Rethinking Thirteenth-Century Byzantine Historiography:

A Postmodern, Narrativist, and Narratological Approach



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Short Abstract

Rethinking Thirteenth-Century Byzantine Historiography: A Postmodern, Narrativist, and Narratological Approach – Matthew Kinloch

In the study of thirteenth-century Byzantium, historiography (made up of linguistic, narrative, and ideological texts) and the past (constituted of things that happened before now) have been conflated. This conflation has proved highly problematic for the study of Byzantine historiography by modern scholars. To explain and describe the period between 1204 and 1261, modern historians have constructed a historiographical narrative that purports to present what happened in the past. This narrative, which I call the *Nikaian narrative*, constructs a simplistic and teleological story of 'Byzantine reconquest' that amongst other things privileges the so-called Nikaian 'empire', which conquered Constantinople in 1261. This modern narrative is founded on a problematic reading of the *Chronike syngraphe* of George Akropolites, a historiographical text, which has dominated the construction of the period.

In this thesis I deconstruct the Nikaian narrative, through the use of various postmodern, narrativist, and narratological tools. In the first three chapters, I deconstruct this narrative, at the macro-level of narrative (and metanarrative), and at the meso-levels of events and characters, exploring the construction five battle-events that structure the Nikaian narrative and the characters to which it attributes agency. In the fourth and final chapter, I extend the argument of the first three chapters to the micro-level through a case study drawn from four narrative historiographical texts, which have been assumed to narrate the 'same events' in the thirteenth-century past. I demonstrate the limitations of an approach to these texts focused on the 'reconstruction' of the past, offering instead an analysis of these texts based on their relationships to each other, not as 'sources' but as texts.

Long Abstract

Rethinking Thirteenth-Century Byzantine Historiography: A Postmodern, Narrativist, and Narratological Approach – Matthew Kinloch

In the study of thirteenth-century Byzantium, historiography (made up of linguistic, narrative, and ideological texts) and the past (constituted of things that happened before now) have been conflated, despite their categorical and epistemological difference. This conflation has proved highly problematic for the study of Byzantine historiography by modern scholars. To explain and describe the period between 1204 and 1261, modern historians have constructed a historiographical narrative that purports to present what happened in the past. This narrative, which I call the *Nikian narrative*, constructs a simplistic and teleological story of 'Byzantine reconquest' that amongst other things privileges the so-called Nikaian 'empire', which conquered Constantinople in 1261. This modern narrative depends on problematic readings of both the *Chronike syngraphe* of George Akropolites, the period's so-called 'main source', and other surviving texts, which are generally marginalised. In this thesis I deconstruct the Nikaian narrative, through the use of various postmodern, narrativist, and narratological tools. Central to this project are the points of rupture between both historiography and the past and medieval and modern texts, each of which have been treated problematically by modern scholars of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world.

In the introduction to this thesis, I differentiate historiography from the past, setting out a postmodern and narrativist philosophy of historiography that sees historiographical texts as generative, rather than simply mimetic. I argue that historiography does not offer a means of knowing, much less of reconstructing the past. Instead, it discursively constructs not *the*, but merely *a* past, equal (at least in absolute epistemological terms) amongst other discursive presentations, because of the past's (ontological) absence. I then compare and contrast my philosophical position with those represented in contemporary Byzantine historiography, which I characterise as ranging between crude and modulated forms of empiricism.

In the first chapter, I introduce the twin problems at the heart of this thesis' argument, namely the modern and medieval texts that have presented the period between 1204 and

1261. First, I deconstruct the artificial dichotomy between diachronic and non-diachronic historiography, before introducing the Nikaian narrative. After tracing and analysing the origins of this narrative in modern historiography, I consider a number of the issues that stem from it, in particular its metanarrative logic. I then relate these modern historiographical constructions to the Byzantine historiographical texts upon which it is founded, introducing first the *Chronike syngraphe* of George Akropolites and then some other texts that will be important for the proceeding study.

In the second chapter, I analyse the medieval texts from which modern historians have constructed five of the most important events in the modern historiography of the period between 1204 and 1261. Each event is a battle in which one of the rivals of the so-called Nikaian empire was defeated. Emphasising different questions in the treatment of each battle-event, I demonstrate how complex presentations of military action in medieval texts are formalised as simplistic battle-events and emplotted within the Nikian narrative and its metanarrative logic.

In the third chapter, I consider the two types of characters which dominate the Nikaian narrative, namely elite male characters (most often rulers) and anthropomorphic unitary 'states', used respectively to narrate short- and long-term military-political action. I analyse both the mediatory quality of these characters on the presentation of 'real' past action in historiography, with particular reference to the indeterminacy of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche, and the lack of congruence between Byzantine and modern conceptions of agency.

In the fourth and final chapter, I illustrate and extend the argument of the first three through the close analysis of §66-72 of the *Chronike syngraphe*, by George Akropolites, and corresponding passages from three closely related texts, the anonymous *Synopsis chronike*, *Chronike historia*, attributed to Ephraim of Ainos, and the anonymous *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*. Using Gerard Genette's theory of hypertextuality, I analyse the relationship between these four texts, in terms of textual relations, rather than as sources of a single past reality. Analysing the presentation of action in these texts at various scales, from the micro-level of intralingual translation, through the instability of apparently basic 'facts', to more complex narrative features, I demonstrate the radical instability, indeterminacy, and

multiplicity of the historiographical texts and thus the weakness of modern historiographical claims to know 'what happened' in the past.

In my conclusion, I offer some alternatives to a scholarship dependent on establishing 'what actually happened'. In particular, I argue that my approach to thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography creates an opportunity to rethink, amongst other things, how we (as Byzantinists) approach texts and transtextual relations, how we structure Byzantine historiography more broadly, and how we acknowledge the ideological, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of modern Byzantine historiography.

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List of Abbreviations

A. Journals

ACSHM	*Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public*
AHR	*American Historical Review*
ΑΠ	*Αρχείον Πόντου*
APB	*Acta patristica et byzantina*
BBBS	*Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies*
BARB	*Bulletin de l'Académie royale Belgique (Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques)*
BHR/RBH	*Bulgarian Historical Review/Revue Bulgare d'histoire*
BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BS	*Byzantinoslavica*
BSEB	*Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CI	*Critical Inquiry*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EBAD/JABS	*Ege ve Balkan Araştırmaları Dergisi/Journal of Aegean and Balkan Studies*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
HR/RH	*Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*
HT	*History and Theory*
HUS	*Harvard Ukrainian Studies*
IHR	*The International History Review*
IJHA	*International Journal of Historical Archaeology*
JAAR	*The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JEH	*The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JEMH	*Journal of Early Modern History*
JHS	*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JTS	*Journal of Turkish Studies*
PP	*Past and Present*
RBPH	*Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*
RÉB	*Revue des études Byzantines*
RÉJ	*Revue des études juives*
RIS	*Review of International Studies*
RH	*Rethinking History*
SO	*Symbolae Osloenses*
SS	*Storia della Storiografia*

TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
VV	*Византийский временник* [*Vizantiĭskiĭ vremennik*]
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
ZRVI	*Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*

B. Regularly cited medieval texts

Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*	A. Heisenberg (ed.) and P. Wirth (corr.), *Georgii Acropolitae: Opera* (Stuttgart, 1978), vol. 1, 3-189.
Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*	A. Heisenberg (ed.) and P. Wirth (corr.), *Georgii Acropolitae: Opera* (Stuttgart, 1978), vol. 1, 193-274.
Anon., *Synopsis chronike*	K. Sathas (ed.), *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Paris, 1894), vol. 7.
Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*	J.-L. Dieten (ed.), *Nicetae Choniatae: Historia* (Berlin, 1975).
Ephraim, *Chronike historia*	O. Lampsides (ed.), *Ephraem Aenii, Historia Chronica* (Athens, 1990).
Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*	J.-L. Dieten (ed.), *Rhomäische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1973-2007), 6 vols.
Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*	C. Tornberg (ed.), *Ibn-el-Athiri Chronicon Quod Perfectissimum Inscribitur* (Leiden and Uppsala, 1851-76), 14 vols.
Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.)	H. Duda (trans.), *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bibi* (Copenhagen, 1959).
Pachymeres, *Syngraphike historie*	A. Failler and V. Laurent (eds.), *Georges Pachymérès: Relations Historiques* (Paris, 1984-2000), 5 vols.
Villehardouin, *La Conquête*	E. Faral (ed.), *La Conquête de Constantinople* (Paris, [1938-9] 1961), 2 vols.

0 – Introduction: Historiography and the Past

> 'Look' says the poet, 'the sun obeys my syntax'.
> 'Look' says the historian, 'the past obeys my interpretation.'[1]

0.1 – Introduction: Rethinking Byzantine historiography

This thesis is an argumentative proposal. In it, I rethink thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography and its relationship to the thirteenth-century Byzantine past. I do this through a combination of postmodern, narrativist, and narratological readings of the texts and textual relations which construct the Byzantine past (particularly the period between 1204 and 1261) as historiography. The reanalysis of the *Chronike syngraphe* (*Χρονικὴ συγγραφή*) of George Akropolites constitutes a central component of this thesis, because of the influence exerted by this text over subsequent constructions of the period, both in terms of its narrative structures and ideological positioning. This reanalysis runs parallel to the analysis of the relationships between the *Chronike syngraphe* and other medieval (mostly Byzantine) texts, including both some very closely related texts and others from different linguistic and literary traditions. Alongside these medieval texts and their transtextual relationships, I consider modern historiographical constructions of the period, not as a byproduct of my analysis, but as a central academic component of this study of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography. My principal objective is to gain a better understanding of how the thirteenth-century Byzantine past has been constructed, rather than a better understanding of the past itself, which I believe to be epistemologically beyond our reach. This study is explicitly (and unashamedly) theoretical, not least because all historiography cannot but be so.[2] However, it is not a test case for (deconstructive) theorising, but a response to the texts, both Byzantine and modern, which claim to present the thirteenth-century Byzantine past.

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[1] K. Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (Abingdon, 2003), 15. Response to V. Khlebnikov, *Victory over the Sun* (Moscow, 1913) via G. Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford, 1975), 234.
[2] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, xvii, "history, like any other discourse in any culture, is not of 'a natural kind', and is thus a theoretical, speculative experiment 'all the way down'."

As I set out in the rest of this introduction, I understand historiography to consist of linguistic, narrative, and ideological texts, which present and construct the past, rather than representing or reconstructing it. After a summary of the whole thesis (0.1), I argue for a (sceptical) postmodern and narrativist theory of historiographical knowledge, pointing to three epistemological fractures (linguistic, narrative, and ideological) that govern the relationship between historiography and the past (0.2). Clearly differentiating historiography from the past, I argue that historiography cannot deliver absolute knowledge of the past. Instead, I argue that historiography discursively constructs and presents the past, but cannot reflect, reconstruct, or represent it. I then compare and contrast my philosophical position with those of contemporary Byzantine historians (0.3).

In the first chapter, I deconstruct the artificial dichotomy between diachronic and non-diachronic historiography (1.1), before introducing the modern historiographical narrative, which has been accepted as 'what happened' in the period between 1204 and 1261, which I call the *Nikaian narrative*, because it privileges the so-called Nikaian 'empire' (1.2). After tracing and analysing the origins of this narrative in modern historiography (1.3), I consider a number of the issues that stem from it, in particular its metanarrative logic (1.4). I then relate these modern historiographical constructions to the Byzantine historiographical texts upon which it is founded (1.5-6), introducing first the *Chronike syngraphe* of George Akropolites (1.5) and then some other texts that will be important for the proceeding study (1.6).

In the second chapter, I analyse the medieval texts from which Byzantinists have constructed five of the most important events in the modern historiography of the period between 1204 and 1261 (2.2-6). Each event is a battle in which one of the rivals of the so-called Nikaian 'empire' was defeated. Emphasising different questions in the treatment of each battle-event, I demonstrate some of the problems with modern historiography in practice and contrast the complexity of the medieval texts with the formalised and simplistic military-political battle-events constructed in modern historiography.

In the third chapter, I consider the two types of characters which dominate the Nikaian narrative, namely elite male characters (most often rulers) and anthropomorphic unitary 'states', used respectively to narrate short- and long-term military-political action (3.2-3 and

3.5). I analyse both the mediatory quality of these characters on the presentation of 'real' past action in historiography, with particular reference to the indeterminacy of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche, and the lack of congruence between Byzantine and modern conceptions of agency (3.4 and 3.6).

In the fourth and final chapter, I illustrate and extend the argument of the first three through the close analysis of §66-72 of the *Chronike syngraphe*, by George Akropolites, and corresponding passages from three closely related texts, the anonymous *Synopsis chronike*, *Chronike historia*, attributed to Ephraim of Ainos, and the anonymous *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*. Using Gérard Genette's narratological theory of hypertextuality, I analyse the relationship between these four texts, in terms of textual relations, rather than as sources of a single past reality. Analysing the presentation of action in these texts at various scales, from the micro-level of intralingual translation (4.6), through the instability of apparently basic 'facts' (4.7-9), to more complex narrative features (4.10-2), I demonstrate the radical instability, indeterminacy, and multiplicity of these texts and thus the weakness of modern historiographical claims to know 'what happened' in the past.

In this thesis, I aim to embrace the epistemological potential of historiography as I find it, rather than as modern historians have wanted it to be. In rethinking the basic assumptions which underpin not just the historiography of the period under direct discussion but the entirety of Byzantine historiography, my contribution offers a radical departure for 'the practice' of Byzantine historiography, as well as a first contribution to a self-conscious philosophy of historiography in Byzantine studies, which has always implicitly underpinned the discipline, but rarely been made explicit.

0.2 – Historiography and knowledge of the past

In this sub-chapter, I set out three points of epistemological fracture between *historiography* and *the past*, which underpin my argument throughout this thesis. I categorise these fractures as (1) linguistic, (2) narrative, and (3) ideological for heuristic purposes, although all three are inextricably intertwined and could also be understood as elements of a single epistemological break. My approach here might be described as *postmodern* or *narrativist*, since I draw heavily on philosophers of historiography who use these labels, particularly Keith Jenkins (postmodern), Hayden White (narrativist), Alun Munslow (postmodern), and

Frank Ankersmit (narrativist).[3] However, I also draw on more recent critiques of these established positions, including the newly christened *postnarrativism* of Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, which particularly influenced the tripartite formulation of my theoretical position, although the product remains more postmodern than postnarrativist.[4] Although it is less apparent in the epistemological and theoretical framing of this introduction, later in the thesis, I also draw heavily on methods derived from literary critical theories of *narratology*, most obviously those of Gérard Genette deployed in chapter four.[5]

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[3] For their most important work for this thesis see K. Jenkins, *Re-thinking*; *Refiguring History*, (London, 2003); K. Jenkins, *On 'What is History?': From Carr and Elton to Rorty and White* (London, 1995); K. Jenkins, *Why History? Ethics and Postmodernity* (London, 1999); K. Jenkins, (ed.), *At the Limits of History* (London, 2009). On Jenkins' importance see G. Roberts, 'Postmodernism versus the Standpoint of Action', *HT* 36 (1997), 250; H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (London, 1973); H. White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1985); H. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987); H. White, *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1957–2007* (Baltimore, 2010). On the importance of White and *Metahistory* in particular see L. Mink, *Historical Understanding* (eds.) B. Fay, *et al.* (Ithaca, 1987), 22, "the book around which all reflexive historians must reorganize their thoughts on history"; W. Kansteiner, 'Hayden White's Critique of the Writing of History', *HT* 32 (1993), 273-95; A. Munslow, *Deconstructing History* (Abingdon, [1997] 2006); A. Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies* (London, 2000); A. Munslow, *The New History* (Harlow, 2003); A. Munslow, *Narrative and History* (Basingstoke, 2007); A. Munslow, *The Future of History* (Basingstoke, 2010); A. Munslow, *Discourse and Culture: The Creation of America, 1870-1920* (Abingdon, 1991); F. Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* (The Hague, 1983); F. Ankersmit, *The Reality Effect in the Writing of History: The Dynamics of Historiographical Topology* (Amsterdam, 1989); F. Ankersmit, *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor* (Berkeley, 1994); F. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford, 2001); F. Ankersmit, *Political Representation* (Stanford, 2002); F. Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford, 2005). On Ankersmit see P. Icke, *Frank Ankersmit's Lost Cause: A Journey from Language to Experience* (London, 2010). My argument cannot be pinned to any of these works, nor does it approach their scope. I set forth my own position for those elements that are relevant to this study. See below 0.2.

[4] J.-M. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of History* (Basingstoke, 2015), esp. 30-49; S. Zoltán and J.-M. Kuukkanen, 'Introduction: Assessing Narrativism', *HT* 54 (2015), 153-61.

[5] On the distinction between *narratology* and *narrativism* M. Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto, 2002), 11. Note that central concepts for this study, particularly 'narrative', have been deployed differently in literary criticism, historiography, the social sciences, and the media/politics during each field's so-called 'narrative turn' in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Matti Hyvärinen argues that we should think not of one, but of four narrative turns, each with markedly different concepts of narrative: M. Hyvärinen, *et al.*, *The Travelling Concepts of Narrative* (Amsterdam, 2013); M. Hyvärinen, 'Revisiting the Narrative Turns', *Life Writing 7* (2010), 69-82; M. Hyvärinen, 'Prototypes, Genres and Concepts: Travelling with Narrative' *Narrative Works* 2 (2012), 10-32; M. Hyvärinen, 'Travelling Metaphors, Transforming Concepts', in M. Hyvärinen, *et al.* (eds.), *The Travelling Concepts of Narrative* (Amsterdam, 2013), 13-41; J.-M. Kuukkanen, The Missing Narrativist Turn in the Historiography of Science', *HT* 51 (2012), 340-63.

By *historiography*, as the etymology of the word suggests, I mean the written results of enquiries about the past, or (simply put) history-writing. I do not mean the history of history-writing, as historiography is often understood in modern Byzantine scholarship.[6] I distinguish historiography from other forms of discourse by its claimed object of study and thus its relationship with *the past*, an object which I understand as the happenings (that is the processes, events, actions, *etc.*) that occurred before now.[7] My analysis takes as its object of study historiographical texts, which claim the thirteenth-century Byzantine past as their object. For practical reasons, I refer to texts as 'Byzantine' (*c.* thirteenth- to fifteenth-century) or 'modern' (*c.* fifteenth- to twenty-first-century), as well as (slightly more precisely) 'late Byzantine' (*c.* thirteenth- to fifiteenth-century), 'early modern' (*c.* fifteenth- to eighteenth-century), and 'contemporary' (*c.* late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century).[8] These categories are arbitrary, vague, and problematic. However, they prove necessary to analyse the relationship between Byzantine and modern historiography, which constitutes a central element of this thesis. I use Byzantine as an open and heuristic descriptor, where others prefer (eastern) Roman or (now less often) Greek.[9]

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[6] F. Haarer, 'Writing Histories of Byzantium: The Historiography of Byzantine History', L. James (ed.) *A Companion to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2010), 9-21; A. Cameron, 'Introduction: The Writing of History', in A. Cameron (ed.), *History as Text: The Writing of Ancient History* (London, 1989), 1.

[7] I find limited heuristic use for the term history, which (in English) elides historiography and the past, unless it is used to mean "the whole ensemble or relations" between historiography and the past, as it has been used by Keith Jenkins: Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 6-8; Jenkins, *Refiguring*, 3, "the before now". See also Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist*, 5. I distinguish both historiography and the past from both memory and experience, following K. Pihlainen, 'The Eternal Return of Reality: On Constructivism and Current Historical Desires', *SS* 65 (2014), 103-14; A. Tucker, 'Introduction,' in A. Tucker (ed.) *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography* (Chichester, 2009), 1-7.

[8] Note that in referring to scholars, I sometimes qualify 'modern historians' with 'Byzantine' (i.e. 'modern Byzantine historians'), to distinguish them from scholars specialising in other fields.

[9] In contemporary scholarship Byzantine has become a controversial term and its utility for the characterisation of the 'true' (self)identification of eastern Roman, people, polities, and things, has been brought into question. See A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007); I. Stouraitis, 'Roman Identity in Byzantium: A Critical Approach', *BZ* 107 (2014), 175-220. On the later period see G. Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge, 2008). I do not refer to a geographical space, such as the Aegean world or the south Balkans and western Anatolia, because although this thesis deals extensively with texts about non-Roman people, their stories have generally (as I show below) been made peripheral to stories about the Byzantine past 'proper' in modern historiography. See below 1.4 and 1.6.

My starting point for the first epistemological fracture is semiotic, in that it is about the production, transmission, reception, interpretation, and meaning of signs, particularly *linguistic signs*.[10] My argument is built on the radical assault on nineteenth-century conceptions of language made by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Cours de linguistique générale* [*Course in General Linguistics*], posthumously published in 1916.[11] Saussure broke down linguistic signs into two mutually constitutive elements, *signifiers* (the forms which signs take, such as words) and *signifieds* (the concepts which signs represent).[12] His principal innovation came in his identification of a lack of correspondence between signifiers and signifieds, which he argued are linked arbitrarily, because there is no natural, necessary, intrinsic, direct, or inevitable relationship between a word (signifier) and the concept it signifies (signified).[13] For example, there is nothing tree-like about the word tree. From this identification, Saussure argued that signifiers produce an excess of signification (the relationship between signifiers and signifieds), because each signifier can refer to multiple signifieds at once, just as the same signified can be referred to by multiple signs. Consequently, he concluded that language is a system built on *différence* [difference], rather than correspondence, and that signifiers produce meaning through (negative) relationships with other signifiers, rather than through (positive) relationships with their signifieds.[14] He argued, therefore, that words are only meaningful within the parameters of specific linguistic systems (of *différence*), such as French or English.[15] Those initially influenced by Saussure's work understood language, meaning, and other socio-cultural phenomena by analysing the structure of the differential (linguistic) systems in which (linguistic) signs were

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[10] For definition see J. Johansen, 'Semiotics', in D. Herman, *et al.* (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* (London, 2005), 522-7. It is especially important to emphasise semiotics, because they are so often neglected by the British postmodern philosophers of historiography, as noted by Elizabeth Ermarth: E. Ermath, 'Review of A. Munslow, *The Future of History*', *Reviews in History* (2010) http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1220 [Accessed 17.02.17].

[11] F. Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Lausanne, 1916); F. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (trans.) R. Harris (London, [1916] 1983).

[12] Saussure, *Course*, 66; 111; K. Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (Oxford, 1983), 103. Although Saussure claims to discuss all signs, his analysis focuses on linguistic signs, in particular (phonocentrically) on spoken over written words. See below 0.2.

[13] Saussure, *Course*, 67, 78, 112.

[14] Saussure, *Course*, 114-9. This negative relationship is best illustrated by how dictionaries work, using other words to define particular signs.

[15] See Saussure's example of the disconnect between the French word *mouton* and the English words sheep and mutton: Saussure, *Course*, 114.

embedded.[16] This approach has been termed *structuralism*, while the increased focus on the nature of language in large part engendered by Saussure's work, as well as developments in analytic philosophy, has been termed the 'linguistic turn' by Richard Rorty.[17]

Saussure's analysis focused exclusively on theorising *signification*. He intentionally "bracketed" off this internal analysis, of what he understood as immaterial mental constructs, from the relationship of linguistic signs to *referents* (real things in the world, to which linguistic signs purportedly refer).[18] However, Saussure's demonstration of the arbitrary relationship between signifiers and signifieds has important consequences for the capacity of linguistic signs to refer to referents, as Jacques Derrida demonstrated, when he followed Saussure's basic argument to its logical conclusion in *De la grammatologie* [*Of Grammatology*].[19] Derrida argued that if concepts (signifieds) can never be entirely freed of their form (signifiers), then neither can real things (referents), which must also be mediated by the same differential linguistic systems that order language.[20] Punning on the word

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[16] F. Dosse, *History of Structuralism* (trans.) D. Glassman (Minneapolis, 1997), 2 vols; G. Deleuze, 'How Do We Recognise Structuralism?' in M. Taormina (ed.) *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974* (trans.) D. Lapoujade (Los Angeles, 2002), 170-92; E. Clark, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge MA, 2004), 42-62. For key practitioners see especially C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (trans.) J. and D Weightman (London, [1962] 1966). Edward Said described Lévi-Strauss as structuralism's Prospero: E. Said, '*Abecedarium Culturae*: Structuralism, Absence, Writing', *TriQuarterly* 20 (1971), 48.

[17] R. Rorty, 'Metaphysical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy', in R. Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago, 1967), 1-40; Jenkins, *What*, esp. 97-133. See also G. Spiegel (ed.), *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn* (London, 2005); J. Surkis, 'When Was the Linguistic Turn? A Genealogy', *AHR* 117 (2012), 700-22; J. Vernon, 'Who's Afraid of the 'Linguistic Turn'? The Politics of Social History and its Discontents', *Social History* 19 (1994), 81-97.

[18] Saussure's work was almost immediately criticised for its failure to consider either the materiality of *signifiers* or the relationship of *linguistic signs* to real-world *referents*. See for example C. Ogden and I. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (London, 1923); V. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (trans.) L. Matejka and I. Titunik (New York, [1929] 1973).

[19] J. Derrida, *De la gramatologie* (Paris, 1967); J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (trans.) G. Spivak (Baltimore, [1967] 1997). This text consists principally of *deconstructive* readings of Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss, and Jean-Jaques Rousseau. Most important here, is his critique of Saussure's (phonocentric) privileging of spoken over written language, which Saussure believed to be a purer and less mediated form. Derrida demonstrated that Saussure's own logic suggests that the (negative) qualities he suggests for writing are simply the condition of all language. For a useful critical analysis see A. Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology* (Edinburgh, 2008). For an alternative reading of Saussure see R. Daylight, *What if Derrida was Wrong about Saussure?* (Edinburgh, 2011).

[20] This is a simplification of Derrida's argument, which is framed as a deconstructive reading of Jean-Jaques Rousseau's quasi-autobiographical *Confessions*, in which he first argued that a *transcendental* (pure and unmediated) *signified* was an impossibility, before moving on to referents: J.-J. Rousseau,

différence, used by Saussure, Derrida coined the term *différance* [deferral] (from *différer* [to postpone]) to refer to the endless deferral of meaning in a linguistic system defined by the difference between equally uncertain linguistic signs. Derrida's argument (created as a wide-ranging critique of western-European metaphysics) also has important consequences for the study of the past, because it suggests that historiography (constituted of linguistic signs) cannot convey absolute (epistemological) knowledge of the past (constituted of referents), because language mediates access to any world beyond itself.[21] Following Derrida, the past is understood as something that is discursively constructed by historiography, rather than something that can (even hypothetically) be transparently represented by language.[22] In a simple sense, this is obvious when we think about historiography. The past is gone and the only past we can know is that presented to us in texts (made up of linguistic signs).[23] There is no longer a past outside of them. However, this was not the point Derrida was trying to make, when he said that "*il n'y a pas de hors-texte* [there is no outside-text]".[24] Instead, he argued that reality is itself already textual, even as it is happening, because people and things are embedded within, constructed from, and inaccessible without recourse to

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Les confessions (Paris, 1782-9), 2 vols; J.-J. Rousseau, *The Confessions* (trans.) J. Grant (Edinburgh, [1782-9] 1904), 2 vols. See also J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (trans.) A. Bass (Chicago, [1967] 1978), 280, "The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely."

[21] For a succinct (if simplistic) definition of the metaphysics of *presence* see Bradly, *Derrrida's*, 148-9. Generally, on *metaphysics*, see A. Ney, *Metaphysics: An Introduction* (Abingdon, 2014). Michel Foucault has probably been more directly influential for historiography than Derrida. However, following Gabrielle Spiegel "I believe that Derrida, rather than Foucault, is a better guide to what might have motivated its [poststructualism's] emergence, since Foucault remained, at least in his early phases, highly structuralist in his deployment of discourse": G. Spiegel, 'The Task of the Historian', *AHR* 114 (2009), 5, n. 12. See also Munslow, *Deconstructing*, 120-39.

[22] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 7, "the past and [historiography] are not stitched into each other such that only one historical reading of the past is absolutely necessary." This results in what Keith Jenkins calls the "multifarious" quality of historiography: Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 13. See also Munslow, *Narrative*, 9-10. Note that the past cannot simply be said to be the referent of historiography: K. Jenkins, 'Introduction: History Limited', in K. Jenkins (ed.), *At the Limits of History* (London, 2009), 7; G. Spiegel, 'Towards a Theory of the Middle Ground', in G. Spiegel (ed.), *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), 46; R. Barthes, 'The Reality Effect', in *The Rustle of Language* (trans.) R. Howard (New York, [1984] 1986), 141-8; R. Bathes, 'The Discourse of History', in *ibid.*, 127-40.

[23] On the ontological absence of the past see below 0.2.

[24] Derrida, *gramatologie*, 158; Derrida, *Grammatology*, 227. For a clarification of Derrida's position see J. Derrida, *Limited Inc* (trans.) S. Weber and J. Mehlman (Evanston, 1988), 136. Note that this is often what historians assume the postmodernist critique to be.

mediatory linguistic systems of *différance*.[25] This is not to say that reality is literally textual or that people are just words or characters, as some critics have mistakenly assumed, but that reality and language cannot be divided into two separate entities, because for humans reality is always already structured by language.[26] This linguistic indeterminacy creates (what I call) an epistemological fracture, between historiography and the past and has otherwise been called the postmodern condition, postmodernism, or (in literary critical contexts) poststructuralism.[27]

Historiography (as I have already stated above) is not constituted of individual linguistic signs, but of texts, in which textual elements (such as words, sentences, and chapters) are woven into textual wholes by content-synthesising/integrative features.[28] These features, which I refer to as *narrative discourse*, are generative rather than simply mimetic, making their textual products (or *narratives*) more than the sum of their parts.[29] Just as form (signifiers) cannot be separated from content (signifieds) at the micro-level of the linguistic sign, so too at the macro-level of narrative textual wholes, form (narrative discourse) cannot be separated from content (past happenings).[30] The past (as I have already noted) is gone, or to put it more technically the past is ontologically absent, since, although it did itself really happen, it has (by definition) now ceased to be. The past's absence means that it depends for its current (ontological) existence on historiography. However, dependence does not entail correspondence. Past happenings and historiographical narratives are categorically

[25] Derrida, *gramatologie*, esp. 157-9; Derrida, *Grammatology*, esp. 227-8; Bradley, *Derrrida's*, 112-4. For a historiographical perspective see Jenkins, *Refiguring*, 25.
[26] For an alternative perspective see G. Eley, 'Is All the World a Text? From Social History to the History of Society Two Decades Later', in G. Spiegel (ed.) *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn* (New York, 2005), 33-61.
[27] J.-S. Schaeffer and I. Vultur, 'Mimesis', in D. Herman, *et al.* (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* (London, 2005), 309-10; J.-F., Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris, 1979); J.-F., Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (trans.) G. Bennington and B. Massumi (Manchester, [1979] 1984). See below 1.4.
[28] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist*, esp. 1-2.
[29] See Kuukkanen who I follow closely here: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist*, 68-96, esp. 68.
[30] White, *Content*; N. Partner, 'Hayden White: The Form of the Content', *HT* 37 (2002), 162-72; S. Foot, 'Finding the Meaning of Form: Narrative in Annals and Chronicles', in N. Partner (ed.) *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), 88-108.

different.[31] Narrative is imposed upon the past, rather than found within it.[32] Consequently, (narrative) historiography contains both more and less than the past it presents.[33] This disjuncture engenders a second epistemological fracture in the referential capacity of historiography. In the following two paragraphs, I problematise several (although by no means all) of the most important points of divergence between narrative historiography and the past.[34]

Most importantly, narrative discourse imposes coherence on the past in various ways (particularly emplotment, connectedness, and completeness).[35] Narratives, for example, have beginnings, middles, and ends (termed by Hayden White as inaugural, transitional, and terminating motifs), which order events into plots.[36] However, past events do not naturally

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[31] Jenkins, 'Limited', 5, "the past (as events, happenings, occurrences, etc.) is categorically (ontologically) of a different kind from history (as discourse, text, narrative, etc.)".

[32] In this I follow those described as *narrativists* (or *narrative idealists*), most notably White. See H. White, 'The Historical Text as Literary Artefact', in H. White (ed.), *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1985), 82, "historical narratives as what they most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented as found*"; H. White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *CI* 7 (1980), 8, "real events do not offer themselves as stories". Following White see Jenkins: Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, esp. 11. For an early, so-called *pre-narrativist*, articulation see Mink, *Historical*; L. Mink, 'Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument', in R. Canary and H. Kozicki (eds.), *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison, 1978), 129-49. I oppose the *narrative realists* who understand narrative as an inherent and natural organizing principle of reality: D. Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington, 1986); D. Carr, 'Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity', *HT* 25 (1986), 117-31; D. Carr, 'Narrative Explanation and Its Malcontents', *HT* 47 (2008), 19-30; P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (trans.) K. McLaughlin/Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago, [1983-5] 1984-8), 3 vols; P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (trans.) K. Blamey and D. Pellauer (Chicago, [2000] 2004): Roberts, 'Postmodernism', 249-60; J. Carter, 'Telling Times: History, Emplotment, and Truth', *HT* 42 (2003), 1-27. This position can be associated with cognitive narratology. For example see D. Herman, 'Cognitive narratology', in P. Hühn, *et al.* (eds.), *Narratologia: Handbook of Narratology* (Berlin, 2009), 30-43.

[33] D. Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), esp. xxii-xxiii.

[34] See Jenkins, 'Limited', 9, "one could go on raising such problematics for ever (for when would you know that the returns are all in)".

[35] Normative visions of narrative coherence have recently been challenged, although only with limited reference (and applicability) to historiographical narratives: M. Hyvärinen, *et al.* (eds.), *Beyond Narrative Coherence* (Amsterdam, 2010), esp. 5.

[36] White, *Metahistory*, 5. This can be traced to Aristotle: See R. Kassel, *Aristotelis, De arte poetica liber* (Oxford, 1965), 1450b. See White, 'Value', 27, "Does the world really present itself to perception in the form of well-made stories, with central subjects, proper beginnings, middles, and ends, and a coherence that permits us to see 'the end' in every beginning?" L. Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London, 1989), 59, "Whether it be in historical or fictional representation, the familiar narrative form of beginning, middle, and end implies a structuring process that imparts meaning as well as order." Mink, *Historical*, 60, "Stories are not lived but told. Life has no beginnings, middles, and ends; there are only meetings, but the start of an affair belongs to the story we tell ourselves later,

occur in ordered plots. Instead, they are unordered prior to their *emplotment*, that is their transformation from a set of events into a sequence structured by a plot. That emplotment is extrinsic to the past can be seen from the many ways in which the same event can be emplotted.[37] For example, the fall of Constantinople (1204) has been emplotted as both beginning, middle, and end and as tragic defeat, ironic accident, and irrelevant blip.[38] However, this multiplicity of historiographical emplotments does not correspond to a multiplicity of pasts, since however complex it might be, it can only be singular.[39] Rather than correspondence, the multiplicity of alternative emplotments for any given event demonstrates that narrativisation constructs rather than reconstructs the past. Similar disjuncture can be seen in the connectedness imposed by narrative discourse. Narrative historiography needs connectedness.[40] Without it, the past remains a mere collection of unrelated events.[41] However, in historiographical narratives, connectedness depends on continuity and causality presupposes linearity.[42] As a result, historiographical narratives not only depend on continuity as an organising principle, but present the past in a manner that is fundamentally teleological and predictable.[43] Neither narratives nor connectedness can be 'found', 'followed', or 'uncovered' ('naturally' or otherwise), because the postulation of a *telos* (or end) means that narratives construct connections and causality, and what an event means, ends up depending on the telos of the narrative. Narratives thus work towards

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and there are partings, but final partings only in story." White, *Metahistory*, 113, "Physical nature as such has no beginning, middle, or end; it is always and eternally what it *has to be*."

[37] H. White, 'Emplotment', in D. Herman, *et al.* (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* (London, 2005), 137; White, *Metahistory*, esp. 7-10; White, 'Narrativity', 26.

[38] See below 1.2 and 1.4.

[39] For different emplotments of the French revolution see A. Rigney, *The Rhetoric of Historical Representation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1990). Following H. White, 'The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation', in H. White (ed.), *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore, 1987), 68-9.

[40] F. Ankersmit, 'Danto on Representation, Identity, and Indiscernibles', *HT* 37 (1998), 68, "historians state facts for no other purpose than to relate them to other facts."

[41] N. Bonneuil, 'The Mathematics of Time in History', *HT* 49 (2010), 28. Not that this might simply be by placing one after another, as demonstrated by White's analysis of (what he called) narratives, chronicles, and annals: White, 'Narrativity', 5-27. For citation and discussion in relation to the work of David Hume see G. Dicker, *Hume's Epistemology and Metaphysics* (London, 1998), 111, "All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem conjoined, but never connected."

[42] Bonneuil, 'Mathematics', 28-46. See also a related argument in N. Bonneuil, 'History, Differential Inclusions, and Narrative', *HT* 40 (2001), 101-15.

[43] For terminology see S. Susen, *The 'Postmodern Turn' in the Social Sciences* (Basingstoke, 2015), 136-70.

closure (thematic, moral, *etc.*) teleologically. Closely related to the linearity which constrains historiography, is the completeness imposed by narrative discourse. The totality of the past is effectively (although not absolutely) limitless.[44] Historiography, in contrast, is not.[45] The process by which certain past happenings are selected for inclusion in historiography means that the past is always already mediated by the criteria for inclusion.[46] Things that are irrelevant to the progression towards a narrative's telos are simply never included. If most of the past is not textualized at all, even as epistemologically problematic narrative texts, this changes the epistemological status of that which is textualized. Limited to only a teleologically selected part of 'what actually happened', historiography is already less than the past before any emplotment. In stark contrast to their incompleteness, when compared to the past, historiographical narratives are themselves textual wholes, made more than collections of atomistic statements by narrative discourse.[47] If a statement is removed from a text, the potential meanings and communicative functions of both the textual whole and the individual statement are transformed.[48] This is because statements accrue meaning from their relationship with other statements, as well as from what they say in and of themselves. For example, a mistake made by a character in a narrative has a different meaning, if they make it once (implying inhabitual incompetence) or multiple times (implying habitual incompetence). This is not the case with the past, which has no meaning in and of itself. Meaning is constructed not innately, but by the way in which past happenings are related to other past happenings.

In short, narrative discourse is generative rather than simply mimetic, since it imposes coherence, connectedness, continuity, completeness, and numerous other qualities onto the

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[44] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 13-4.

[45] H. White, 'Introduction: Tropology, Discourse and the Modes of Human Consciousness', in H. White (ed.), *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1985), 3; I. Ševčenko, 'Two Varieties of Historical Writing', *HT* 8 (1969), 333. See below 0.2.

[46] Prosaically this has been described by empiricist historians in terms of the relationship between "the historian and his [*sic*] facts": E. Carr, *What is History?* (Harmondsworth, 1987), 7-30.

[47] Textual wholes might at first glance seem to imply a composition-centric understanding of what a text is. It can and should be observed that audiences do not hold in their head the entirety of the statements all at once, when reading every other statement. However, I understand this as a process by which audiences generate new textual wholes.

[48] F. Ankersmit, 'Statements, Texts and Pictures', in F. Ankersmit and H. Kellner (eds.), *A New Philosophy of History* (London, 1995), 225, "none of the statements which constitute the texts…irrelevant to the text's presentation of the past".[48]

past, which prior to narrativisation the past did not possess.[49] This results in an epistemological fracture between the past and historiography, although this fracture is inextricable from those caused by historiography's linguistic and ideological qualities.

In both its creation and reception, people mediate the past, when they present it as historiography. This mediation, which I term 'ideological', using the term as broadly as possible to refer to the sum of a person's normative beliefs and ideas (conscious or unconscious), constitutes a third epistemological fracture between historiography and the past.[50] Like linguistic signs and narrative discourse, the role of people in the creation and reception of historiography is generative, rather than simply mimetic.[51] The past is (ontologically) absent, since, although it did exist, it has (by definition) now ceased to be. Consequently, the past is (ontologically) dependent, for its very existence, on historiography. However, historiography is both created and interpreted by people. It is these people who determine both what traces of the past (textual, physical, *etc.*) are presented as historiography, as well as how they are presented.[52] Consequently, people literally exercise power over the past's very existence. In contrast, the past has no input as to how it is historicised, nor can it be consulted, either in the creation of historiography or in its 'verification'.[53] Indeed, there is no measure by which a historiographical text can be 'verified'

[49] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist*, 62, "'Narratives' or 'representations' contain qualities that the past does not have. Further, it seems that they do not refer to uniquely identifiable entities in the past." See also J.-M. Kuukkanen, 'Representationalism and Non-representationalism in Historiography', *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 7 (2013), 453-79.

[50] This is simply one definition of a notoriously well-travelled concept. On ideology generally see J. Gerring, 'Ideology: A Definitional Analysis', *Political Research Quarterly* 50 (1997), 957-94; T. Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London, 1991), esp. 1-31; K. Knight, 'Transformations of the Concept of Ideology in the Twentieth Century', *American Political Science Review* 100 (2006), 619-26. For the usage of ideology in this period and modern scholarship see M. Vukašinović, *Nicée, Épire, Serbie. Idéologie et relations de pouvoir dans les récits de la première moitié du 13e siècle* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Belgrade and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, in progress).

[51] Note that, like linguistic signs and narrative discourse, ideology is not something imposed upon historiography by something or someone external to it, but an inextricable quality of it. The 'people', discussed in this passage, who impose ideological concerns on historiography in its creation and reception are not outside of language, text, and discourse.

[52] Jenkins, 'Limited', 5. Note that traces must not be mistaken for the past itself.

[53] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 14; Jenkins, 'Limited', 5.

(or even demonstrated to be superior to another), since it cannot be checked against the past, but only other historiographical texts.[54]

Nobody, no matter how deeply immersed in the study of the thirteenth-century Byzantine past, can entirely divest themselves of their own person or present (whether fourteenth- or twenty-first-century):[55]

> La référence des récits peut paraître appartenir au temps passé, elle est en réalité toujours contemporaine de cet acte.[56] [The narratives' reference may seem to belong to the past, but in reality it is always contemporaneous with the act of recitation.][57]
>
> Nobody has a patent on "the past"; it can be used or ignored by everyone. And why is this? Because the so-called past (the before now) doesn't exist "meaningfully" prior to the efforts of historians to impose upon it a structure or form; the "before now" is utterly shapeless and knows of no significance of its own either in terms of its whole or its parts before it is "figured out" by us.[58]

The knowledge, experience, politics, morality, methodological training, and so on of both the creators and receivers of historiography are inextricable from historiography (and thus presentations of the past).[59] Professional and methodological standards, such as peer review, transform and limit, rather than overcome, these inextricable predispositions.[60] The subject-centred quality of historiography (both in its creation and reception) cannot be bracketed off as 'bias' or 'perspective', because this would require the impossible, an 'unbiased' or 'non-perspectival' approach, uninfluenced by the subject.[61] It is here that a postmodern and narrativist perspective diverges from numerous other approaches, which have acknowledged the presentism and subject-centered quality of historiography. For example, idealist Benedetto Croce argued in 1920 that "*ogni vera storia e storia contemporanea* [every true history is contemporary history]" and structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss stated in 1962

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[54] H. White, 'Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground', *HT* 12 (1973), 23-54.
[55] Ankersmit, 'Statements', 212-40; Ankersmit, *Historical Representation*.
[56] Lyotard, *condition*, 42.
[57] Lyotard, *Condition*, 22.
[58] Jenkins, *Refiguring*, 11.
[59] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 13-4; Lowenthal, *Past*, esp. 185-259; White, 'Tropology', 21, "Has any historical narrative ever been written that was not informed not only by moral awareness but specifically by the moral authority of the narrator?"
[60] S. Cohen, *Passive Nihilism: Cultural Historiography and the Rules of Scholarship* (Houndmills, 1998), esp. 127-8; Jenkins, 'Limited', 10.
[61] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 44-7; 66-7, "history is intersubjective and ideologically positioned…objectivity and being unbiased are chimeras".

that "*L'histoire n'est donc jamais l'histoire, mais l'histoire-pour* [History is therefore never history, but history-for]", while more recently Edward Carr, in a chapter on "the historian and his [*sic*] facts", and even Arthur Marwick have accepted that historians are "fallible, and subject to many kinds of career and social pressures".[62] The central difference between the postmodern and narrativist position, I advocate here, and these other approaches is in the degree to which they believe that these fallibilities and difficulties can be overcome (that is, as to whether or not what I call ideology constitutes an unbridgeable epistemological break).[63]

The past cannot escape the presentism of subjects and be taken 'on its own terms', because it can only exist on the terms of its creators and receivers.[64] Consequently, historiography is just as political and ideological whether it explicitly reads for class struggle or (implicitly) reads the past for its own sake:

> …even those historians who professed no particular ideological commitment and who suppressed the impulse to draw explicit ideological implications from their analysis of past societies could be said to be writing from within a specifiable ideological framework…liberal and conservative, whether its practitioners are aware of this or not.[65]

Of course, what I separate as ideological is inextricable from the linguistic and narrative form of historiography, which provides mechanisms through which the past can be transformed into (and thus be made accessible as) historiography. It is ideology (broadly conceived) that fills the aporias, gaps, and ellipses left by the formal inadequacies of

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[62] C. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962), 341; C. Lévi-Strauss, *Savage Mind*, 257-8; B. Croce, *Teoria e storia della storiografia* (Bari, 1920), 4; B. Croce, *Theory and History of Historiography* (trans.) D. Ainsle (London, 1921), 12; Jenkins, 'Limited', 7; Carr, *What*, 7-30; A. Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (London, 2001), 38.

[63] See below 0.3.

[64] For Byzantine examples, see W. Treadgold, 'Taking Sources on their own Terms and on Ours', *Antiquite tardive* 2 (1994), 153-9; S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2013), 3.

[65] H. White, 'Interpretation in History', in H. White (ed.), *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1985), 69. See also White, *Metahistory*, 21-8. Following White, Jenkins has argued convincingly that contemporary "own-sakism" conceals bourgeois (neo)liberalism: Jenkins, *What*, 9; 164-5, "…there never will be, any such thing as a past which is expressive of some sort of essence, whilst the idea that the proper study of history is actually 'own-sakism' is recognised as just the mystifying way in which a bourgeoise conveniently articulates its own interests as if they belonged to the past itself."

linguistic signs and narrative texts. They are filled in by people informed by their own contemporary socio-political, ethnic, gendered, and other identities and experiences.

The ideological quality of historiography can be seen at the very earliest stage of a historiographical text's creation, because, even in the selection of material, the ideological (as well as linguistic and narrative) quality of historiography prefigures any possible presentation of the past, the totality of which is effectively (although not absolutely) limitless and therefore impossible to render in the limited medium of historiography:[66]

> Every mimetic text can be shown to have left something out of the description of its object or to have put something into it that is inessential to what *some* reader, with more or less authority, will regard as an adequate description.[67]

Even Ihor Ševčenko accepted this basic observation, although his response was to create a hierarchy out of 'good' and 'bad' selections (alongside his metaphor of butterflies and caterpillars), determined by his own interests and the disciplinary norms of Byzantine studies in the 1960s:

> Complete history is impossible, for everything that ever occurred cannot have been recorded, nor should all that is recorded be narrated. Selection is necessary. Bad or proper selection is the touchstone by which good historians can be told from bad ones.[68]

The process of selection cannot come before the allocation of meaning to those elements that are selected, since to select is to endow with some kind of meaning/importance, for the purpose of whatever narrative is being told. Thus, before any expression, the past is already mediated by those who choose what, out of the totality of past reality, to even attempt to express. Again, it is impossible to reach a more justifiable selection, in absolute terms, since all such selections are relative and testable only against each other.

Gender offers a useful example of how this might affect the study of thirteenth-century Byzantium. The surviving texts were almost exclusively written by (elite) men, for the

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[66] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 13-4.
[67] White, 'Tropology', 3.
[68] Ševčenko, 'Varieties', 333. See also the responses of E. Hurwitz and D. Ostrowski, 'The Many Varieties of Historical Writing: Caterpillars and Butterflies Reexamined', *HUS* 7 (1983), 296-308; E. Bourbouhakis, 'To Flutter or to Crawl? Ihor Ševčenko and the 'Two Varieties of Historical Writing'', *Palaeoslavica* 24 (2016), 232-44.

consumption of other (elite) men.[69] It is consequently, fairly unsurprising that the historiography of thirteenth-century Byzantium is dominated by (elite) men doing stuff that other (elite) men were interested in.[70] Even if women were not the object of caricature and tropes in these texts or if it were somehow possible to strip this patriarchal paraphernalia from their presentation, the simple absence of the majority of approximately half of the population creates an inevitably and inescapably gendered world, in which women cannot escape their textualization within patriarchal structures.[71]

Not everything can be expressed through language, nor can the entirety of any past (no matter how micro) be contained in a historiographical text. These formal limitations are in themselves enough to fracture the referential potential of historiography. However, they intersect with historiography's ideological quality, since language and narrative are always used by ideologically situated people. The point at which the linguistic, narrative, and ideological quality of historiography converge is concisely stated by William Cronon:

> Narrative succeeds to the extent that it hides the discontinuities, ellipses, and contradictory experiences that would undermine the intended meaning of its story. Whatever its overt purpose, it cannot avoid a covert exercise of power: it inevitably sanctions some voices while silencing others. A powerful narrative reconstructs common sense to make the contingent seem determined and the artificial seem natural.[72]

In this statement, Cronon captures the problematic at the heart of this thesis and at the heart of the historiography of thirteenth-century Byzantium. The complexity and uncertainty of the past has been simplified and subordinated to the simplicity and certainty of linguistic, narrative, and ideological historiography. These three fractures merge together in a single epistemological break, between historiography and the past, which demands the attention of

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[69] Recently see L. Neville, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian* (New York, 2016), 15, "History writing in the Greek tradition was a masculine form of expression." For several exceptions that prove the rule see A. Riehle, 'Authorship and Gender (and) Identity: Women's Writing in the Middle Byzantine Period', in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), 245-62.

[70] On the preponderance of (elite) men in Byzantine and modern historiography see below 3.2 and 3.3.

[71] See below 4.10. E. Clark, 'The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the "Linguistic Turn"', *Church History* 67 (1998), 1-31; A. Kaldellis, 'The Study of Women and Children: Methodological Challenges and New Directions', in P. Stephenson (ed.), *The Byzantine World* (Abingdon, 2010), 61-71; Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 9.

[72] W. Cronon, 'A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative', *The Journal of American History* 78 (1992), 1349-50.

contemporary historians. However, in the study of the thirteenth-century Byzantine 'past' this epistemological break is (at least) doubled, since there are multiple textual levels, most obviously Byzantine and modern, each of which is fractured by the linguistic, narrative, and ideological quality of historiography.[73]

In this thesis, I am concerned with historiography and have framed the preceding philosophical introduction accordingly.[74] However, the sceptical postmodernist position outlined here extends to all traces (as conceived by Jenkins) of the past.[75] This position holds that there is no fundamental epistemological distinction between 'material' and 'textual' traces of the past, since following Derrida 'material' traces (whether architectural remains, coins, seals, palynological samples, or anything else) are also 'read' as 'texts' and can no more stand outside of linguistic-textual structures than historiography.[76] Of course, any distinction between 'material' and 'textual' traces is already compromised in an obvious way, because Byzantine 'texts' are simultaneously 'material' (i.e. manuscripts and codices), as has been emphasised by more recent trends in codicology, palaeography, and literary criticism.[77] However more than that, the relationship between 'material' traces and the past is epistemologically fractured (and broken) in the same way as that between historiography and the past. The interpretation of 'material' traces and their instrumentalisation as 'sources' of knowledge about the past is always structured by indeterminate linguistic signs, while any attempt to make them meaningful depends on their emplotment within (linguistically

[73] See below 0.3 and 1.4.
[74] See above 0.1 and 0.2.
[75] Jenkins, 'Limited', 8; Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 26-7.
[76] I. Hodder, 'This is not an Article about Material Culture as Text', *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 8 (1989), 250-69; I. Hodder, 'Post-modernism, Post-structuralism and Post-processual Archaeology' in I. Hodder (ed.), *The Meaning of Things: Material Culture and Symbolic Expression* (London, 1989), 64-78. On Derrida, see above 0.2. On the analogous relationships between text and critic or gold and chemist, see K. Jenkins, 'A Postmodern Reply to Perez Zagorin', in K. Jenkins (ed.), *At the Limits of History* (London, 2009), 92. For a more comprehensive (and theoretical) approach to reading in a specifically Byzantine context see T. Shawcross and I. Toth (eds.), *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond* (Cambridge, in progress).
[77] For a particularly relevant example of the relationship between illustrated manuscripts and historiography see E. Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge, 2015). For relevant (illustrative) examples from related disciplines see M. Aresu, *The Author as Scribe. Materiality and Textuality in the Trecento* (Doctoral thesis for Harvard University, 2015); H. Lähnemann, 'The Materiality of Medieval Manuscripts', *Oxford German Studies* 45 (2016), 121-41.

indeterminate) narratives that are fundamentally and inescapably ideological.[78] In short, 'material objects' no more speak for themselves or can be taken on their own terms than historiographical texts.[79]

The epistemological break between 'material' traces and the past is perhaps most intuitively obvious at the level of narrative. At this level archaeological excavation offers structural comparisons to historiography. The narrative linearity and directionality that structures historiographical text might be compared to both stratigraphy and the sequencing of styles over time (through schematizing typologies) in archaeology.[80] At the very least, when the 'results' of research are presented and published, studies that foreground 'non-historiographical material' traces in Byzantine studies produce similar narrative structures in their construction and presentation of 'the past' to historiographical studies. In the attempt to interpret and make the objects of their analysis meaningful, monographs and articles about Byzantine archaeology, numismatics, or palynology construct narratives (and arguments) as does historiography.[81] Furthermore, such studies tend to supplement rather

[78] See above 0.2.

[79] For recent critiques of postmodernist theory and (more importantly) practise in approaching 'material' traces of the past, see T. LeCain, *The Matter of History: How Things Create the Past* (Cambridge, 2017), esp. 23-66; T. LeCain, 'Against the Anthropocene. A Neo-Materialist Perspective', *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernit*y 3 (2015), 1-28; N. Boivin, *Material Cultures, Material Minds: The Impact of Things on Human Thought, Society, and Evolution* (Cambridge, 2008). Note that Timothy LeCain concedes that the postmodernist position he critiques is not itself necessarily anthropocentric, since it offers the possibility "to *transcend* the boundaries between ideas and matter", but instead focuses his critique on the tendency towards "ignoring or minimizing the importance of the nonhuman world of things": LeCain, *Matter*, 50. For a recent posthumanist approach to Byzantine literature see A. Goldwyn, *Byzantine Ecocriticism: Women, Nature, and Power in the Medieval Greek Romance* (Cham, 2017), esp. 191-233. For bibliography on the entanglement of humans and 'non-humans' see B. Latour, 'Nonhumans', in S. Harrison, S. Pile, and N. Thrift (eds.), *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture* (London, 2004), 224-7; C. Knappett, *An Archaeology of Interaction: Network Perspectives on Material Culture and Society* (Oxford, 2011); I. Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Oxford, 2012).

[80] I. Hodder, 'The Narrative and Rhetoric of Material Culture Sequences', *World Archaeology* 25 (1993), 268-82. Similarly the partiality of any archaeological excavation or sample might be compared to the partiality of any historiographical presentation of the past.

[81] On the presentation of archaeological research in narrative form(s) see R. Dyke and R. Bernbeck (eds.), *Subjects and Narratives in Archaeology* (Boulder, 2015). For an aside on the imposition of order through the selection of contributions for the publication of conference proceedings, see Hodder, 'Post-modernism', 67-8.

than replace historiographical texts.[82] It is worth here considering some relevant case studies to see these dynamics in operation. An important example for the late Byzantine period can be seen in Slobodan Ćurčić's concept of "the age of insecurity", which he used to characterise the late medieval Balkans from wide-ranging analyses of its architecture and archaeology.[83] This highly influential argumentative concept creates and depends logically on a narrative of 'what happened' and 'how it changed'. However, this "age of insecurity" draws on and synchronises with narratives of late Byzantine "decline", principally derived from historiographical texts. The 'scientific' analysis of tenth- and eleventh-century climatic change by Ronnie Ellenblum, likewise produces a traditional narrative argument.[84] Further, his study has been criticised for its over-dependence on historiographical texts.[85] Finally, John Haldon's *The Empire that Would Not Die*, which offers a (re)appraisal of Byzantium's 'dark age' and integrates both historiographical and other types of 'evidence', still produces an argument through the compilation of linguistic signs into narrative structures that are ideologically positioned.[86] The argument presented might be more provisional, less unilinear, more theorised, and more epistemologically self-aware than other types of study, but it is not of a different epistemological quality. These illustrative examples aside, it should be noted that in the study of the period between 1204 and 1261, 'material' traces tend to be emplotted within and/or prefaced by narratives principally constructed from readings

[82] As I show (see below 1, esp. 1.3 and 1.5), in the case of thirteenth-century historiography various different types of 'source material' have been subordinated to a narrative logic principally derived from a single historiographical text.

[83] S. Ćurčić, 'Architecture in the Age of Insecurity: An Introduction to Secular Architecture in the Balkans, 1300-1500', in S. Ćurčić and E. Hadjitryphonos (eds.), *Secular Medieval Architecture 1300–1500, and its Preservation* (Thessaloniki, 1997), 19-51. He also describes the period between 1250 and 1450 as "the period of turmoil", see S. Ćurčić, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (New Haven CT, 2010), 507-702.

[84] R. Ellenblum, *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean: Climate Change and the Decline of the East, 950-1072* (Cambridge, 2012).

[85] For a critique of Ellenblum's excessive reliance on historiography as reporting past realities, as well as his overly deterministic approach, see J. Preiser-Kapeller, 'A Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean? New Results and Theories on the Interplay between Climate and Societies in Byzantium and the Near East, ca. 1000–1200 AD.', *JÖB* 65 (2015), 195-242.

[86] J. Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640-740* (Cambridge MA, 2016). Haldon's position can be placed towards the 'practical realist' end of the spectrum outlined above, see 0.3. For an example of a monograph dealing with the same period that depends to an even greater extent on archaeological and (in particular) palynological material, but that still uses narrative explanations such as 'decline', 'efflorescence', and 'resilience', see A. Izdebski, *A Rural Economy in Transition: Asia Minor from Late Antiquity into the Early Middle Ages* (Warsaw, 2013).

of historiographical texts.[87] However, since this thesis is concerned with historiography, 'material' traces will not form a central part of this study, except where such material has come to affect narratives about aspects of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography.

Before I compare my approach to historiography to those expressed by modern historians of the Byzantine world, it is worth restating my core argument. Historiography is categorically different to the past. The break between the two is ontological, rather than just epistemological, and thus not bridgeable by any amount of methodological rigour. Modern historians cannot gain unmediated knowledge of the past through historiography, because it discursively constructs and presents the past, rather than reconstructing or representing it. Traditional metaphors of representation, reconstruction, and reflection are problematic, not just because they imply knowledge, but because they imply the recreation of something without transformation.[88] That historiography generates *a* new past, rather than *the* past, is an emancipatory revelation, which frees the historian from subordination to a restrictive and singular past reality.[89]

0.3 – Modern Byzantine historiography

The categorical, epistemological, and ontological distinction between historiography and the past has not constituted a principal concern of contemporary Byzantine studies generally and thirteenth-century historiography in particular.[90] The introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, published in 2008, still accurately captures the state of the field:

> Discussions among historians and philosophers of history around issues raised by debates about the epistemological status of history-writing and the ontological status of the past produced polarizations of opinion which hardly touched most Byzantinists, although this is not to say that they were unaware of them – there is

[87] See below 1.3.
[88] If historiography can be said to be a reflection, it is the reflection, not the thing reflected.
[89] On presentation as opposed to representation see H. White, 'Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality', *RH* 9 (2005), 149.
[90] On the absence of "fundamental discussions" with reference to Hayden White, see I. Nilsson, 'To Narrate the Events of the Past: On Byzantine Historians, and Historians on Byzantium', in J. Burke, *et al* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006), 48; R.-J. Lilie, 'Reality and Invention: Reflections on Byzantine Historiography', *DOP* 68 (2014), 159-60, n. 11. On conservatism in Byzantine studies see Kaldellis, 'Women', 62; E. Jeffreys, 'Comments on J. Ljubarskij, *Quellenforschung* and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings', *SO* 73 (1998), 36-7.

> often a gap between personal intellectual practice and the intellectual or institutional context in which it exists.[91]

Many Byzantinists are aware of the semiotic and epistemological challenges posed by sceptical postmodernism over the last fifty years to traditional empiricist historiography.[92] However, the discipline has yet to experience the "paradigm shift" expected by John Haldon in 1985.[93] Contemporary Byzantine historiography remains fundamentally dominated by empiricism. This is not to say that all Byzantinists approach historiography in the same way. In contrast, contemporary Byzantine historiographical practice is so diverse that it has proved impossible to examine all contemporary practice here. Consequently, this analysis of modern Byzantine historiography is generalising and partial. Rather than seeking to delineate the whole field, in this sub-chapter, I present the two theoretical poles, between which the majority of modern historians operate, namely crude empiricism and practical realism, against which I set my own postmodern and narrativist approach. Since these ideal theoretical positions are principally articulated by philosophers of historiography, rather than (self-proclaimed) 'historical practitioners', they do not always map directly onto modern Byzantine historiographical practice.[94] That is to say, modern Byzantine historians neither regularly describe their methodological assumptions explicitly, much less in terms of epistemology and semiotics, nor self-identify as crude empiricists, practical realists, sceptical postmodernists, or for that matter as much else other than as historians.[95] Consequently, I ground my theoretical analysis in the work of four prominent contemporary Byzantine

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[91] E. Jeffreys, *et al*., 'Byzantine Studies as an Academic Discipline', in E. Jeffreys, *et al.* (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 14-5. See also B. Croke, 'Tradition and Originality in Photius' Historical Reading', in J. Burke, *et al* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006), 59-61, esp. 60, n. 4.

[92] This hesitance is not exclusive to Byzantine studies, see H. White, 'Review of A. Munslow, *The New History*', *RH* 9 (2005), 132, "Philosophers and scientists alike have been attacking the idea of 'empirical' research for decades. Most professional historians either do not know this or do not care to know it."

[93] Following Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions: J. Haldon, ''Jargon' vs. 'the Facts'? Byzantine History-Writing and Contemporary Debates', *BMGS* 9 (1984), 132; T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1962), 5-21, 43-51, 87-93.

[94] I highlight self-proclaimed, because any division between theory and practice is artificial. This is a core trope of defences of empiricist practice. See Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 6-24.

[95] Generally explicit theorising has been avoided in Byzantium, with the exception of some Annales and Marxist (realist) historiography. Most prominently by John Haldon. For example, see J. Haldon, 'The Feudalism Debate Once More: The Case of Byzantium', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 17 (1989), 5-40; J. Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production* (London, 1993); J. Haldon, 'Theories of Practice: Marxist History-Writing and Complexity', *Historical Materialism* 21 (2013), 36-70.

historians (Ruth Macrides, Leonora Neville, Warren Treadgold, and Anthony Kaldellis), who spoke in a plenary session of the 2016 *International Congress of Byzantine Studies* in Belgrade on the topic of 'How the Byzantines Wrote History'.[96] Together they serve as a heuristically-useful sample, for four principal reasons. First, the papers are both recent and unusually explicit for modern Byzantine historiography.[97] Second, the panel constitutes a broadly-representative (if somewhat Anglophone-centric) range of opinions, with Treadgold functioning as a usefully illustrative outlier and Macrides, Neville, and Kaldellis representing contemporary consensus. Third, the presence of Macrides is particularly useful, because her work dominates contemporary thirteenth-century historiography and underpins the argument of this thesis. Fourth, Kaldellis is particularly useful both because his wide-ranging, prolific, and controversial publication record means that most contemporary Byzantine (not to mention late-antique) historians have read some of his work and also because he is one of the few Byzantinists who has explicitly discussed historiographical epistemology and ontology.[98] Although the limited explicit discussion of historiographical theory in modern Byzantine historiography means that I must draw on a wide selection of scholars, my principal concern is to illustrate the methodological context of contemporary thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography.

Empiricism depends on an entirely different theory of knowledge to the sceptical postmodernism articulated in the previous sub-chapter. Empiricism posits that reality is independent of language (and other social constructs) and accessible through experience and observation. It assumes that objective experience and observation is theoretically

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[96] R. Macrides, 'How the Byzantines Wrote History', in S. Marjanović-Dušanić (ed.), *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 22-27 August 2016: Plenary Papers* (Belgrade, 2016), 257-63; L. Neville, 'Why did the Byzantines Write History?', in *ibid*., 265-76; W. Treadgold, 'The Unwritten Rules for Writing Byzantine History', in *ibid*., 277-92; A. Kaldellis, 'The Manufacture of History in the Later Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Rhetorical Templates and Narrative Ontologies', in *ibid*., 293-306.

[97] It should be noted that this, like most explicit discussion on historiographical theory in Byzantine studies, is focused on Byzantine texts, rather than contemporary practice, that is at one end of a double bind. See below 0.3.

[98] For this range see A. Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2004); A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia* (Leiden, 1999); A. Kaldellis, *A New Herodotos: Laonikos Chalkokondyles on the Ottoman Empire, the Fall of Byzantium, and the Emergence of the West* (Washington DC, 2014).

possible and thus absolute and unmediated knowledge.[99] I use unmodulated acceptance of an empiricist epistemology, termed as either 'crude' or 'naïve empiricism', as one pole of my analysis of contemporary Byzantine historiography.[100] In a historiographical context, crude empiricism maintains that historiography is capable of corresponding to the past and thus of providing absolute (or near absolute) knowledge of it.[101] The central concern is the reconstruction of the past from texts, understood as sources or evidence of the past. This is not to say that crude empiricists credulously believe that the texts they interrogate are always objective and accurate, but rather that they believe it is possible to use them to gain knowledge of the past, through the historian's objective self-control and the application of inductive method and logical reasoning.[102] They do not believe that individual modern historians are exempt from bias, but that they can actively aim at objectivity when analysing the sources.[103] Individuals may be biased, but since historiography is a collective project, where historians overstep, their professionalised colleagues will step in to correct discrepancies.[104] Crude empiricists thus believe that historians are capable of establishing a core of facts that can be objectively agreed upon and that the argumentative, subjective, and interpretative elements of historiography can be (largely) removed from the centre to the periphery of historiographical research.

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[99] D. Robinson and B. Mayblin, *Introducing Empiricism* (Royston, 2004); A. Tucker, *Our Knowledge of the Past: A Philosophy of Historiography* (Cambridge, 2004); Munslow, *Companion*, 80-2. For a Byzantinist's definition see Haldon, 'Jargon', 99.

[100] I accept that terming something as crude or naïve is pejorative, see Haldon, 'Jargon', 96.

[101] Geoffrey Elton, Arthur Marwick, and Richard Evans are the key, although often contradictory, defenders of empiricist historiography: G. Elton, *The Practice of History* (London, 1969); G. Elton, *Political History: Principles and Practice* (London, 1970); G. Elton, *Return to Essentials: Some Reflections on the Present State of Historical Research* (London, 1991); A. Marwick, *The Nature of History* (London, 1970); A. Marwick, '"A Fetishism of Documents?" The Salience of Source-Based History', in H. Kozicki (ed.), *Developments in Modern Historiography* (New York, 1993), 107-38; A. Marwick, 'Two Approaches to Historical Study: The Metaphysical (including "Postmodernism") and the Historical', *Journal of Contemporary History* 30 (1995), 5-34; Marwick, *New*; R. Evans, *In Defence of History* (London, 1997). On some of the weaknesses of empiricism, see Munslow, *Deconstructing*, 36-56, 76-98, 181-2; Munslow, *Companion*, 88. For a defence of Elton, which claims him as a narrative realist, see Roberts, 'Postmodernism', esp. 252.

[102] For a summary and bibliography see Munslow, *Companion*, 80-2.

[103] For the problems with bias, see above 0.2 and 0.3.

[104] Marwick draws a distinction between different types of historiographical production: Marwick, *New*, 8, "Historians don't just write research monographs, where, granted, the personal passion may be a vital driving force; they also write textbooks, summaries of existing knowledge, where the biases inherent in difficult research works should be filtered out; and they teach."

As I illustrate below, empiricism (at least in its crude form and as a wholesale theory of knowledge) has now generally been rejected by contemporary historians, including Byzantinists.[105] Instead they generally commit to various modulated forms of empiricism, although in practice this commitment is often merely theoretical or rhetorical. The most important modulation, which most historians now accept, is that people mentally process new experience and observation, deploying *a priori* knowledge and experience to interpret them.[106] They accept the empiricist premise that reality is both knowable and irreducible to language, but maintain that knowledge is still socially constructed.[107] This compromised position, which has been driven principally by social and cultural historians, has been termed 'practical realism' by some of its proponents, with a heavy emphasis on the (practical) pragmatism of their approach.[108] In historiographical terms, they argue that social constructs (such as language or narrative structures) place limits on the capacity for historiography to reconstruct or represent the past, but do not make it impossible. Some would go so far as to accept that the past is entirely mediated by language and that absolute knowledge of the past is consequently impossible. However, although practical realists make relatively extreme concessions to sceptical postmodernism, they retreat from the radical logic of such an acceptance, by reintroducing socio-historical context (apparently outside the reach of textuality) as a means of turning texts into material embodiments of situated language use.[109] Led by the historian of medieval France, Gabrielle Spiegel, scholars have sought to absorb the critique of sceptical postmodernism into traditional empiricist historiographical practice and find a productive "middle ground" between the two positions. However, even the relatively extreme concessions made by Spiegel and other practical realists depend fundamentally on empiricist theory and practice. Spiegel herself

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[105] Munslow, *Deconstructing*, 76-98; *Companion*, 80-2.
[106] For definitions of *a priori* and *a postiori* knowledge see Munslow, *Companion*, 21-4; 81.
[107] For the terminology see Munslow, *Deconstructing*, 76-98. For key proponents of this position see J. Appleby, *et al.*, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York, 1994).
[108] Appleby, *et al.*, *Truth*; F. Olafson, 'Hermeneutics: "Analytical" and "Dialectical"', *HT* 25 (1986), 28-42; J. Kloppenberg, 'Objectivity and Historicism: A Century of American Historical Writing', *AHR* 94 (1989), 1011-30; Spiegel, *Practicing*.
[109] G. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text', in G. Spiegel (ed.) *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), 3-28; Spiegel, 'Towards', 44-56. For the Derridean/postmodernist understanding of textuality, see above 0.2.

acknowledges this philosophical contradiction, describing her own position as "an enormous epistemological cheat".[110]

Crude empiricism and practical realism provide two useful poles for the close examination of contemporary Byzantine historiographical practice. However, neither are really attested in contemporary historiography in the ideal-type forms that I (and philosophers of historiography) have outlined. As I argue, crude empiricism has been strongly rejected, but few have compromised as far as 'fully-developed' practical realists. However, although crude empiricism is now largely absent from contemporary practice, there is still a considerable body of crude empiricist scholarship in Byzantine studies, which directly impacts on contemporary historiography.[111] In a field in which many important texts still lack satisfactory editions, let alone commentaries or translations, it is unsurprising that scholarship is only rarely revisited. Consequently, it is not unusual for scholarship written within older scholarly paradigms to remain definitive, especially regarding marginalised subjects. Consequently, crude empiricist philosophies of historiography still effectively undergird great swathes of contemporary Byzantine historiography.[112] The compromised theoretical status of these foundations are often lost in almost Whiggish narratives of increasing knowledge about the Byzantine past, as I demonstrate in my analysis of the nineteenth- and even eighteenth-century foundations of contemporary thirteenth-century historiography.[113]

Truly crude empiricism is now uncommon in contemporary historiography, Byzantine or otherwise. However, Treadgold illustrates the closest that contemporary practice comes to this theoretical extreme. In his plenary paper at Belgrade, Treadgold sought to demonstrate that the Byzantines (treated as one) had different conceptions of historiographical accuracy

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[110] G. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), xix; Spiegel, 'Task', 189-208.

[111] If anything, even more extreme (positivist) empiricism is attested. For an explicit statement of Rankean historiography from a key figure in both early British Byzantinism and nineteenth-/early-twentieth-century positivist historiography see J. Bury, *An Inaugural Lecture* (Cambridge, 1903), 5-42. For a critique of Bury see A. Megill, 'Grand Narrative and the Discipline of History', in F. Ankersmit and H. Kellner (eds.), *A New Philosophy of History* (London, 1995), 151-73, esp. 159.

[112] Especially in the form of narrative historiography. For example see Kaldellis' critique of contemporary tenth- and eleventh-century historiography: A. Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood: The Rise and Fall of Byzantium, 955 A.D. to the First Crusade* (Oxford, 2017).

[113] See below 1.3.

to modern historians (again treated as one).[114] In his analysis he drew out seven "unwritten rules" for "accuracy", through the examination of what he called four "good" and four "bad" late antique and Byzantine historiographical texts.[115] Treadgold's argument, here and elsewhere, is underwritten by the assumption that historiography (as a medium) possesses the potential to refer to the past and to correspond to the truth, not just to present it. He notes that "some statements" made by Byzantine historians "are not objectively accurate", but implicitly believes that objective accuracy is nevertheless fundamentally possible:[116]

> [Some Byzantine] historians failed to tell the truth, through carelessness or bias or some other sort of dishonesty… sometimes we can be fairly sure that the inaccuracies were deliberate. This may mean that the historians, like many of us, sometimes did things that by their own standards were less than absolutely honest.[117]

For Treadgold, there are a host of reasons why objective reality might not always be represented in Byzantine historiography (be it because of authorial agendas or archaising rhetoric), but he fundamentally believes that it is possible to isolate reality (in the form of facts) from the bias and rhetoric in which his 'source material' is couched.[118] In other words, Treadgold sees the (linguistic, narrative, and ideological) form of historiography as extrinsic to its 'content' (i.e. past reality). Consequently, his seven rules read almost as a guide to stripping that form (in his terms style and bias) and what he calls "false reports" away from supposedly 'true content'.[119]

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[114] Few in the field are likely to disagree with this general observation. If anything, it is Treadgold himself who comes closest to disagreeing with himself, given his repeated insistence that Byzantine historians were scholars like us: W. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke, 2007), xi; Treadgold, 'Rules', 277.

[115] Treadgold, 'Rules', 277. For a critique of this kind of "emotional" categorisation see J. Ljubarskij, 'Reply to the Comments', *SO* 73 (1998), 61. However, for a similar characterisation of 'good' and 'bad' see Ševčenko, 'Varieties', 333.

[116] Treadgold, 'Rules', 278.

[117] Treadgold, 'Rules', 277-8.

[118] Implicitly, for Treadgold historiographical texts are 'source material' for knowledge of the past and bias must be stripped from it. This is the principal guiding force behind his three-volume history of the Byzantine historians: W. Treadgold, *Early*; *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke, 2013); W. Treadgold *The Late Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke, in progress). For a positive review see M. Angold, 'Review of W. Treadgold, *The Middle Byzantine Historians*', *JEH* 66 (2015), 168-70. For Angold's conception of a similar subjective/objective binary see M. Angold, 'Review of A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*', *JHS* 135 (2015), 298, "from today's standpoint, his aims were more literary than scientific; his approach to the past more subjective than objective." On bias see above 0.2 and 0.3.

[119] Treadgold, 'Rules', 277, n 1. Note that he essentially offers these rules as both an addition to and critique of those offered by Ralph-Johannes Lilie: Lilie, 'Reality'.

Treadgold has explicitly and repeatedly attacked what he perceives to be "the fantasies of poststructuralism", by which he also means all postmodernisms, scepticisms, and narrativisms.[120] His principal problem is with the relationship between history (which he understands to be factual) and fiction, as articulated by Hayden White and somewhat misrepresented by Jakov Ljubarskij in 1998:[121]

> My main disagreements stem from a very modern attitude that Professor Ljubarskij accepts but I cannot, that "there is no clear distinction between history and fiction."[122]

Treadgold's hang-up is shared by most contemporary Byzantine historians, including Ljubarskij.[123] However, his critique is derived from a common misunderstanding of Hayden White's argument regarding the constructive quality of historiography. White's intentionally polemical argument that "[a]ll stories are fictions", is one of language and form not of reality or unreality (i.e. epistemology not ontology), as he clarified in 2005:[124]

> This does not mean that narrative historical discourse is fictitious in the sense of imaginary or fantastical or delusory, and it does not mean that fictional discourse is 'historical'. What it does mean is that 'the past' can be converted into 'history' only by the use of the kinds of techniques of representation usually employed in poetic speech and fiction for speaking about hypothetical situations or imaginary ones.[125]

Treadgold conflates fiction with invention and thus misses White's principal point about techniques of representation. Treadgold, like White, acknowledges that what he calls style is common to both historiography and other literature. However, they differ as to whether it is separable from 'content'.

Treadgold has gone out of his way to attack a variety of theoretical approaches to Byzantine studies. In the process, he has intentionally fashioned himself as hyper-reactionary and anti-theoretical. His theoretical/empiricist self-fashioning is buttressed (in academic print) by a

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[120] W. Treadgold, 'Comments on J. Ljubarskij, *Quellenforschung* and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings', *SO* 73 (1998), 57.
[121] Ljubarskij, 'Quellenforschung', 11. See also J. Ljubarskij, 'Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos', *DOP* 46 (1992), 177-86; J. Ljubarskij, 'New Trends in the Study of Byzantine Historiography', *DOP* 47 (1993), 131-8.
[122] Treadgold, 'Comments', 58.
[123] Ljubarskij, 'Reply', 61, "To be sure, I do not tend to confuse historiography and fiction, as Professor Treadgold suggests. My approach to historiography as a kind of fiction is nothing more than a method or, to put it better, an analytical device." See below 0.3.
[124] For the original argument see White, *Fiction*. Especially see White, 'Narrativity', 5-27.
[125] White, 'Munslow', 135. For a clear disambiguation in a Byzantine context see Nilsson, 'Past', 50.

bigoted social conservatism, which intersects most clearly in his work in his rejection of sexuality and gender as legitimate fields of scholarly analysis. Most recently, in an aggressive review of Leonora Neville's monograph, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*, Treadgold essentially refutes the suggestion that gender has influenced either Byzantine or modern perceptions of Anna and the *Alexiad*'s authority.[126] For Treadgold "this has nothing to do with her gender" and had she been Alexios' son she would have faced the same difficulties.[127] However, his patronising dismissal of Neville as "a dogmatic feminist" and reduction of her argument to that of criticising previous scholars "essentially for not being contemporary feminists", foregrounds his assumption that such superfluous elements of a text and its reception as gender (if they exist at all) can be removed from the 'evidence' of the text.[128] Treadgold, for example, is disappointed not to find "[t]he real Anna Comnena" in Neville's book, although he feels able to redirect his readers to a place that she can really be found, in one of his own monographs.[129] His criticism of gender, even in the (principally empiricist) form presented by Neville, is mirrored by his wholesale dismissal of other (theoretical) approaches, such as historical materialism and even comparative analysis.[130] However, his social-conservatism is most extreme in various observations that he makes immediately after a tripartite attack on Peter Brown, the study of sexuality in late antiquity, and a caricatured 'poststructuralism':[131]

> They [the Byzantines] would have detested Michel Foucault, especially for his *homosexual activities*, which under Byzantine law were punishable by castration in the 6th century and execution in the 8th century.[132]

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[126] W. Treadgold, 'Review of L. Neville, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*', *Medioevo Greco* 17 (2017), 516-7; Neville, *Anna*.
[127] Treadgold, 'Neville', 517. For a similarly problematic empiricist interpretation of Anna and the *Alexiad*, in which Howard-Johnston assumes, because the subject-matter of a text is military that it could not have been written by a woman, see J. Howard-Johnston, 'Anna Komnene and the *Alexiad*' in M. Mullett and D. Smythe (eds.), *Alexios I Komnenos* (Belfast, 1996), 260-302. For compelling critiques see R. Macrides, 'The Pen and the Sword: Who Wrote the *Alexiad*?', in T. Gouma-Peterson (ed.), *Anna Komnene and her Times* (New York, 2000), 63-81; D. Reinsch, 'Women's Literature in Byzantium? The Case of Anna Komnene', in T. Gouma-Peterson (ed.), *Anna Komnene and her Times* (New York, 2000), 83-105; L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-century Byzantium: The Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios* (Cambridge, 2012), 182-93.
[128] Treadgold, 'Neville', 517.
[129] Treadgold, 'Neville', 516-7.
[130] W. Treadgold, 'Late Ancient and Byzantine History Today', *Historically Speaking* 3 (2002), 20-2.
[131] Treadgold, 'Today', 22.
[132] Treadgold, 'Today', 22. Emphasis added.

Treadgold descends into a strange critique of Michel Foucault, accompanied by not only the offensively phrased mention of "his homosexual activities", but also the homophobic relish with which he expounded the Byzantine punishments for them. Treadgold's work comes as a package, his empiricism is buttressed by and inextricable from his social conservatism. The anti-theoretical Treadgold, thus, provides a useful example of the ideological in modern Byzantine historiography, particularly in the presentism and partiality displayed in his work.[133]

While Treadgold stands close to the pole of crude empiricism, the rest of the Belgrade panellists, Macrides, Neville, and Kaldellis, along with most contemporary Byzantine historians, practise modulated forms of empiricism, considerably closer to practical realism, although they fall short of some of its compromises.[134] All three, have formed part of the vanguard of an empiricist revisionist movement in modern Byzantine historiography, which has successfully challenged the crude empiricism of previous generations and castigated them for plundering historiographical texts for facts and ignoring their literary quality.[135] Together, their papers from Belgrade usefully illustrate how self-, theoretically-, and methodologically-aware contemporary Byzantine historians have engaged explicitly with ontological and epistemological issues, although I consider Macrides and Kaldellis' papers in closer detail because they are generally more abstract and explicit in their theorising:[136]

> We are and will always be in search of factual information…Our aim is ostensibly the same as theirs [Byzantine historians] – to keep the memory of the past alive…The discrepancies we find between theory and practice in Byzantine histories alert us to the need to find other ways to read our sources if they are going to help us to reconstruct the past. The author has been resurrected, the worst excesses of the linguistic turn have passed, but we have to take seriously the literariness of the histories we read and draw from.[137]

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[133] See above 0.2.

[134] For an early, if highly problematic challenge, see C. Mango, *Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror* (Oxford, 1975).

[135] For the forerunners of this revisionism see M. Mullett, 'Dancing with Deconstructionists in the Gardens of the Muses: New Literary History vs?', *BMGS* 14 (1990), 258-75, esp. 268, "At the crudest level they charge through with card indexes and databases plundering for historical facts and complaining when the text's complexity or vacuity eludes their rape"; Haldon, 'Jargon', 95-132.

[136] There are several significant differences between them, but this makes them even more representative of the field.

[137] Macrides, 'How', 259-60; 262. On the problem of eliding memory and past see Pihlainen, 'Reality', 103-15.

> While I am hardly convinced that true historical claims are ultimately impossible or that history is only representation, nevertheless the ontology of our *texts* is literary, by definition: the 'stuff' that furnishes each textual universe consists, proximately, of literary artifacts.[138]

In slightly different ways, both Macrides and Kaldellis maintain knowledge of the past as both possible and as their core objective as historians. In so doing, they both explicitly reject sceptical postmodernism, in favour of empiricism.[139] However, they modulate that empiricism by acknowledging the *littérarité* [literariness] of historiography. This *littérarité* stands in for a range of the elements discussed in the previous sub-chapter. However, both have concluded that the mediation of *littérarité* does not inhibit historiography from reconstructing the past.

The *littérarité* of historiography has been at the heart of the most concerted and successful assault on crude empiricist practice in Byzantine historiography, alongside the rehabilitation of Byzantine literature as worthy of merit and the revision of interpretive models based on rigid systems of generic classification.[140] Two recent conferences, which took history/literature (2004) and historiography/*littérarité* (2007) as their topics, saw several papers seek to destroy the arbitrary separation of historiography from literature, alongside numerous detailed studies of specific texts and authors, which utilised various literary-critical tools.[141] These pioneering studies, alongside others, have now generated a new norm,

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[138] Kaldellis, 'Manufacture', 293.

[139] Neville is less explicit about epistemology in her Belgrade paper. However, elsewhere she has maintained the link between text and knowledge of the past. See Neville, *Anna*, 1-2, "The *Alexiad* is a masterpiece of vivid historical narrative to which we owe much of our knowledge of the history and politics of the eastern Mediterranean in the twelfth century."

[140] On literary merit see E. Hanawalt, 'Dancing with Rhetoricians in the Gardens of the Muses: Notes on the Recent Study and Appreciation of Byzantine Literature', *BSEB* 13 (1986), 1-23; Mullett, 'Deconstructionists', 258-75; M. Mullett, 'A New Literary History of Byzantium: A Worthwhile Endeavour?', in P. Odorico and P. Agapitos (eds.), *Pour une nouvelle histoire de la littérature byzantine: problèmes, méthodes, approches, propositions* (Paris, 2002), 37-60. On the problems of generic categorisation in prefiguring historiographical analysis see M. Mullett, 'The Madness of Genre', *DOP* 46 (1992), 233-43; D. Afinogenov, 'Some Observations on Genres of Byzantine Historiography', *Byzantion* 62 (1992), 13-33; I. Nilsson, 'Discovering Literariness in the Past: Literature vs. History in the *Synopsis Chronike* of Konstantinos Manasses', in P. Odorico, *et al.* (eds.) *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie* (Paris, 2006), 15-31, esp. 28-30; H.-G. Beck, 'Zur byzantinische "Mönchschronik"', in *Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz* (London, [1965] 1972), XVI, 188-97; C. Mango, 'The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography', *HUS* 22 (1988/9), 360-72.

[141] P. Odorico, *et al.* (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie* (Paris, 2006); R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2010). Kaldellis contributed an article critiquing the treatment of Prokopios' *Persian wars* "as a repository of factual knowledge": A.

as Ralph-Johannes Lilie observed in 2014, in an article that exemplifies the new theoretical landscape:

> The *communis opinio* in scholarship is that (Byzantine) historiography is a form of literature. One main focus of the dispute is the proportion of literature to "scientific" history contained in the Byzantine historical works…[142]

Even Treadgold has acknowledged that historiography is literature.[143] However, as Lilie's observations suggest, the acknowledgement of historiography as literature has not led to an epistemological challenge to historiographical knowledge of the past, but rather a struggle to work out where *littérarité* and rhetorical artifice ends and knowledge of the past begins. Rephrased, the question isolated by Lilie is that asked by Kaldellis in Belgrade.

> How much history is there in Byzantine historical texts?[144]

Kaldellis' answer, "even *less* than we think now", is less optimistic than that of Treadgold.[145] However, it chimes with Neville's paper in the Belgrade plenary session, which although less explicit about epistemology than those of Kaldellis and Macrides, is illustrative of the same new normative paradigm.[146] In her paper, Neville like Kaldellis, Treadgold, and Lilie surveys various literary qualities of Byzantine historiographical texts, from the didactic to the epical and narrative, and considers their relationship to the past. Macrides also articulated this concern in the tantalisingly short preface for *History as Literature in Byzantium*, in which she imagined two options for Byzantinists who have acknowledged that history is literature:[147]

Kaldellis, 'Procopius' *Persian War*: A Thematic and Literary Analysis', in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2010), 254. Also important, although slightly differently aligned, were two other conferences taking place in Melbourne (2004) and Naples (1998) see J. Burke, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006), esp. 1-220; U. Criscuolo and R. Maisano (eds.), *Categorie linguistiche e concettuali della storiografia bizantina: atti della quinta Giornata di studi bizantini* (Naples, 2000).

[142] Lilie, 'Reality', 205, n. 181. See also Kaldellis, 'Women'.

[143] Treadgold, 'Rules', 277; Treadgold, *Early*, xii; Treadgold, *Middle*, x; Treadgold, 'Comments', 28.

[144] Kaldellis, 'Manufacture', 293.

[145] Kaldellis, 'Manufacture', 294.

[146] Neville, 'Why'. Note that Neville still felt the need to reassure her audience in the oral presentation of her paper that she was still "here for the dead people".

[147] C. Holmes, 'Review of R. Macrides, *History as Literature in Byzantium*', *The Medieval Review* (2012), https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/17441/23559 [Accessed 17.02.17].

> History *is* literature… For some, history studied as literature can be an end in itself. For others, it will be a means of determining how our knowledge of the past changes when the historical sources are read as literature.[148]

In this statement, at the end of her preface, Macrides re-entrenched the binary distinction between literary critic and historian, just as she destroyed that between literature and history.[149] Literary critics are essentially invited to do whatever they like with historiography.[150] However, historians are expected to instrumentalise their awareness of *littérarité* (whether in the form of theoretical literary criticism or not) in order to attain knowledge of the past.[151] Intertwined with *littérarité* is the perceived 'bias' of texts (although this is mostly framed as the bias of authors), which is also dismissed as an absolute fracture and worked around.[152] The turn to *littérarité* in modern Byzantine historiography has thus reinforced rather than challenged its dominant empiricist epistemology. Macrides, and the other contemporary Byzantine historians I have used to illustrate contemporary historiographical practice, pull back before major epistemological fracture, coming up to, but not over, the line that would require them to rethink their empiricism. They settle for a compromise, which Kaldellis has more explicitly described elsewhere as "a middle ground" that avoids a "hard version of the 'Linguistic Turn'", as well as unnecessary "jargon".[153] Although he borrows the concept of a middle ground from Spiegel, he shies away from even

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[148] R. Macrides, 'Editor's Preface', in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2010), xi. For a more empiricist presentation see P. Magdalino, 'A History of Byzantine Literature for Historians', in P. Odorico and P. Agapitos (eds.), *Pour une nouvelle histoire de la littérature byzantine* (Paris, 2002), 167-84.

[149] For a similar differentiation of literary critic and historian see Spiegel, 'Logic', 23.

[150] In this dichotomy there is a slight hint of the crude empiricism of Marwick, *New*, 19, "It is open to all young people to adopt postmodern attitudes if they are persuaded by them. But if they are persuaded, they would be best advised to give up the study of history."

[151] This instrumentalisation can be seen in A. Kazhdan and W. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkley, 1985), xx, "The works of Byzantine historians are usually reliable, but often they provide information rather than insight, facts rather than perceptions. Developments in the form and emphasis of these histories have proved more useful for identifying changes in society than have the political events the historians recorded in them."

[152] See above 0.2 and below 1.5.

[153] Kaldellis, 'Women', 62. Kaldellis' article constitutes an attack on the *postmodern* approach of Elizabeth Clark to late Antique historiography: Clark, 'Vanishes'. His description echoes Haldon's earlier call for a less polarising debate between theorists and non-theorists. Haldon claimed that it was "not my intention to argue for or against any of these positions as such", despite implicitly advocating a Marxist realism: Haldon, 'Jargon', 119.

her already fundamentally empiricist compromise.[154] Spiegel acknowledges, while Kaldellis and Macrides reject, that knowledge of the past is mediated by language to the point that it cannot actually be known. Since they do not compromise, neither Kaldellis nor Macrides need the "epistemological trickery" invented (somewhat problematically) by Spiegel.[155] This supposed "middle ground", occupied by the majority of contemporary Byzantine historians, claims to be a reasonable point of mediation, avoiding both the narrowness of crude empiricism and, to quote Macrides again, "the worst excesses of the linguistic turn".[156] However, this rhetorical framing (of precisely the kind to which both historians are so alert in the Byzantine texts they study) conceals a reactionary and conservative empiricism.[157] Kaldellis' "middle ground" mediates between different empiricisms, but as with any claim to centrism, suffers from the delusion that a spectrum can have a centre, which is not perspectival.[158] From the more theoretically developed field of modern historiography or even classics, the 'middle ground' of Byzantine studies appears as conservative as the 'centre ground' of American politics, as viewed from continental Europe.[159] It depends on the

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[154] Note that Kaldellis does not explicitly cite Spiegel at this point in his argument. See Spiegel, 'Middle', 44-56. For relevant uses of Spiegel's model see, K. Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (Abingdon, 2006), esp. 3-4; H. Cipa, *The Making of Selim: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World* (Bloomington, 2017), esp. 22, nn. 97-9.

[155] Spiegel (like the historiographical theorist Quentin Skinner) needs historical context to be non-textual (thus rolling back a core Derridean argument), so that she can use it to contextualise and situate the texts she analyses and to treat them as "material embodiments of situated language-use". Consequently, her project (counterintuitively) demands the (re)separation of history from literature: L. Stone and G. Spiegel, 'History and Post-modernism', *PP* 135 (1992), 203. For a critical dismissal of Spiegel see Munslow, *Deconstructing*, 90-1. On Spiegel see J. Aurell, 'Performative Academic Careers: Gabrielle Spiegel and Natalie Davis', *RH* 13 (2009), 53-64. On Skinner and for debate around this aspect of his work see Q. Skinner, 'The Limits of Historical Explanations', *Philosophy* 41 (1966), 199-215; Q. Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *HT* 8 (1969), 3-53; Q. Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge, 2002), vol. 1. J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Princeton, 1988).

[156] See Pihlainen on appeals to 'moderation' and 'common sense': Pihlainen, 'Reality', 104.

[157] Poststructuralism is presented as an intermediary (if maybe necessary) phase between naïve and critical analysis, just as Paul Ricoeur considered structuralism's function: P. Ricoeur, 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text', *Social Research* 38 (1971), 557-61; Clark, *History*, 55, n. 117.

[158] Jenkins, *Re-thinking*, 40-4.

[159] For an example of a postmodern approach see J. Henderson, 'Tacitus/the World in Pieces', *Ramus* 18 (1989), 167-210. For the effect of his approach on more recent studies see discussion in G. Baroud, *Language and Power in the "Annals" of Tacitus* (Doctoral Thesis for New York University, 2015); H. Haynes, *The History of Make-Believe: Tacitus on Imperial Rome* (Berkley, 2003). For more narratological approaches, influenced by narrativism, see I. Jong, *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide* (Oxford, 2014); I. Jong, 'The Anachronical Structure of Herodotus' *Histories*', in S. Harrison

construction of rhetorical bogeymen, naïve empiricists and excessive/nihilistic postmodernists. However, it shuts down a much wider spectrum of potential epistemologies, which Byzantinists have yet to explore.

This is not to say that all Byzantinists are atheoretical, but simply that approaches to Byzantine historiography and (more often) literature have tended to explore alternative research questions, to those raised by postmodern and narrativist critiques of modern historiographical practice. Indeed, Byzantinists have arguably been at their most theoretical in the study of Byzantine narrative texts as literature, particularly extended fiction, but also hagiography and historiography.[160] Narratological (although predominantly structuralist) theory has been and continues to be applied to a range of Byzantine texts in a variety of innovative ways.[161] However, this narratology has failed to introduce the more narrativist- or postmodern-orientated approach sketched in this introduction. First, Byzantinists have generally pulled back from more extreme arguments of postmodernism, in particular questions relating to the epistemological and ontological quality of 'historical knowledge' have been avoided. The author and (most often) his intention still dominates the meanings that are allocated to Byzantine texts, historiographical or otherwise, as I discuss in a thirteenth-century context below.[162] Structuralist certainties have generally been preferred to the poststructuralist aporias and discontinuities, in a sub-discipline (Byzantine literary

(ed.), *Texts, Ideas, and the Classics* (Oxford 2001), 93-116; I. Jong, 'Narrative Unity and Units', in E. Bakker, *et al.* (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden 2002), 245-66; D. Pausch, *Livius und der Leser: Narrative Strukturen in ab urbe condita* (Munich, 2011); J. Lallot, *et al.* (eds.), *The Historical Present in Thucydides: Semantics and Narrative Functions* (Leiden 2011); J. Grethlein and A. Rengakos (eds.), *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature* (Berlin, 2009), esp. 451-571; S. Hornblower, 'Narratology and Narrative Techniques in Thucydides', in S. Hornblower (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (Oxford 1994), 131-66.

[160] E. Bourbouhakis and I. Nilsson, 'Byzantine Narrative: The Form of Storytelling in Byzantium', in L. James (ed.), *Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), 263-74. Epistolography has also received relatively more theoretical treatment, although rarely as narrative. See M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Aldershot, 1997).

[161] Recently, see the scholarly activity of a project headed by Nilsson, Uppsala University/École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales project, *Text and Narrative in Byzantium* (*Texte et récit à Byzance*), http://www.grekiska.net/byzantine-narrative/ [Accessed 21.01.18].

[162] A. Pizzone, 'The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: A View from Within', in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), esp. 3; M. Mullett, 'In Search of the Monastic Author: Story-Telling, Anonymity and Innovation in the 12th Century', in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Byzantine Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), 171-99. See below 1.5.

criticism) that has always been and remains stalwartly (and unsurprisingly) historicist, even in its most poststructuralist articulation by literary critics, such as Panagiotis Agapitos:[163]

> The second point is the need to use 'Theory', both Byzantine and modern, together with 'History' as complementary methods in the application of literary criticism to Byzantine texts.[164]

Even Agapitos thus endorses Macrides' dichotomy. Second, and probably more importantly for this study, although narratological approaches abound, particularly in the study of the romances, historiographical narrativism has had a limited impact on Byzantine studies, even when modern Byzantine historians have attempted to consider narrative structures in historiographical texts.[165] Recently, Ingela Nilsson has tentatively raised some questions about the epistemological quality of historiographical knowledge.[166] However, she has not pushed the argument regarding the epistemological assumptions, under which contemporary Byzantine historiography operates, preferring to stay on the literary side of Macrides' dividing line and to leave the past to empiricist historians.[167]

There is nothing necessarily wrong with the rejection of postmodern challenges, with pragmatic epistemological compromises, or with pluralistic openness to alternative epistemological choices, provided that they constitute considered responses to a fully-

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[163] See also Mullett, 'New', 37-60; P. Agapitos, 'Is a History of Byzantine Literature Possible?: Questions of Literary Method in a Postmodernist World', Unpublished paper delivered at the Late Antique and Byzantine Seminar, King's College London (17.11.15).

[164] P. Agapitos, 'Literary Criticism', in E. Jeffreys, *et al.* (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 82. Here Agapitos inverts the traditional historiographical instrumentalisation of literature for historiography, making 'history' (equally problematically) into a method of literary criticism. In a thirteenth-century context see his forthcoming article: P. Agapitos, 'Literature and Education in Nicaea: An Interpretative Introduction', in P. Papadopoulou and A. Simpson (eds.) *The Empire of Nicaea Revisited* (Turnhout, in progress). See also P. Agapitos, 'Comments on J. Ljubarskij, *Quellenforschung* and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings', *SO* 73 (1998), 24-9.

[165] For example, P. Agapitos, *Narrative Structure in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances: A Textual and Literary Study of Kallimachos, Belthandros, and Libistros* (Munich, 1991); I. Nilsson, *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' Hysmine and Hysminias* (Uppsala, 2001); M. Mullett, 'Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the Revival of Fiction', in J. Burke, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006), 5. For disambiguation of narratology and narrativism see Bal, *Concepts*, 11.

[166] Nilsson, 'Past', 50; Nilsson, 'Literariness', 27. Note that she references various works by Barthes, Stone, and White. For an earlier period some such questions have been attempted in more earnest by Clark, *History*; 'Vanishes'.

[167] Bourbouhakis and Nilsson, 'Narrative', 263-74.

articulated sceptical postmodernism, accepted as a genuine alternative. I believe that a more fully articulated sceptical postmodernism, rooted in narrativist theory, offers an important opportunity for reading Byzantine texts. However, although it demands a different approach to contemporary empiricism, "*nothing* necessarily follows from the critique of epistemology".[168] Byzantinists might, as I naively hope (following Jenkins and Munslow), create a revolutionary postmodern historiography that is politically progressive and aesthetically experimental.[169] However, they might equally look for methods, by which they might unite the insight of postmodernism with the desire to make epistemological evaluations, either as Spiegel has, through her "cheat", or as Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen has sought to do, by exploring the argumentative and propositional quality of historiographical narratives.[170] Likewise, outright or partial rejection of postmodern and narrativist critiques should not necessarily be dismissed automatically.[171] However, until this conversation has been had in Byzantine studies, rejections of and compromises with postmodernism cannot generate the innovation that it has seen in other disciplinary discourses. Critical approaches, along similar or less postmodern lines, are often accused of attempting "to flog extremely dead horses", of "pushing at an open door", or any number of other metaphorical crimes, yet in contemporary Byzantine studies, as I have argued here and demonstrate below, the horses are alive and kicking, whilst the door remains shut and locked.[172] In this thesis, I offer a number of postmodern, narrativist, and narratological readings of various texts and textual problems for a specific period of Byzantine historiography. I demonstrate that, for us, the thirteenth-century Byzantine past has been discursively constructed by linguistic, narrative, and ideological texts and then point to the problems caused by this core observation, as well as some of the opportunities that it opens up. In so doing, I offer some alternative approaches to 'doing' Byzantine historiography as well as a critical reassessment of contemporary practice.

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[168] M. Roth, 'Classic Postmodernism', *HT* 43 (2004), 375.
[169] Jenkins, *Why*; A. Munslow and R. Rosenstone (eds.), *Experiments in Rethinking History* (New York, 2004), esp. 7-11.
[170] See above 0.3. Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist*.
[171] M. Roth, 'Back to the Future: Postnarrativist Historiography and Analytic Philosophy of History', *HT* 55 (2016), 270-81; Roth, 'Classic'.
[172] J. Winn, 'An Old Historian Looks at the New Historicism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993), 867-8; Jeffreys, 'Comments', 36.

1 – Narrative Discourse

> …take away from historical writing these narrative sentences and what they effect, and you have transformed historical writing into a corpse without a heart.[173]

1.1 – Introduction: Diachronic and non-diachronic historiography

Having presented in general terms both contemporary historiographical practice and my theoretical approach, in this chapter, I shift focus onto thirteenth-century historiography. I introduce the central properties of and problems with the main narrative deployed in modern historiography to present the period between 1204 and 1261, alongside the most important surviving medieval texts, for that narrative, and their treatment by modern historians. I focus here at the level of narrative wholes, before moving into more micro-level analyses in the following chapters.

In the introduction, I used an inclusive definition of narrative discourse, as the content-synthesising/integrative features of textual wholes, so as not to overly restrict the variety of ways in which the past is narrated as historiography.[174] This definition includes both historiography that diachronically narrates 'what happened' in the past in linear and chronological order (so-called *Narrative History*) and historiography that eschews such diachronic narration.[175] Following that definition, neither explicitly Narrative History, nor non-diachronic (supposedly 'non-narrative', 'anti-narrative', 'cross-sectional', 'annalistic', or 'problem-oriented') historiography, can offer pure or unmediated knowledge of the past, since both are equally epistemologically fractured by their linguistic, narrative, and ideological form.[176] Although it is more intuitively obvious that explicitly Narrative History

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[173] Ankersmit, 'Danto', 68.
[174] See below 1.2.
[175] Ankersmit, *Logic*, 15-6. Note that I capitalise Narrative History, to denote this kind of historiography.
[176] Frank Ankersmit has suggested that non-diachronic historiography is his principal concern. See Ankersmit, *Logic*, 16, "narrativist philosophy is *more* interested in the (logical) nature of the linguistic entities we use in discussing the past…than in how the path of a nation or intellectual movement through time should be described." Emphasis added. Note that in postnarrativist philosophy of historiography Narrative Historiography receives almost no attention: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist*. On

is structured by narrative discourse, non-diachronic historiography has also been demonstrated to present, construct, and assign meaning to the past through the same content-synthesising/integrative features.[177] Furthermore, when the detail of supposedly non-diachronic historiography is examined, it becomes clear that even the most stringently 'anti-narrative' text depends on elements of diachronic narration. This is not to say that there are no differences between explicitly Narrative and non-Narrative historiography, but simply that historiographical texts (even at their most extreme) cannot be divided into binary opposites, with different epistemological properties.[178] In this chapter, I focus on the narration of 'what happened' in the thirteenth-century Byzantine past, regardless of the degree to which the text fulfils the criteria of Narrative History (or not).

What scholars believe to have happened in the thirteenth-century Byzantine past underwrites modern historiographical production, in all kinds of texts, from nineteenth-century monographic Narrative Histories to twenty-first-century archaeological reports published as journal articles. In this chapter, (1.2) I start by presenting how the period between 1204 and 1261 has been presented in modern historiography. I argue that, 'what happened' has now become a stable set of 'established facts', which are presented in a

'problem-oriented' historiography see F. Furet, 'From Narrative History to Problem-Oriented History', in G. Roberts (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader* (London, 2001), 269-80.

[177] This has been demonstrated by the deconstructive and narrativist readings of several important classics of supposedly 'anti-narrative' historiography. For narrativist readings see White, *Metahistory*; F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (trans.) S. Reynolds (Berkley, [1949] 1972-3), 2 vols; J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay* (trans.) S. Middlemore (London, [1860] 1965); J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (trans.) F. Hopman (Oxford, [1919] 2009). Indeed, in other contexts the concept has been understood even more broadly, with questions changing from narrative as 'representation' or presentation to questions of ontological narrativity and life as narrative. Indeed this is by no means the broadest academic conception of narrative. See famously R. Barthes, 'Introduction à l'analyse structurale des récits', *Communications* 8 (1966), 1, "international, transhistorique, transculturel, le récit est là, comme la vie. [like life itself, narrative is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural.] For the translation see R. Barthes, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', (trans.) L. Duisit, *New Literary History* 6 ([1966] 1975), 237. Following Barthes see also White, 'Value', 5-6; Nilsson, 'Past', 47. The current growth of cognitive narratology also significantly extends definitions. See Herman, 'Cognitive', 30-43.

[178] This is not to say that such generic markers are not important, as White has argued (albeit with slightly distracting terminology): White, 'Value', 6-7, "a historical discourse that narrates and a discourse that narrativizes, between a discourse that openly adopts a perspective that looks out on the world and reports it and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story".

consistent narrative form. (1.3) I track the genealogy of this modern narrative from its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century beginnings, to the form in which it now dominates modern historiography. (1.4) I then demonstrate that modern historiography has accepted an ideologically-positioned Nikaian-centric narrative as fact, with particular reference to the terminology that underwrites apparently 'objective descriptions' of past happenings. (1.5-6) In the rest of the chapter, I consider the relationship between the modern historiography and the Byzantine texts it has claimed as 'evidence' for past happenings. (1.5) I first examine the most important text for this modern historiographical construct, the *Chronike syngraphe* of George Akropolites, (1.6) before introducing alternative texts that both conflict with and support the *Chronike syngraphe* and the modern narrative. As a whole, this chapter introduces the most relevant medieval texts for this thesis and sets out a wholesale critique of the modern historiography of thirteenth-century Byzantium, preparing the ground for increasingly micro-level analyses in chapters two, three, and four.

1.2 – The modern Nikaian narrative

From the thirteenth to the twenty-first centuries, many texts have been produced which claim as their object of study the Byzantine past between 1204 and 1261.[179] Each text (as well as each reading of it) discursively constructs and presents a different Byzantine past. However, despite their specific variations, these texts present narratives about the period that almost exclusively agree on a set of core elements (chronology, order, characters, events, actions, *etc.*). I have termed this narrative the 'Nikaian narrative', because (as I argue below) it systematically privileges the Nikaian polity and its rulers over all other characters.[180] In this sub-chapter, I present this Nikaian narrative, as it is constructed most commonly in modern historiography.[181] I do so using the linguistic, narrative, and ideological framework

[179] Note that I focus especially on modern historiography explicitly focused on the 'Byzantine' past. On how this intersects with other approaches to the Byzantine historiography of the period see below 1.6.

[180] See below 1.3 and (on characters) 3, esp. 3.5.

[181] Like the Nikaian narrative itself, my presentation is a discursive construct, not just a description. I use it to prefigure my argument, in which I use this presentation as evidence. Consequently here, I not only illustrate the object of my analysis, but also one of the processes, which makes any attempt to maintain historiographical referentiality so problematic.

of modern historiography, although I draw attention to particularly problematic terminology, through the liberal use of signposts, such as inverted commas.

Modern narratives of this period of the Byzantine past generally start with the death of the Byzantine emperor Manuel Komnenos (r. 1143-80).[182] His death is commonly considered to have marked the end of the so-called Komnenian 'revival' or 'renaissance' and heralded the inception of an increasingly unstable period of 'crisis' and 'decline', which culminated in the fall of Constantinople in 1204.[183] The relatively long reigns of Alexios Komnenos (r. 1081-118), John II Komnenos (r. 1118-43), and Manuel Komnenos (r. 1143-80) are contrasted with the rapid turnover of emperors during the twenty-four years between 1180 and 1204, when at least seven different men reigned as emperor in Constantinople.[184] The brutal murder of

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[182] P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. 491-3.
[183] For this narrative of decline from 1180-1204, see M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)* (Oxford, 1975), 9, "Ever since the death of Manuel I Komnenos in 1180 the weaknesses of the Byzantine Empire had become increasingly apparent"; J. Hoffmann, *Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im byzantinischen Reich, 1071-1210: Untersuchungen über Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Kaiser und Reich* (Munich, 1974); C. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West 1180-1204* (Cambridge MA, 1968); C. Holmes, 'Political Historical Survey, 800-1204', in E. Jeffreys, *et al.* (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 273-6; J.-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990), esp. 427-58; A. Savvides, 'Internal Strife and Unrest in Later Byzantium, XIth-XIIIth Centuries (A.D. 1025-1261). The Case of Urban and Provincial Insurrections (Causes and Effects)', *Byzantina symmeitka* 7 (1987), 237-73; S. Karpov and P. Zhavoronkov, 'Особенности социально-экономического и политического развития греческих земель в эпоху политической раздробленности и латинского владычества', in G. Litvarin (ed.), *Культура Византии, XIII - первая половина XV в.* (Moscow, 1991), 12. Economic and numismatic studies also follow a similar trajectory. See M. Hendy, 'Byzantium, 1081-1204: An Economic Reappraisal', *TRHS* 5th series 20 (1970), 31-52; M. Hendy, 'Byzantium, 1081-1204: The Economy Revisited, Twenty Years On' in M. Hendy (ed.), *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and the Coinage of Byzantium* (Northampton, 1989), III, 1-48; A. Laiou and C. Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge, 2007), 155-65. Specifically on terminology of crisis see I. Dujčev, *La crise idéologique de 1203-1204 et ses répercussions sur la civilisation byzantine* (Paris, 1975); M. Mansouri, 'The Social Crisis in Byzantium after the Fourth Crusade, 1203-1204', *Mediterranean World* 22 (2015), 147-53; I. Giarenis, 'The Crisis of the Fourth Crusade in Byzantium (1203-1204) and the Emergence of Networks for Anti-Latin Reaction and Political Action', *Mediterranean World* 43 (2017), 73-80; I. Giarenis, 'Τα κράτη της Νίκαιας, της Ηπείρου και της Τραπεζούντας έως το 1230. Δράση, Αντιπαραθέσεις, Αντοχές και Συμβιβασμοί', in N. Moschonas (ed.), *Η Τέταρτη Σταυροφορία και ο Ελληνικός Κόσμος* (Athens, 2008), 251-67, esp. 251-3; I. Giarenis, 'Η Δ' Σταυροφορία, η άλωση της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως (1204) και η συγκρότηση των κρατών της Τραπεζούντας, της Νικαίας και της Ηπείρου', *Διαλέξεις* 2 (2004), esp. 63-73. Generally see A. Simpson (ed.), *Byzantium, 1180-1204: "The Sad Quarter of a Century"?* (Athens, 2015). For a reflective analysis of modern historiography see A. Simpson, 'Perceptions and Interpretations of the Late Twelfth Century in Modern Historiography', in A. Simpson (ed.), *Byzantium, 1180-1204: "The Sad Quarter of a Century"?* (Athens, 2015), 13-34.
[184] Eight if Constantine Laskaris is included, see below 1.3. On the overemphasis on emperors, see below 3.3.

Manuel's son Alexios II Komnenos (r. 1180-3) by his uncle Andronikos Komnenos (r. 1183-5) and Andronikos' own dismemberment by the Constantinopolitan mob constitute two of the favourite vignettes of historians describing the 'anarchic chaos' of the period.[185] This period of 'chaotic decline' is marked in particular by the political 'fragmentation' of the Byzantine empire, as evidenced by the cessation of Cyprus (1184) and Bulgaria (1185) and the sack of Thessaloniki by the Normans (1185).[186] This series of 'disasters' 'culminated' in the sequence of 'events' that led to the capture of Constantinople by the forces of what historians have traditionally described as the fourth crusade in 1204. Where the various competing narratives of the fourth crusade intersect with more specifically Byzantine historiography, it is generally as an event (that is the capture itself) that 'catalysed', 'compounded', or 'crystallised' the pre-existing trends of 'decline', 'chaos', and 'fragmentation'. However, the extent to which factors 'internal' to the Byzantine empire (in contrast to 'external') were responsible for the capture of the city still dominates much academic debate.[187]

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[185] For example see W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, 1997), 653, 656.
[186] P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge, 2000), 275-315; Brand, *West*, 160-75; M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: A Political History* (London, 1997), 295-315, esp. 304-10; M. Grünbart, 'How to Become an Emperor: The Ascension of Isaakios Komnenos (of Cyprus)', in S. Rogge and M. Grünbart (eds.), *Medieval Cyprus: A Place of Cultural Encounter* (Munich, 2015), 11-27; W. Collenberg, 'L'empereur Isaac de Chypre et sa fille (1155–1207)', *Byzantion* 38 (1968), 123-77; Th. Vlachos, 'Ο τύραννος της Κύπρου Ισαάκιος Κομνηνός (1184-1191)', *Byzantina* 6 (1974), 169-77.
[187] The complex historiography of the fourth crusade itself largely lies beyond the scope of this project. However, to summarise, it has generally been understood in terms of the product of the inevitable "clash of civilisations" (between East and West) as Jonathan Harris has put it, channelling Samuel Huntington, or as some revisionist/apologist western medievalists have argued, as the accident of circumstances. For the core arguments and bibliography see J. Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London, 2006), xiv; S. Runciman, 'Byzantium and the Crusades', in T. Madden (ed.), *The Crusades: The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 2002), 211-20; S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 1951-4), 3 vols; A. Laiou, 'Byzantium and the Crusades in the Twelfth Century: Why was the Fourth Crusade Late in Coming?', in A. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e croisade et ses conséquences* (Paris, 2005), 17-40; D. Queller and T. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1997); T. Madden, 'Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade', *IHR* 17 (1995), 726-43; T. Madden, 'Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade', *IHR* 15 (1993), 441-68; T. Madden, 'Venice's Hostage Crisis: Diplomatic Efforts to Secure Peace with Byzantium between 1171 and 1184', in T. Madden and E. Kittell (eds.), *Medieval and Renaissance Venice* (Urbana, 1999), 96-108; D. Queller and G. Day, 'Some Arguments in Defence of the Venetians on the Fourth Crusade', *AHR* 71 (1976), 717-37. For a middle ground seeking to arbitrate between these two sides see M. Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (Harlow, 2003).

The conquest of Constantinople is presented as resulting in the 'fragmentation' of the Byzantine empire (and with it of the Aegean world).[188] The so-called *partitio Romaniae*, a treaty drawn up by a council of twelve crusaders and twelve Venetians in 1204, is assumed to be the 'actual' blueprint for the division of territory of the Byzantine empire (one-quarter to the new Latin emperor and three-eighths each to the other crusader lords and the Venetians).[189] The practical result of the partition, corroborated by other (less normative) texts, was that the Byzantine empire was partially replaced by the so-called 'Latin empire of Constantinople', alongside a number of other Latin polities, which (at least technically) owed fealty to this empire, including the so-called 'kingdom' of Thessaloniki, 'principality' of Achaia/the Morea, the 'duchy' of Athens and Thebes, the 'county' of Boudonitsa, and the 'duchy' of the Archipelago/Naxos.[190] To these should be added the various territories (generally in economically and strategically important locations), which were claimed by Venice. Their subsequent fate, as well as that of those territories gained later by other Italian city-states, although closely aligned with the Latin 'empire', remained somewhat distinct.[191] During the 'chaos' that followed the fall of Constantinople, two other pre-existing polities, the so-called 'second' Bulgarian 'empire' and Seljuk 'sultanate' of Rum, also participated in

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[188] On the metaphor of fragmentation see below 3.5.

[189] A. Carile, 'Partitio Terrarum Imperii Romanie', *Studi Veneziani* 7 (1965), 125-305; N. Oikonomides, 'La Décomposition de l'empire Byzantin à la veille de 1204 et les origines de l'empire de Nicée: A propos de la *Partitio Romaniae*', in N. Oikonomides, *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade: Studies, Texts, Monuments* (London, 1992), XX, 3-28; G. Tafel and G. Thomas (eds.), *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte de Republik Venedig mit besonderen Beziehungen auf Byzanz und die Levante* (Vienna, 1856), vol. 1, 444-501; C. Brand, 'Partitio Romaniae', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), 1591-2; T. Madden, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople's Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders', in T. Madden (ed.), *The Fourth Crusade: Event, Aftermath, and Perceptions* (Aldershot, 2008), 45-52; M. Kinloch, *A 'Story' of Predestined Polities: Reviewing Nicaea's Anatolian Dominance (c. 1204-14)* (Masters Thesis for the University of Birmingham, 2014), 97-8.

[190] D. Jacoby, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States', in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, 2008), 759-78; N. Tsougarakis, 'The Latins in Greece: A Brief Introduction', in N. Tsougarakis and P. Lock (eds.), *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden, 2015), 1-22; W. Miller, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)* (Cambridge, 1908), 27-48; E. Gerland, *Geschichte des lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel* (Hamburg, 1905); P. Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean: 1204-1500* (London, 1995), 5-7; S. Burkhardt, *Mediterranes Kaisertum und imperiale Ordnungen: das lateinische Kaiserreich von Konstantinopel* (Berlin, 2014).

[191] For up to date bibliography see M. Carr and N. Chrissis (eds.), *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204-1453: Crusade, Religion and Trade Between Latins, Greeks and Turks* (Farnham, 2014).

the 'dismemberment' of the Byzantine empire, expanding into the 'power vacuum' left by the fall of the centralised Byzantine administration.[192]

All these polities have received extensive historiographical treatment by Byzantinists or scholars interested in Byzantium. Indeed, such treatment is unavoidable for any study of the period. Each of these polities has its own historiographical traditions, both in terms of medieval texts and modern scholarship.[193] However, the main focus of Byzantine historiography (narrowly defined) has been on the three variously termed Byzantine, Roman, or Greek polities, which emerged before or soon after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, namely the so-called 'empire' of Nikaia, 'empire' of Trebizond, and 'despotate' of Epiros, which is also briefly referred to as the 'empire' of Thessaloniki (1224-42).[194] These polities, better known as 'successor states', are understood as Byzantine 'governments in exile' and they (alongside their rulers) are the principal characters in the Nikaian narrative, which fundamentally tells a story about how the situation in 1204 (the political 'fragmentation' of Byzantium, the 'foreign occupation' of Constantinople, and the Byzantine 'exile') was 'returned' to the normative model of the pre-1204 Byzantine empire ruled from Constantinople. The culmination of this narrative is therefore the 'reconquest' of Constantinople in 1261 by the forces of the so-called 'empire' of Nikaia. Consequently, the Nikaian polity has been teleologically elevated above its 'rivals', since it was the one to 'recapture' Constantinople.

The story of 'reconquest' is framed by the two falls of Constantinople, which function as beginning (1204) and end (1261). Internally, the Nikaian narrative is principally structured by five 'significant' battles, which organise and narrativise the military and political action that forms the middle of the story.[195] Each battle presents the defeat of one of Nikaia's 'rivals'

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[192] J. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1987), 83; D. Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 2014), 1-2; A. Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία τοῦ βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἠπείρου, 1204-1261* (Athens, 1898), 3; A. Laiou, 'Political Historical Survey, 1204-1453', in E. Jeffreys, *et al.* (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 280.

[193] See below 1.6 and 2.

[194] F. Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessalonike, 1224-1242* (Thessaloniki, 1996); A. Stavridou-Zafraka, 'The Empire of Thessaloniki (1224–1242): Political Ideology and Reality', *Byzantiaka* 19 (1999), 211-22. For an example of this tripartite division see S. Reinert, 'Fragmentation (1204-1453)', in C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002), 251.

[195] See below 2.

and thus moves the Nikain polity closer to 'reconquest' of Constantinople.[196] The story is generally framed in modernist and (free-market) capitalist language of 'competition', as a 'race for Constantinople', between the various Byzantine and other polities. Throughout the telos of the story (Nikaian 'reconquest' in 1261) is never in doubt.

The first of these five 'significant' battles, the so-called battle of Adrianople (1205), saw the Latin and Venetian conquerors defeated by the Bulgarians. The new Latin 'emperor' Baldwin of Flanders (*r.* 1204-5) was killed and with him apparently all possibility that the Latins might replace the old Byzantine empire completely. It functions to 'demonstrate' the fundamental weakness of the so-called Latin 'empire' from its very foundation.[197] After this Latin defeat, the story normally moves to western Anatolia, where (in contrast to the Latin 'empire') the sure foundations of a so-called 'empire in exile' were being laid at Nikaia, where the 'twin pillars' of empire and church were 'resurrected' in 'exile' (*c.* 1204-8).[198] Situated closer to Constantinople than its two more 'peripheral' Byzantine 'rivals' in Epiros and the Pontus, the so-called empire of Nikaia has been seen as profiting most from the 'inherent weakness' of the 'implanted' 'Latin empire'.[199] The second 'important' battle that structures the story is the so-called battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander (1211), in which the Seljuk ruler, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I, was killed.[200] This victory has been seen as 'representing' the moment when the eastern border of the Nikaian 'empire' was secured.[201] In contrast, the Nikaian defeat by the Latins immediately after, at the so-called battle of Poimanenon (1211), which I do not include as one of the five 'significant' battles, is generally

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[196] See below 2.

[197] See below 2.3. The presentation of the Latin 'empire' as weak from its genesis is usefully discussed by F. Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)* (trans.) P. Longbottom (Leiden, 2011), 25. See also Angold, *Crusade*, 129; Angold, *Exile*, 12.

[198] M. Angold, 'Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire', *BMGS* 1 (1975), 50; Angold, *Government*, 9.

[199] The importance of geography is generally assumed rather than actively discussed. At times modern historiographical consensus borders implicitly on geographical determinism. The assumption that Ottoman, rather than another *beylik's*, 'victory' over Byzantium was essentially inevitable offers a comparable historiographical problem that has recently been problematised, see A. Peacock, *et al.*, 'Introduction', in A. Peacock, *et al.* (eds.) *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia* (Aldershot, 2014), 1-20. In contrast see C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (trans.) J. Jones-Williams (London, [1968] 1968); H. Inalcik, 'The question of the emergence of the Ottoman state', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (1981-2), 71-9.

[200] See below 2.4.

[201] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 149-50.

presented as only a temporary setback, the high watermark before the 'reconquest' of the Latin 'occupied' territories.

The Trapezuntines are generally presented as a separable case, more closely associated with the Seljuk and Caucasian worlds than with the 'mainstream' of the Byzantine past 'proper'. As such, the Trapezuntines are rarely presented as truly in the 'race' to 'reconquer' Constantinople. However, Trebizond's 'peripherality' is especially underlined after the so-called fall of Sinope (1214) in which the polity's ruler, Alexios Komnenos, was captured.[202] The loss of Sinope severed the territorial connection between the Trapezuntine and Nikaian 'empires'. Consequently, the fall of Sinope has been presented as the moment when the Trapezuntines were permanently 'cut off' from the Byzantine world and with it from the 'race' for Constantinople.[203]

After these early defeats for Nikaia's most immediate 'rivals', the story is one of steady 'reconquest' to the north and west, which despite fluctuations and temporary setbacks continued throughout the period. The principal 'rival' in this period is seen to be the so-called 'despotate' of Epiros, which after capturing Thessaloniki in 1228 proclaimed itself to be an 'empire'.[204] However soon after this triumph, the Epirots were defeated by the Bulgarians at the so-called battle of Klokotnitsa (1230).[205] The capture and blinding of the Epirot ruler Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas at this battle features amongst the causes presented by historians for the Nikaian 'reconquest' of Thessaloniki (1246) sixteen years later. After Klokotnitsa and the continued expansion of the Nikaian 'empire', no single polity was capable of facing it alone. Consequently, in 1259, a coalition of Latins and Epirots was formed to face the Nikaians in a last ditch attempt to stop their increasing authority. This resulted in their defeat by the Nikaians at the so-called battle of Pelagonia (1259), leaving the way open for the 'reconquest' of Constantinople (1261) and the 're-establishment' of the 'Byzantine empire' in its rightful place on the Bosporus.[206]

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[202] See below 2.5.
[203] M. Angold, 'The Greek Rump States and the Recovery of Byzantium', in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500-1492* (Cambridge, 2008), 737.
[204] Bredenkamp, *Thessalonike*.
[205] D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros* (Oxford, 1957), 110-13. See below 2.6.
[206] See below 2.7.

As I demonstrate in this thesis, this story of 'reconquest' is a linguistic, narrative, and ideological historiographical construct, which discursively presents the past. It is principally textual. However, modern narrative texts are often accompanied by maps which figuratively complement the linguistic narrative.[207] In almost all instances, these maps imply political and military 'fragmentation', by breaking the Aegean landscape into solid blocks dedicated to different polities.[208] However, sometimes multiple maps are provided, which can also reinforce the impression of incremental territorial 'reconquest' by the so-called 'empire' of Nikaia, as its territories increase incrementally with each depiction.[209]

In short, the modern Nikaian narrative constitutes a coherent, complete, and connected narrative whole, structured by three clearly identifiable elements: (beginning) 'fall' of Constantinople (1204), (middle) the 'period of exile' in which the old empire was incrementally 'reconquered' (1204-61), and (end) the 'recapture' of and 'return' to Constantinople (1261). The two conquests of Constantinople are connected in a linear (point-to-point) trajectory, in which 'reconquest' is the privileged transformation, driving the plot. However, there are numerous problems with this construct, which I discuss below, beginning with a consideration of this construct's origins.[210]

1.3 – The form and origins of the Nikaian narrative

The last monographic Narrative History, entirely dedicated to the so-called empire of Nikaia, is Alice Gardner's *The Lascarids of Nicaea: The Story of an Empire in Exile*, published in

[207] Scholars often prepare their own maps for publication, but at conferences they often rely on less academic maps, in which the problems described below are even more pronounced.
[208] A. Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot, 2004), xxii; Angold, *Crusade*, xviii; Angold, *Government*, 243; 281; Angold, 'Rump', 732-3; A. Karpozilos, *The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros (1217-1233)* (Thessaloniki, 1973), 109; V. Barakov, *Градът във Второто българско царство. Раждане, типология и структура* (Veliko Tarnovo, 2015), 60. On the metaphor of fragmentation, see below 3.5.
[209] M. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204-1453* (Philadelphia, 1997), 17-8; D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2006), xviii-xix. Note, for example, that Bartusis contrasts maps of the Aegean in 1215 and 1250 and only the empire of Nikaia is highlighted in black, as well as implicitly presented as *the* Byzantine empire.
[210] See below 1.4.

1912.[211] Gardner's monograph is a textbook example of the Nikaian narrative of 'exile' and 'reconquest', as is made clear from the preface:

> This particular episode – of a renowned Empire temporarily ousted from its rightful abode, recuperating its forces abroad, and finally recovering its own again, in virtue of its actual superiority over its rivals – has, I may say, always been attractive to me since, in early youth, I read **the story** in the pages of Gibbon.[212]

Gardner's story has the beginning, middle, and end of the modern Nikaian narrative of reconquest, described above. Furthermore, she explicitly conceives of her subject not as *a* story of recuperation and recovery, but as *the* story, a unity partially inherited from Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published in 1776-89.[213] Gardner delivers on the promise to tell Gibbon's story, albeit in a considerably augmented fashion.[214] Gardner emulated Gibbon in almost exclusively focusing on the reconquests of what he had called "the Greek Emperors of Nice".[215] In Gardner's narrative, as in Gibbon's, 'reconquest' defined a narrative that functioned principally to link 1204 to 1261, as can be seen clearly in Gibbon's presentation of the reign of John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes:

> In the decline of the Latins, I have briefly exposed the progress of the Greeks; the prudent and gradual advances of a conqueror, who, in a reign of thirty-three years, rescued the provinces from national and foreign usurpers, till he pressed on all sides the Imperial city, a leafless and sapless trunk, which must fall at the first stroke of the axe.[216]

As well as Gibbon, Gardner drew on a monograph published in 1898, by Antonios Meliarakes, entitled "*Ἱστορία τοῦ βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἠπείρου, 1204-1261* [*History of the Empire of Nikaia and the Despotate of Epiros, 1204-1261*]", which she described as "a most useful guide to the subject".[217] The inclusion of the 'despotate' of Epiros alongside the 'empire' of Nikaia, in Meliarakes' work, was a consequence of his nineteenth-

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[211] This was explicitly acknowledged as a core justification for a forthcoming (and importantly) collected volume. P. Papadopoulou and A. Simpson (eds.), *The Empire of Nicaea Revisited* (Turnhout, in progress).
[212] A. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea* (London, 1912), vii. Emphasis added.
[213] E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, [1776-89] 1906), vol. 11., 54-68.
[214] On augmentation see below 4.1.
[215] The exclusive focus on the so-called empire of Nikaia was observed by Anthony Bryer, with particular reference to omission of Trebizond. A. Bryer, 'Gibbon and the later Byzantine Empires', in R. McKitterick and R. Quinault (eds.), *Edward Gibbon and Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), 105.
[216] Gibbon, *Decline*, vol. 11., 55.
[217] Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία*; Gardner, *Lascarids*, 310.

century (modern) Greek nationalism, which also saw him claim Skanderbeg as 'Greek', rather than 'Slavic'.[218] However, even the fuller inclusion of Epiros did not prevent Meliarakes from principally narrating the same story of Nikaian 'reconquest' found in Gardner and even Gibbon, just as the fuller incorporation of the Latin polities into 'Byzantine' historiography failed to fundamentally transform numerous other Narrative Histories.[219] The texts of Gibbon, Gardner, and Meliarakes are not the full canon, but are both a representative sample and the most consistently cited texts in the next generation of historiography, which from the early-nineteenth-century started to eschew wholesale diachronic Narrative History.[220] This revisionist tendency can be seen most clearly in Michael Angold's seminal study, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)*, which although published in 1975 remains highly influential today.[221] By way of an introduction Angold summarised 'what happened', before moving on to his principal topic, a detailed study of administration and government. At that point, he explicitly rejected what he called "narrative treatment":

> The problem of how the Byzantine legacy was preserved during the period of exile and of how the emperors and patriarchs of Nicaea attempted to give a degree of unity to the fragments of the fallen Byzantine Empire, in short, of how the Empire of Nicaea fared as the successor of Byzantium, provides the general context of this study, but its main purpose is more specific. It is to examine the fate of the Byzantine legacy in government during the period of exile…This is not a theme that lends itself to a straightforward **narrative treatment**. In any case, there have been a number of good narrative histories of the period of exile.[222]

However, despite his rejection, Angold sketched both here and in the rest of his introduction the central elements of the Nikaian narrative.[223] More importantly, he explicitly noted his dependence on previous "good narrative histories of the period of exile". Here Angold cited

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[218] A. Meliarakes, *Ολίγαι λέξεις περί της καταγωγής του Σκενδέρμπεη* (Athens, 1876). See below 1.3. On the intersection of this historiography and modern nationalisms see below 1.4.
[219] For the prioritisation of Nikaia over Epiros see below 1.4. For example see C. Beau, *Histoire du bas-empire, commençant a Constantin-le-gràND* (Paris, 1820), vol. 10; Miller, *Latins*; K. Hopf, *Geschichte Griechenlands im Mittelalter* (Leipzig, 1867-8), 2 vols; Gerland, *Kaiserreiches*. On the Nikaian narrative's relationship with Narrative Histories of the Latin polities see below 1.5. Note that some of the earlier French treatments of the Latin polities are filtered by nineteenth-century nationalist discourses of their own.
[220] See above 1.1.
[221] Angold, *Exile*.
[222] Angold, *Exile*, 2-3. Emphasis added.
[223] Angold, *Exile*, 1-33.

the monographs of Meliarakes and Gardner, as well as an article by Donald Nicol (which I discuss below).[224] For Angold, these three texts had essentially already established *the* narrative of the period of exile. The Nikaian narrative thus both prefaces his study in a reduced form and underpins it at a more fundamental level, as the intellectual and conceptual foundation of his research. I have singled out Angold, because he explicitly acknowledges his dependence, but the same phenomenon can be seen in Hélène Ahrweiler's study of the region of Smyrna, which (like Angold's monograph) sought to deemphasise the Byzantine 'Narrative' texts in favour of 'documentary evidence', but which is also prefaced and underwritten by the Nikaian narrative.[225] Although often found in historiographical works, these narratives often preface art historical, architectural, and archaeological scholarship.[226] However, alongside prefatory summaries of the Nikaian narrative, explicit Narrative History has survived in standalone articles in larger diachronic survey and reference works. One such article by Donald Nicol, cited by Angold, alongside Gardner and Meliarakes' texts is particularly illustrative, because the series of Cambridge medieval histories in which it appeared has gone through several iterations between 1923 and 2008, all of which present reasonably homogenous narratives, that correspond to the Nikaian narrative illustrated above.[227] Other similar publications, such as the relevant chapters of *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, *Le Monde byzantin* [*The Byzantine World*], and *Культура Византии* [*Byzantine Culture*], mirror the Cambridge histories in presenting remarkably

[224] Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία*; Gardner, *Lascarids*; D. Nicol, 'The Fourth Crusade and the Greek and Latin Empires, 1204-1261', in J. Hussey, *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1966), vol. 4, 275-330.

[225] H. Ahrweiler, 'L'Histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations Turques (1081-1317), particulièrement au XIIIe siècle', *Travaux et Mémoires* 1 (1965), 4-11, esp. 7-9. This is especially noteworthy given her extended period of study and her explicitly localist scope.

[226] For example, see Angelov, *Ideology*, 2-3; C. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 2014), 1.

[227] Nicol's article can be compared with four other articulations in various versions of *The Cambridge Medieval History*. These four summaries, written in 1923, 1966, 1999, and 2008, illustrate the core content and remarkable homogeneity: W. Miller, 'The Empire of Nicaea and the Recovery of Constantinople' in J. Bury, *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge Medieval History, IV* (Cambridge, 1923), 473-516; Nicol, 'Fourth'; M. Angold, 'Byzantium in Exile', in D. Abulafia (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1999), 525-42; Angold, 'Rump'. Note that the two articles by Angold are duplicates and appeared alongside duplicates regarding the Latin polities. D. Jacoby, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States in Greece', in D. Abulafia (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1999), 525-42; Jacoby, 'Latin', 759-78.

stable versions of the modern Nikaian narrative, regardless of linguistic and scholarly traditions.[228]

In short, although it still underpins scholarship, the diachronic narration of the period between 1204 and 1261 is now largely confined to introductions and standalone chapters in wider diachronic surveys. From this analysis of modern scholarship, it is apparent that my reduced presentation of the modern Nikaian narrative is more illustrative of historiographical orthodoxy today than it has ever been, because (explicitly) diachronic Narrative History has long gone out of fashion.[229] It is not that modern historians no longer narrate 'what happened', but that such narration is seldom perceived to be an end in itself, having acquired the reputation of being an outdated, uncritical, and populist form.[230] In the study of all periods of Byzantine historiography, Narrative Histories have been replaced by other types of monographic study, more likely to focus on specific themes, characters, authors, or texts, than to attempt to narrate 'what happened' in any given period and place.[231] Even the self-declared bastions of single-authored monographic Narrative History, Steven Runciman and Donald Nicol, were aware of the 'anti-Narrative' turn. For example, Nicol commented sourly, although not without some reactionary relish, in a preface to his synthesis of late Byzantine historiography that "[t]his kind of historiography may now be out of date".[232] As Runciman and Nicol predicted, linear monographic Narrative History has not only ceded its primacy, but has almost entirely vanished from twentieth- and twenty-

[228] Reinert, 'Fragmentation', 248-83; C. Morrisson, 'La quatrième croisade et la nouvelle organisation politique (1204-1258)', in C. Morrisson and A. Laiou (eds.), *Le Monde Byzantin* (Paris, 2011), vol. 3, 3-11; Karpov and Zhavoronkov, 'социально-экономического', 12-45.
[229] On this generally see the debate surrounding Lawrence Stone's claims of a narrative revival in the late 1970s: L. Stone, 'The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History', *PP* 85 (1979), 1-23. In contrast see E. Hobsbawm, 'The Revival of Narrative: Some Comments', *PP* 86 (1980), 3-8. Interestingly it also prompted Peter Lock in his writing of a narrative history of Latin *Romania*: Lock, *Franks*, 32, n. 55.
[230] See above 1.1.
[231] For example, see R. Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 2007); Papaioannou, *Psellos*; Kaldellis, *Procopius*; M. Jeffreys and M. Lauxtermann, *The Letters of Psellos: Cultural Network and Historical Realities* (Oxford, 2017); A. Eastmond, *Tamta's World: The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia* (Cambridge, 2017).
[232] Runciman, *Crusades*, vol. 1, xi-xiii; D. Nicol, *The End of the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1979), 9.

first-century Byzantine studies, despite inklings of revisionism.[233] Consequently, separated off and summarised, 'what happened' in this period has not only become synonymous with a compact modern Nikaian narrative, but in the process become unproblematic, mere 'context' for other types of analysis.

1.4 – The Nikaian metanarrative

Today the modern Nikaian narrative has become the unproblematic statement of 'what happened' between 1204 and 1261. In an epistemological sleight of hand, this (linguistic, narrative, and ideological) historiographical construct has come to be treated as the thirteenth-century past itself. However, in historiography, unlike the past, events have already been endowed with meaning. This meaning is determined principally by the requirements of the narrative, rather than the qualities of the events themselves.[234] Thus, in the modern Nikaian narrative, events are both forced into roles required by the narrative and deemed more or less meaningful (that is important or significant), depending on how they relate to it. For example, in the modern Nikaian narrative, the capture of Constantinople in 1204 is made the beginning of a narrative of 'exile' and 'reconquest', although it could just as easily be made meaningful as the end of a narrative about the fourth crusade. Furthermore, the capture of Constantinople is allocated importance, because of its inaugural role within the narrative, just as other events are deemed to be more or less important, depending on their relationship with the narrative, rather than any intrinsic quality of the event. For example, the importance of battles has come to be determined principally by the extent to which they make the narrative's telos (the 'recapture' of Constantinople in 1261) more or less likely.[235] In other words, the modern Nikaian narrative systematically orders the allocation of meaning to action. While I have used the term *Nikaian narrative* to describe the accepted modern narrative about 'what happened' in the period between 1204 and 1261, it is useful to distinguish it (terminologically) from the totalizing narrative schema that the modern Nikaian narrative has created through the systematic allocation of meaning to action. Borrowing from the postmodern philosopher Jean-François

[233] It remains to be seen how successful Kaldellis' recent attempt to challenge this *status quo* will be: Kaldellis, *Streams*, esp. xxviii-xxix.
[234] See above 0.2.
[235] See below 1.4 and 2.

Lyotard, I call this totalizing narrative schema the *Nikaian metanarrative*.[236] I, like Lyotard, use the term *metanarrative* to describe ideological assumptions (and claims) that have been worked into the fabric of how the past is historicised and narrated, and in the process assigned meaning. Lyotard principally applied it to universalist narrative schemas, such as modernist projects of social progress and knowledge totalisation.[237] However, metanarrative proves a useful heuristic to rethink less universalist, yet (in their own sphere) equally totalising narratives about knowledge, meaning, and the past, such as that found in thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography. The Nikaian narrative and metanarrative are mutually-dependent, inextricable, and self-reinforcing.[238] However, I find this bipartite division heuristically useful in referring to different elements of this complex phenomenon.

The Nikaian polity and its rulers are the most privileged characters in the prevailing (Nikaian) narrative and metanarrative, since both events and meaning revolves around that polity's success in 'recapturing' Constantinople it 1261.[239] The importance allocated to this specific telos is founded on a set of normative assumptions about what the Byzantine empire should look like. These assumptions are drawn from the study of a polity understood to stretch from 324 to 1453. Chief amongst them is the expectation that the natural state of the eastern Mediterranean is to be ruled as a single unified territorial polity centred on Constantinople. The period between 1204 and 1261 does not fit this normative model. However, instead of amending the model to include the alternative Byzantine political and spatial configuration, found between 1204 and 1261, this period has been considered anomalous or simply ignored, as it is by Cyril Mango in the introduction to his *Oxford History of Byzantium*:

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[236] Lyotard, *Condition*. Note that by metanarrative I do not mean the comment by a narrator on narration, as it is sometimes used in narratology. See A. Nünning, 'On Metanarrative: Towards a Definition, a Typology and an Outline of the Functions of Metanarrative Commentary', in J. Pier (ed.), *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology* (Berlin, 2005), 11-57.

[237] Skepticism of such metanarrative constructs is a central tenet or even the defining feature, as Lyotard argued, of postmodernism: J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children* (trans.) J. Pefanis and M. Thomas (Sydney, 1992), 29; Lyotard, *Condition*, xxiv. See also Jenkins, *Why*, 35-89, esp. 71-89.

[238] Ankersmit pushes this point by arguing that "[t]here is no intrinsic difference between speculative systems and history proper; they are *used* in different ways. Speculative systems are used as *master-narratives* to which other narratives should conform": Ankersmit, *Tropology*, 37.

[239] On characters see below 3.

> About a thousand years after its foundation Byzantium was chosen by Constantine the Great as his imperial residence (AD 324) and renamed *Constantinopolis nova*… Constantinople proved a lasting success and was to remain 'the Reigning City' for the next eleven centuries, not counting another five under the Ottoman sultans.[240]

For Mango, this normative vision is so strong that even 'imperial' Ottoman rule is more Byzantine than the 'fragmented' period of Latin rule in Constantinople, which is simply ignored.[241]

Consequently, the modern historiography of the period (1204-61) has focused on describing and explaining how this normative organisation of a single unified territorial polity centred on Constantinople was once again 'restored' to the eastern Mediterranean. It does so through the organising principal of 'reconquest', also called 'recovery', 'restoration', 'release', 'recapture', 'return', 'liberation', and so on. Reconquest and its various cognates are ubiquitous in modern scholarship of all languages and sub-disciplines:[242]

> ...das Reich **wiederherzustellen**... [...**to restore** the empire...][243]
>
> …the **recovery** of Constantinople by the Greeks…[244]

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[240] C. Mango, 'Introduction', in C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002), 1.
[241] Similarly, Angeliki Laiou has argued that the eastern Mediterranean naturally focused on Constantinople and that, consequently, the period of Ottoman rule was more normal than that which followed 1204: A. Laiou, 'Byzantium and the Neighbouring Powers: Small-State Polities and Complexities', in S. Brooks (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New Haven, 2006), 49. For a dissenting perspective see T. Shawcross, 'Conquest Legitimized: The Making of a Byzantine Emperor in Crusader Constantinople (1204-1261)', in J. Harris, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World After 1150* (Oxford, 2012), 181-220. For discussion of this dissent see below 1.4 and 1.6.
[242] For just a few more examples see D. Geneakoplos, 'The Byzantine Recovery of Constantinople from the Latins in 1261: A Chrysobull of Michael VIII Palaeologus in Favor of Hagia Sophia', in F. Church and T. George (eds.), *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History* (Leiden, 1979), 104-17; Miller, 'Recovery', 478-516; M. Angold, 'Turning Points in History: The Fall of Constantinople', *BS* 71 (2013), 23; A.-M. Talbot, 'The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII', *DOP* 47 (1993), 243-61; Bartusis, *Army*, 12, 23, 31-3, 36, 38, 40-1, 43, 49-50, 52, 64, 66, 70, 158, 189, 195, 208, 303-4, 342; Tricht, *Renovatio*, 7, 10, 25; C. Chapman, *Michel Paléologue, restaurateur de l'Empire byzantin (1261-1282)* (Paris, 1926); Lock, *Franks*, 7, 92. For the casual use of reconquest in other contexts (eleventh-century Anatolia and the Levant and twelfth-century Ani) see M. Mullett, '1098 and All That: Theophylact Bishop of Semnea and the Alexian Reconquest of Anatolia', *Peritia* 10 (1996), 237-52; K. Ciggar and M. Metcalf (eds.), *East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean: Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality* (Leuven, 2006); A. Eastmond, '"Local" Saints, Art, and Regional Identity in the Orthodox World after the Fourth Crusade', *Speculum* 78 (2003), 734.
[243] Akropolites, 'Studien', 463. Emphasis added.
[244] Nicol, *Despotate*, 186. Emphasis added.

> …στήν **ἀπελευθερωμένη** Κωνσταντινούπολη τό 1261 …[245] […in the **liberated** Constantinople in 1261…]
>
> …der **Rückeroberung** Konstantinopels… […the **reconquest** of Constantinople…][246]
>
> La **reconquête** de Constantinople en 1261…[247] [The **reconquest** of Constantinople in 1261…]
>
> It could only be a matter of time before his armies **recovered** Constantinople.[248]
>
> …после **освобождения** Константинополя в 1261 г.…[249] […after the **liberation** of Constantinople in 1261…]
>
> …the Byzantines **reclaimed** Constantinople. But the **reconquest** came at a great cost…[250]

Despite its ubiquity, scholars have not explicitly argued that 'reconquest' provides a useful concept for the presentation and explanation of the happenings of this period. Instead, it has been simply assumed as if it were a natural and neutral way of describing events. However, this only makes sense within the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative.'Reconquest' should not be accepted as if it were natural, but should instead be recognised as fundamentally positioned and value-laden, as the metanarrative itself is. The 're' prefix implies either repetition or movement backwards.[251] Consequently, behind any statement of reconquest lies an ideological claim to both correspondence and continuity between that which previously ruled and was conquered (the pre-1204 Byzantine empire) and that which then did the (re)conquering (the Nikaian polity). Modern descriptions of 'reconquest', therefore implicitly accept medieval claims to be the legitimate inheritors of the old Byzantine empire. Such claims are most often (as I show) Nikaian. Consequently, scholars equate the Nikaians

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[245] A. Panagiotou (trans.), *Χρονική συγγραφή, Γεώργιος Ακροπολίτης: εισαγωγή, μετάφραση, σχόλια* (Athens, 2003), 14. Emphasis added.
[246] E. Mitsiou, *Untersuchungen zu Wirtschaft und Ideologie im "Nizänischen" Reich* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Vienna, 2006), lxxxi. Emphasis added.
[247] C. Giros, 'Constantinople et les grands monastères provinciaux sous les premiers Paléologues', *ACSHM* 36 (2006), 242. Emphasis added.
[248] Angold, 'Rump', 749. Emphasis added.
[249] K. White, 'Взаимоотношения Византии и Иконийского султаната в Правление Михаила VIII Палеолога (1259-1282 гг.)', *Материалы по археологии и истории античного и средневекового Крыма* 3 (2011), 304. Emphasis added.
[250] Hilsdale, *Decline*, 1. Emphasis added.
[251] Also developed, slightly differently, by Julia Kristeva in relation to revolt as renewal: J. Kristeva, *Revolt, She Said* (trans.) Brian O'Keeffe (Los Angeles, 2002).

with *the* Byzantines, the Nikaian polity with *the* Byzantine empire, and the Nikaian ruler with *the* Byzantine emperor:[252]

> ...**Wiedereroberung** des Rhomäerreiches... [...**reconquest** of the Roman empire...][253]
>
> …paved the way for the **restoration** of the Byzantine Empire…freeing the hands of Michael Palaeologos for the task of **recovering** Constantinople.[254]
>
> Νίκαια και Ήπειρος τον 13ο αιώνα. Ιδεολογική αντιπαράθεση στην προσπάθειά τους να **ανακτήσουν** την αυτοκρατορία[255] [Nikaia and Epirus in the 13th century: Ideological confrontation in their effort to **recover** the empire]
>
> Theodore II Dukas Laskaris (1222-1258) was the third and last Laskarid emperor to govern the Byzantine state in its exile **at Nicaea**.[256]
>
> It was an important step before the **recovery** of the imperial city of Constantinople in the possession of the Nicaean Empire and the **revival** of the Eastern Roman Empire.[257]
>
> …the events and celebrations that took place in Constantinople in 1261, upon the **return** of the Byzantine emperor to the traditional capital of his state.[258]
>
> La ville qu'ont **reconquise** les Byzantins en 1261 était dans un état lamentable.[259] [The city **reconquered** by the Byzantines in 1261 was in a sorry state.]
>
> …его **реконкиста** византийцами спустя 57 лет…[260] […its **reconquest** by the Byzantines after 57 years…]
>
> …the **re-established** Byzantine Empire…[261]

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[252] Note, for example, that Michael Angold describes the Nikaian polity as just "*a* government in exile", although he treats it implicitly as *the* government in exile: Angold, *Exile*.
[253] A. Heisenberg, 'Studien zur Textgeschichte des Georgios Akropolites', *Programm des Kgl. Humanistischen Gymnasiums zu Landau* (Landau, 1894), 5. Emphasis added.
[254] D. Geanakoplos, 'Greco-Latin Relations on the Eve of the Byzantine Restoration: The Battle of Pelagonia-1259', *DOP* 7 (1953), 135. Emphasis added.
[255] A. Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ήπειρος τον 13ο αιώνα. Ιδεολογική αντιπαράθεση στην προσπάθειά τους να ανακτήσουν την αυτοκρατορία* (Thessaloniki, 1990). Emphasis added.
[256] S. Georgiopoulou, *Theodore II Dukas Laskaris (1222-1258) as an Author and an Intellectual of the XIIIth Century* (Doctoral Thesis for Harvard University, 1990), abstract. Emphasis added.
[257] R. Mihajlovski, 'The Battle of Pelagonia, 1259: A New Look at the March Route and Topography', *BS* 64 (2006), 275. Emphasis added.
[258] K. Zafeiris, *The Synopsis Chronike and its Place in the Byzantine Chronicle Tradition: Its Sources (Creation – 1081 CE)* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of St Andrews, 2007), 1. Emphasis added.
[259] A. Laiou, 'Constantinople sous les Paléologues', in C. Morrisson and A. Laiou (eds.), *Le Monde Byzantin* (Paris, 2011), vol. 3, 131. Emphasis added.
[260] M. Demintsev, 'Травмы у людей в Византии XIII века', *Вестник Тюменского государственного университета* 2 (2014), 29.
[261] Giarenis, 'Crisis', 80. Emphasis added.

Through these types of presentation, it is not just that the Nikaians become the Byzantines after 1204, by fulfilling some criterion for 'true Byzantine-ness' by holding Constantinople, but rather that they were teleologically always already the true heirs of Byzantium. The pseudo-neutral presentation of the period (1204-61) in terms of 'reconquest' weaves ideologically-positioned meaning into the basic narration of events. The Nikaian polity, people, and rulers are sanctioned as the legitimate inheritors of the old Byzantine empire.

This mode of presenting Nikaian conquest, is underpinned by attestations of terms such as ἀναγείρω [rebuild], ἀνορθόω [restore], and ἀνάρρυσις [recovery] in the Nikaian texts, both narrative and rhetorical.[262] However, unlike the consistent narrative of 'reconquest' constructed throughout the period, the presentation of Constantinople and the degree to which its conquest (let alone 'reconquest') was presented as an objective transformed during the period, being most commonly attested both immediately after 1204 and again after 1261, but declining in frequency from the 1230s until 1261.[263] However, leaving aside the discrepancy between the fluctuating medieval and the constant and simplified modern conception of 'reconquest', it is necessary to question the criteria on which continuity and correspondence has been justified. These criteria might (rather simplistically) be divided into three major categories: *identity* (religious, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, *etc.* continuity), *practical* (continued use of pre-existing structures of governance, such as regional and fiscal), and

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[262] For example see L. Tartaglia (ed.), *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris, Opuscula Rhetorica* (Munich, 2000), 53.693-6, "καὶ δόρατί τε καὶ φασγάνῳ καὶ εὐβουλίᾳ καὶ ἀγχινοίᾳ τὸν ἀρχαῖον ὅρον ἡμῶν **ἀνήγειρε** καὶ **ἀνώρθωσε**, καὶ τρόπαιον ἀρετῶν ἀνεστήσατο· [and by spear and sword and good-counsel and shrewdness he **rebuilt** and **restored** our old boundary, and erected a trophy of virtues.]" First published as L. Tartaglia (ed. and trans.), *Teodoro II Duca Lascari, Encomio dell'Imperatore Giovanni Duca: Testo critico, introduzione, traduzione e note* (Naples, 1990); A. Dmitrievsky (ed.), *Описание литургических рукописей* (Kiev, 1895-1901), vol. 1, 771; G. Dennis, '*Auxentios*: *Typikon* of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of the Archangel Michael on Mount Auxentios near Chalcedon', in J. Thomas and A. Hero (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Washington DC, 2000), vol. 3, 1216, "τῆς δε καὶ βασιλίδος τῶν πόλεων ἐκ τῆς ἰταλικῆς τυραννίδος **ἀνάῤῥυσιν** [the **recovery** of the famous, the very queen of cities from Italian tyranny]".

[263] L. Delobette, 'Oublier Constantinople? L'Éloge de Nicée par Théodore II Lascaris', *ACSHM* 36 (2006), 365-72, esp. 365, "Chose inconcevable dans les premiers temps de l'exil, la reconquête de Constantinople ne paraît plus une ardente obligation. [An inconceivable thing in the early days of exile, the reconquest of Constantinople no longer seems an ardent obligation.]"; N. Chrissis, 'Paradise Lost or Negligent Shepherd? Constantinople and Byzantine Identity after 1204', in D. Dželebdžić and S. Bojanin (ed.), *Proceedings of the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Belgrade, 22-27 August 2016: Thematic Sessions of Free Communications* (Belgrade, 2016), 596; H. Ahrweiler, 'L'Expérience nicéenne', *DOP* 29 (1975), 21-40.

claimed (explicit and implicit claims to continuity).[264] The Nikaian polity might be said to fulfil these categories, but so too do numerous other polities, throughout the south-Balkan, Aegean, and Anatolian world. Not only 'Byzantine' (the so-called empire of Trebizond and despotate of Epiros) polities, but also 'non-Byzantine' (Latin, Seljuk, Serbian, and Bulgarian) polities could be said to fulfil these criteria too. Of course, claims to continuity each have regional vocabularies and media, be they architectural, rhetorical, titular, linguistic, artistic, or historiographical.[265] For example, the architectural articulation of Epirot, Trapezuntine, and Nikaian imperial claims through secular- and church-building in the early thirteenth-century, express continuity differently to the Seljuk imitation of/allusion to Constantinople in the town planning of their capital in Konya.[266] Similarly, the (re)adoption by the so-called second Bulgarian empire of the so-called first Bulgarian empire's imperial claims to power over the Bulgarians and Romans in the thirteenth-century polity, differ from Latin claims to imperial authority aimed at both their Greek- and Latin-speaking subjects, Seljuk claims to power over Rum, as well as Nikaian, Epirot, and Trapezuntine claims to Roman imperial continuity.[267] As these various examples suggest, correspondence (although different in each case) can be constructed between the old Byzantine empire and any number of polities, depending on the narrative in which such 'facts' as modern historians construct are emplotted.[268] However, rather than starting from even such loose criteria as those sketched above, modern historians have begun by taking Nikaia as the gold-standard and working backwards from a teleologically conception of what correspondence ought to look like.

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[264] Note that I use these categories loosely and understand identity to be socially constructed.
[265] Both due to preference for specific media and the haphazard survival of texts and material culture.
[266] S. Georgiadou, *Architecture and Statehood in Late Byzantium: A Comparative Study of Epiros and Trebizond* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Illinois, 2015); B. Osswald, 'From *Lieux de Pouvoir* to *Lieux de Mémoire*: The Monuments of the Medieval Castle of Ioannina through the Centuries', in G. Hálfdanarson (ed.), *Discrimination and Tolerance in Historical Perspective* (Pisa, 2008), 187-99; H. Buchwald, 'Lascarid Architecture', in *JÖB* 28 (1979), 263-96; S. Redford, 'The Laskarids and the Seljuks: Material Cultural Evidence for Contact and Exchange', Unpublished paper delivered at the KCL Late Antique and Byzantine Seminar (26.01.16). On more general cross-fertilisation in material culture and architecture see S. Redford, 'Anatolian Seljuk Palaces and Gardens', in M. Featherstone, *et al.* (eds.), *The Emperor's House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism* (Berlin, 2015), 231-42.
[267] D. Korobeinikov, ''The King of the East and the West': The Seljuk Dynastic Concept and Titles in the Muslim and Christian Sources', in A. Peacock and S. Yıldız (eds.), *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London, 2013), 68-90. See below 1.6.
[268] See below 1.6.

The narrative and metanarrative logic of 'reconquest' is bound up in a host of interconnected assumptions, which contribute to and depend upon the teleological Nikaian-centric historiography of the period, between 1204 and 1261. Central to this Nikaian-centrism is the historiographical and terminological presentation of the relationships between the various so-called 'successor states'. In modern historiography, the polity that formed in Bithynia in 1204 is almost exclusively referred to in imperial terms as 'the empire of Nikaia' or 'the Nikaian empire', while its ruler is referred to as an 'emperor'. However, other polities are either less consistently or never described as imperial. Consequently, even before any analysis, titulature legitimises the Nikaian polity, whilst subordinating others. The polity that was created in Epiros in the early thirteenth century and that came to include much of central Greece and Macedonia, including Thessaloniki, has generally been described as the 'despotate of Epiros'.[269] This implicitly subordinates Epiros to Nikaia, because despot [δεσπότης] is an inferior rank to emperor [βασιλεύς] in Byzantine hierarchies of officials.[270] However, the term despot was only used by the rulers of the polity in the late thirteenth century. Consequently, in the 1970s, scholars demonstrated that describing this polity as a despotate from its foundation in 1204 was both erroneous and misleading.[271] However, although most scholars working directly on the Epirot polity have used alternative terms or registered their scepticism of the term despotate, for instance by framing it in quotation marks, many scholars (including most less specialised academics) still refer to the despotate of Epiros as if it were an unproblematic descriptor of the polity.[272]

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[269] This use of the term is obvious in the defining book of the early Epirot polity published in 1957. Nicol, *Despotate of Epiros*. See also the title of Meliarakes' monograph, "*Ἱστορία τοῦ βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἠπείρου, 1204-1261*".

[270] J. Verpeaux, *Traité des offices* (Paris, 1966), 133f; R. Macrides, *et al.* (trans.), *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies* (Farnham, 2013), 27.

[271] Although it was known as a despotate in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the application of this term to the early thirteenth century was thoroughly discredited by mostly French scholars. Even Nicol accepted the critique and withdrew his use for the earlier period in his later work. R. Loenertz, 'Aux origines du despotat d'Épire et de la principauté d'Achaïe', *Byzantion* 43 (1973), 360-94; R. Guilland, 'Recherches sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin: Le despote, δεσπότης', *RÉB* 17 (1959), 52-89; Karpozilos, *Controversy*; B. Ferjančić, *Деспоти у Византији и Јужнословенскимн* (Belgrade, 1960), 49-88; L. Stiernon, 'Les origines du despotat d'Épire: À propos d'un livre récent', *RÉB* 17 (1959), 90-126; D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479* (Cambridge, 1984), 2.

[272] The older the scholarship the more likely to use the term. However, the term is still attested in contemporary historiography: A. Laiou, 'Introduction', in A. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IVe Croisade et ses consequences* (Paris, 2005), 11; Reinert,

Most change their terminology, at least partially, when referring to the polity, after it expanded enough to incorporate Thessaloniki in 1224. After the capture of Thessaloniki, the Epirot ruler (Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas) had himself proclaimed and anointed as emperor by the archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatenos.[273] After this point scholars tend to refer to the polity as an empire, distinguishing between the 'despotate of Epiros' (1204-24), the 'empire of Thessaloniki' (1224-46), and then the 'despotate of Epiros' (1246-1479).[274] In so doing scholars prioritise the (self-)designations of polities found in near-contemporary texts over all other factors, such as the size or form of the polity.[275] However, even if this were a justifiable logical leap, it has been applied inconsistently by modern historians. As I have shown, scholars still refer to the pre-1224 polity as a despotate. However, more interestingly they fail to call the pre-1205/8 Nikaian polity a despotate, despite a defining feature of early 'Nikaian' claims to imperial continuity and legitimacy being its founder's title of despot, given to Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris by one of the last emperors of Constantinople, Alexios III Angelos-Komnenos-Doukas.[276] Thus, until at least

'Fragmentation', 251; Angold, 'Rump', 732-3; L. James (ed.), *Companion to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2010), xxiii; A. Cameron, *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton, 2014), 50.

[273] D. Nicol, '*Kaisersalbung*: The Unction of Emperors in Late Byzantine Coronation Ritual', *BMGS* 2 (1976), 37-52; I. Giarenis, 'Πτυχές της ιδεολογικής αντιπαράθεσης Νίκαιας και Ηπείρου. Ο ρόλος του χρίσματος', in C. Constantinides (ed.), *Μεσαιωνική Ήπειρος* (Ioannina, 2001), 99-122; A. Karpozilos, 'The Date of Coronation of Theodoros Doukas Angelos', *Byzantina* 6 (1974), 251-62; Karpozilos, *Controversy*, esp. 70-86; A. Stavridou-Zafraka, 'The Relations between Secular and Religious Autorities in the State of Epiros after 1204', in D. Angelov (ed.), *Church and Society in Late Byzantium* (Kalamazoo, 2009), 11-24; Angelov, *Νίκαια*, 178; R. Macrides, 'Bad Historian or Good Lawyer? Demetrios Chomatenos and Novel 131', *DOP* 46 (1992), 187-96; G. Prinzing, 'A Quasi Patriarch in the State of Epirus: The Autocephalous Archbishop of 'Boulgaria' (Ohrid) Demetrios Chomatenos', *ZRVI* 41 (2004), 165-82; G. Prinzing, 'The Autocephalous Byzantine Ecclesiastical Province of Bulgaria/Ohrid. How Independent were its Archbishops?', *Bulgaria mediaevalis* 3 (2012), 355-83; G. Prinzing, 'The Authority of the Church in Uneasy Times: The Example of Demetrios Chomatenos, Archbishop of Ohrid, in the State of Epiros, 1216-1236', in P. Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2013), 137-50; F. Brightman, 'Byzantine Imperial Coronations', *JTS* 2 (1901), 359-92, esp. 383-5; D. Nicol, 'Ecclesiastical Relations Between the Despotate of Epirus and the Kingdom of Nicaea in the Years 1215 to 1230', *Byzantion* 22 (1952), 207-28; F. Bredenkamp, 'The "Sampson Incident" (ca. 1215) and the Deterioration of Epirote-Nicaean Orthodox Ecclesiastical Relations', *Byzantiaka* 4 (1984), 9-31.

[274] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 40.

[275] In a wider Byzantine context see J. Haldon, 'The Byzantine Empire', in I. Morris and W. Scheidel (eds.), *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* (Oxford, 2009), 205-54.

[276] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 81-2; 116, n. 5; 118, n. 3; Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 469. This was presented alongside the fact that Theodore was also Alexios' son-in-law: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 9.3-4 (§5), 10.14-7 (§6); Villehardouin, *La Conquête*, vol. 2, 122 (§313).

his proclamation (1205) and possibly as late as his coronation (1208) Theodore was not an emperor at all, but a despot.[277] Despite this polity being ruled by a despot, modern scholars have not sought to parse out the different evolutions of the polity in its titulature. This selective commitment to terminological accuracy subordinates the Epirot to the Nikaian polity. However, if other criteria were to be examined, even from a crude empiricist perspective, the hard distinction between the two polities fades. For example, Thessaloniki was far more important economically and politically than Nikaia, while the autonomous Epirot church remained effectively autonomous from the so-called Patriarchate of Constantinople in Nikaia, with its quasi-patriarch being capable of not only appointing suffragan bishops, but also of supporting Epirot imperial claims and even anointing an emperor.[278]

Similarly, although the terms empire and emperor are often used to describe them, the polity and rulers of Trebizond are often made different to those of Nikaia through the qualifying appellation Megas (or sometimes Grand) Komnenos.[279] Of course, this qualification was originally made as an important ideological claim to imperial continuity and authority. However, in modern scholarship, it sometimes replaces the term emperor altogether, especially in studies principally focused on the late-thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.[280] Yet even when the term is just used as an additional qualification to the terms emperor or empire, its novelty seems to add to the general impression of a polity, which is made strange and placed "outside the mainstream of Byzantine history", because Nikaian-centric teleology has determined the characteristics of Byzantine-ness in this period.[281] Even scholars studying Trebizond, such as Alexander Vasiliev, have over-emphasised the remoteness of Trebizond and focused on its failure to retake Constantinople as the defining

[277] Note that the chronology is particularly unreliable here. Macrides, *Akropolites*, 81-3; Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 593.56-60; 633.57-9; Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 11.5-12.21(§7).
[278] There is insufficient space here to deal with the full complexities of the so-called schism between the Nikaian and Epirot clergy. See Prinzing, 'Chomatenos', 165-82; Prinzing, 'Authority', 137-50; Karpozilos, *Controversy*.
[279] R. Macrides, 'What's in the Name "Megas Komnenos"?', *ΑΠ* 35 (1979), 238-45; R. Shukurov, 'AIMA: The Blood of the Grand Komnenoi', *BMGS* 19 (1995), 161-81.
[280] See for example R. Shukurov, 'Foreigners in the Empire of Trebizond (The Case of Orientals and Latins)', in D. Beyazit and S. Rettig (eds.), *At the Crossroad of Empires: 14th and 15th Century Eastern Anatolia* (Istanbul, 2012), 76-80.
[281] Angold, *Exile*, 12.

aspect of the polity, which remained largely autonomous until 1461.[282] As a consequence, the polity is often referred to in modern historiography diminutively as a "pocket empire" or made other as a 'Greek emirate'.[283] It is of little wonder then that, within the dominant Nikaian narrative, this polity is presented as peripheral and inevitably limited geographically to the northeastern Anatolian coast.

In the modern Nikaian narrative, when the central Byzantine characters are introduced as the empires of Nikaia and Trebizond and the despotate of Epiros, there is already a value-laden set of teleological assumptions built into this statement.[284] However, a similar set of assumptions can also be seen in the titles used to label 'non-Byzantine' polities. 'The Latin empire of Constantinople', for example, which by some logics has the best right to be described as the most direct successor of the old Byzantine empire, is delegitimised by its Latin and Constantinopolitan qualities.[285] The foreignness of a Latin polity and the geographical limitation of the polity to little more than Constantinople (unlike the later Ottoman 'empire') both seem to subordinate the polity, although scholars working on the Latin polities have argued that the Latin polity's pretentions to Byzantine imperial heritage should be taken more seriously.[286] 'Lesser' Latin polities than 'the empire of Constantinople' are automatically dismissed, at least in normative Byzantine-centric imperial terms, through the allocation of inferior titles, such as 'principality' (of Achaia), 'duchy' of Athens and Thebes, or 'kingdom' of Thessaloniki.[287] Similarly, the Serbian and Bulgarian polities are

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[282] A. Vasiliev, 'The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond (1204-1222)', *Speculum* 11 (1936), 3-4. For a more nuanced approach to Trebizond and its position in the 'Byzantine world' see Eastmond, *Art*, esp. xix-12; Kinloch, *Anatolian*, 71-4. See below 2.4.

[283] See for example: Eastmond, *Art*, 11; E. Georganteli, 'Transposed Images: Currencies and Legitimacy in the Late Medieval Eastern Mediterranean', in J. Harris, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World After 1150* (Oxford, 2012), 161; J. Howard-Johnston and N. Ryan, *The Scholar and the Gypsy: Two Journeys to Turkey, Past and Present* (London, 1992), 39; R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge, 2013), 10; G. Peers, 'Arta and Identity in an Amulet Roll from Fourteenth-Century Trebizond', in B. Romeny (ed.), *Religious Origins of Nations? The Christian Communities of the Middle East* (Leiden, 2010), 155; Angold, 'Rump', 737. See below 1.6 and 2.4.

[284] See below 3.5.

[285] Note that the preference for using *Romania* was observed even in 1948. See R. Wolff, 'Romania: The Latin Empire of Constantinople', *Speculum* 23 (1948), 1, n. 1: "Typical titles are 'Balduinus Dei Gratia imperator Romanie, Flandriae et Hainoniae comes'; 'Henricus Dei Gratia Imperator Romanie,' 'Balduinus Dei Gratia Imperator Romanie semper Augustus.'"

[286] Shawcross, 'Legitimized', 181-220.

[287] See above 1.2.

often referred to in Byzantine scholarship as 'kingdoms' (or sometimes the exoticising and othering terms of 'khanate' or 'Tsardom'), despite their imperial claims.[288]

It is not just the title allocated to the polity, but also the geographical terms, which prove problematic in the traditional designation of these polities. Focusing on the urban settlement of Nikaia, as the main identifier of the polity, is problematic, since the polity found in Byzantine texts had multiple ritual, economic, and political centres.[289] Not only could Nymphaion stake as great a claim to being 'the capital' (if such a term were meaningful), but the importance of Magnesia, Lampsakos, and Philadelphia, which were also important hubs for various rulers in different periods, has also been underestimated.[290] As Julia Bokody has argued, this western-Anatolian polity was formed on the basis of a different political, economic, and ritual model to that of the old Byzantine empire. The normative vision of a single dominant urban centre at the heart of an imperial command economy cannot be transferred uncritically from twelfth-century Constantinople to thirteenth-century Nikaia. Instead, as Bokody has convincingly argued, in this new polity the functions of Constantinople seem to have been dispersed around various settlements, leading to a more decentralised polity, held together by itinerant rulership.[291] The study of Trebizond has also been subordinated to Nikaia, because its study has been framed in relation to Constantinople and the normative expectations of classifying urban centres, associated with

[288] See G. Ostrogorsky, 'The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956), 1-14, esp. 7-8; D. Nicol, 'The Byzantine View of Western Europe', *GRBS* 8 (1967), 315-39; D. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (Cambridge, [1972] 1993), 72-5. On the Bulgarian attempts to have the title of 'king' recognised, see F. Curta, 'Constantinople and the Echo Chamber: The Vlachs in the French Crusade Chronicles', *Medieval Encounters* 22 (2016), esp. 452-4.

[289] J. Bokody, *Itinerant Rulership in Byzantium: A Topographical Analysis of the Laskarid Realm (1204-1261)* (Doctoral Thesis for the Central European University, 2013).

[290] H. Barnes and M. Whittow, 'Medieval Castles: Antioch-on-the-Maeander', *Anatolian Archaeology* 4 (1998) 17-8; H. Barnes and M. Whittow, 'The Survey of Medieval Castles of Anatolia (1992-6): The Maeander Region', in R. Matthews (ed.), *Fifty Years of Anatolian Archaeology* (London, 1998), 347-58; C. Foss (ed.), *Cities, Fortresses and Villages of Byzantine Asia Minor* (Aldershot, 1996).

[291] Bokody, *Itinerant*, esp. 35-146, 225-8. See also Ahrweiler, 'Smyrne', 42; J. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 1986), 186; W. Blum (trans.), *Georgios Akropolites: Die Chronik* (Stuttgart, 1989), 2, n. 8. A; Schneider, *Die römischen und byzantinischen Denkmäler von Iznik-Nicaea* (Berlin, 1943), 4.

it.[292] However, in contrast, Epiros has suffered equally from the exact opposite. Like the Nikaian polity, the Epirot polity seems to have dispersed several of the roles, which in the pre-1204 polity were located in Constantinople, with Ioannina, Arta, Nikopolis, Ochrid, and Thessaloniki all functioning in various ways as governmental and ecclesiastical centres.[293] Despite the contrasting 'realities' of urbanism and governance, both types of divergence have been harnessed by the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative to subordinate these polities to that of Nikaia, to the point where modern historians can state, as Korobeinikov has, that there were only two Byzantine 'capitals' in the thirteenth century:

> Constantinople and Nicaea, the two Byzantine capital cities in the thirteenth century[294]

Beyond the identifiers of the polities themselves a host of other terminological apparatus impinges on the presentation of the historiography of the period, such as the naming and numeration of the rulers of these polities. Most twelfth- and thirteenth-century Byzantine elites had multiple family names, which appear selectively in Byzantine texts, because different names or combinations of names generate different meanings. They also tended to draw on a small pool of first names. Consequently, to differentiate between rulers of the same name scholars have systematised the rulers of the various thirteenth-century polities. For example, the 'emperors' of Nikaia have been formalised as Theodore I Laskaris, John III Vatatzes, Theodore II Laskaris, John IV Laskaris, and Michael VIII Palaiologos, although most of these rulers more often used the name Komnenos, an important claim to imperial status in the period. This seemingly innocuous system of regnal numeration implicitly links the rulers of Nikaia through the preceding Angelid and Komnenian dynasties into an official genealogy of Byzantine emperors, stretching back to Constantine 'the first', whilst simultaneously reaching forward to the proceeding Palaiologan emperors, all the way to

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[292] Eastmond, *Art*, xix-12; S. Karpov, 'The Black Sea Region, Before and After the Fourth Crusade', in A. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e croisade et ses conséquences* (Paris, 2005), 283-92.

[293] B. Osswald, 'The Byzantine State of Epirus and its Capitals', *Géocarrefour* 90 (2015), 103-16; N. Molla, *The Despotate of Epirus: The Archaeology of a Late Byzantine State* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Siena, in progress). Building on more detailed studies for the earlier period. See M. Veikou, *Byzantine Epirus: A Topography of Transformation. Settlements of the Seventh-Twelfth Centuries in Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania, Greece* (Leiden, 2012); M. Veikou, 'Urban or Rural? Theoretical Remarks on the Settlement Patterns in Byzantine Epirus (7th–11th centuries)', *BZ* 103 (2010), 171-93.

[294] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, xix.

Constantine 'XI' Palaiologos. Thus, despite being the first rulers of their name in Nikaia, John III Vatatzes, John IV Laskaris, and Michael VIII Palaiologos are teleologically elevated already to the status of Byzantine emperors. This privilege, which is not extended to Epirot, Trapezuntine, or Latin rulers, is teleological anachronism; it makes the Nikaian John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes the third, but leaves the Latin John of Brienne and the Epirot Manuel Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas unnumbered and delegitimised.[295] Consequently, systematic regnal numeration reinforces the teleological logic of Nikaian-centrism.[296] So important has this process of systematisation become that numbering rulers has even superseded the entire historiography of one potential Byzantine/Nikaian ruler. Constantine Laskaris, assumed to be the brother of Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris, is mentioned in a strange passage of Niketas Choniates' *Chronike diegesis* (*Χρονικὴ διήγησις*), where he is acclaimed emperor.[297] However, although some modern historians have been mildly interested in this character, Constantine Laskaris has been the subject of scholarly debate principally because of the way in which his numeration as a 'legitimate' emperor would change the appropriate name for the famous last emperor Constantine 'XI' Palaiologos.[298]

Given the Nikaian polity's dominance of the presentation of events, the meaning allocated to them, and the terminological foundations of all descriptions, such as regnal numeration, it is unsurprising that the very name of the period between 1204 and 1261 has come to reflect that Nikaian-centrism, being described as the 'Nikaian/Nicaean period' or 'Laskarid/Lascarid period' in modern historiography.[299] Elsewhere the period is also

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[295] Note that I also prefer a less simplistic naming practice

[296] Often in publications the Nikaian rulers are incorporated into a genealogy of Byzantine rulers, while the 'despots' of Epiros and the 'emperors'/*megas Komnenoi* of Trebizond are placed in separate panels. For a recent example see E. Jeffreys, *et al*. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 732-3. Note also the descriptors of these polities (despotate, empire, *etc.*).

[297] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 572-3. On this text see below 1.6.

[298] See B. Sinogowitz, 'Über das byzantinische Kaisertum nach dem Vierten Kreuzzuge (1204-1205)', *BZ* 45 (1952), 354-6; P. Schreiner (ed.), *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* (Vienna, 1975-9), vol. 2., 187-8; Nicol, *Last*, 369, n. 1; A.-M. Talbot, 'Constantine XI Palaiologos', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 1, 505; P. Zhavoronkov, 'У истоков образования Никейской империи (оценка деятельности Константина XI Ласкаря)', *VV* 38 (1977), 30-7.

[299] For a representative range of publications see Angelov, *Ideology*, 42, "Nicaean period"; L. Maksimović, *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under the Palaiologoi* (Ann Arbor, 1988), 8, "Nicaean period"; Bartusis, *Army*, 21-42, "Nicaean period"; Karpov and Zhavoronkov, 'социально-экономического', 33, "никейский период [Nikaian period]"; S. Kyriakidis, 'The Role of the *Megas Domestikos* in the Late Byzantine Army (1204-1453)', *BS* 66 (2008), 248, "Nicaean period"; C. Snively,

described as the period of exile, which also reinforces the Nikaian-centric narrative, because it is the prerequisite for the narrative of reconquest, which makes the Nikaian polity superior.[300] The rhetoric of reconquest depends at a basic level on the notion that the Byzantines were in 'exile' (whether in Trebizond, Nikaia, or Epiros). In notions of exile, Byzantinist's Constantinople-centric normativity and the elite-centric textual record combine to present a period of 57 years in terms of exile. However, the Trapezuntine, Nikaian, and Epirot polities were created in territories that were already part of the old Byzantine empire. Only a tiny minority of Constantinopolitan elites moved at all and then only within the territory of the old polity they all claimed to still be in. The narrative of a period of exile is invented by and for elite Byzantines who had lived in Constantinople before 1204.[301] However, although notions of exile came closely intertwined with notions of reconquest, they suffer from the same inconsistency in the medieval texts and the same unchanging dominance in modern historiography.[302] In modern historiography, the notion of 'exile' has anachronistically been imbued with a powerful and highly teleological expectation of 'return'.

The Nikaian narrative of 'reconquest' is underpinned by modern ethno-nationalism, particularly modern assumptions about 'peoples' and their association with specific places, especially territorially bounded nation-states.[303] It is no coincidence that analogous historiographical narratives of 'reconquest' have now been demonstrated to be the products of nineteenth- and twentieth-century discourses of ethno-national emancipation. For

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'Review of H. Buchwald, *Churches EA and E at Sardis. Archaeological Exploration of Sardis Report 6*', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 9 (2016), 555-6, "Lascarid period"; S. Çağaptay, 'Frontierscape: Reconsidering Bithynian Structures and their Builders on the Byzantine-Ottoman Cusp', *Muqarnas* 28 (2011), 157, "Laskarid period"; A. Leroy-Molinghen, 'Le XIV[e] congrès international des études byzantines', *Byzantion* 41 (1971), 547, "période nicéenne [Nikaian period]".

[300] M. Angold, 'Greeks and Latins after 1204: The Perspective of Exile', in B. Arbel, *et al*. (eds.), *Greeks and Latins in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989), 63-86; R. Macrides, 'From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile', in P. Magdalino, *New Constantines* (Aldershot, 1994), 269-82.

[301] Notable 'sources' for this 'ideology of exile' include the orations of Michael and Niketas Choniates.

[302] For an excellent study of notions of exile and lamentation, with a particular focus on architecture and material culture (broadly conceived), see N. Pitamber, *Replacing Byzantium: Laskarid Urban Environments and the Landscape of Loss (1204-1261)* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of California, Los Angeles, 2015). See above 1.4.

[303] Generally on pre-modern 'nationalism' see L. Scales and O. Zimmer, 'Introduction', in L. Scales and O. Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005), 1-30.

example, the 'English' 'reconquest' of the Danelaw (878-937) has been shown to be bound up with the creation of an origin myth for 'the English people', sought in the Anglo-Saxon (and importantly Christian) kingdom of Wessex, initiated by the pious Alfred 'the Great' (849-99).[304] Similarly, the narrative of the 'Spanish' '*Reconquista*' of Iberia (711/22-1492) from 'the Moors', has been demonstrated to be principally the creation of the ideological programme of Franco's fascist administration in the 1940s.[305] At the heart of this historiographical narrative is a teleological growth toward the 're-Christianisation' and 'civilization' of Iberia, as well as the 'unification' of Spain under the Catholic church and the Spanish nation-state.[306] However, with the collapse of Franco's dictatorship and the grip of the Catholic church on the modern Spanish education system, this historiographical narrative of National-Catholicism has undergone, and is still undergoing, wholesale deconstruction. The modern Nikaian narrative is underpinned by the same logics as these ethno-nationalist narratives, since at its heart it fixes the location of a group of people to a single geographical space and political entity, using modern terms and logics. In the most general sense, the fact that the Nikaian narrative of reconquest could be perceived as a plausible explanation of the past is dependent on some of these logics. However, more actively, the Iberian *Reconquista* and the Byzantine 'reconquest' have been explicitly compared, with scholars comparing the

[304] For traditional narratives of English 'unification' and 'reconquest', including some quite recent studies, see F. Stenton, 'The Foundations of English History', *TRHS* 9 (1926), 159-73, esp. 169; P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989); G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), esp. 1-38. For scholarship on questions of nationalism see S. Hall, 'Did Anglo-Saxons Have a Sense of National Identity?: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and The Battle of Brunanburh', in B. Brandt and M. Nagy (eds.), *Proceedings of the 14th Northern Plains Conference on Earlier British Literature* (Brookings, 2007), 1-12; A. Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1997); T. Turville-Petre, 'Representations of the Danelaw in Middle English Literature', in J. Graham-Campbell, *et al.* (eds.), *Vikings and the Danelaw* (Oxford, 2001), 345-56.

[305] Generally see J. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia, 2003); D. Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain* (New York, 1978); P. Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford, 1993); A. Ward, *History and Chronicles in Late Medieval Iberia: Representations of Wamba in Late Medieval Narrative Histories* (Leiden, 2011). Note that the *Reconquista* narrative was already contested in nineteenth-century scholarship.

[306] The *Reconquista* narrative intersects with orientalising assumptions of barbaric, bloodthirsty, effete, and even sodomitic Moors, facing civilizing, masculine, chivalric, and heterosexual Christian knights. See for example G. Hutcheson, 'The Sodomitic Moor: Queerness in the Narrative of Reconquista', in G. Burger and S. Kruger (eds.), *Queering the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, 2001), 99-122.

falls of Constantinople and Granada and even calling Nikaian expansion a *Reconquista*.[307] Furthermore, 1204 has been used by some scholars to signpost the inaugural motif for the formation of the modern Greek nation-state.[308] This is a product of modern Greek ethno-nationalist discourses, particularly those associated with the irredentist Μεγάλη Ιδέα [Great Idea].[309] In short a comparative study of the Nikaian narrative and its metanarrative logic suggests that underpinning all the problematics, discussed above, are modern ethno-nationalist logics and agendas, in the image of which the thirteenth-century Byzantine past has been constructed.

The modern Nikaian narrative is problematic not just because of what (or even how) action is presented, but also because of the meanings that are already bound up into those presentations of action. These underlying assumptions and meanings can be understood as a metanarrative, the logic of which, on closer inspection dominates the entirety of modern historiography of the period between 1204 and 1261.

1.5 – The *Chronike Syngraphe* of George Akropolites

From the analysis of the Nikaian narrative and metanarrative, I have demonstrated that modern historiography of the first half of the thirteenth century is fundamentally (and teleologically) Nikaian-centric, both in the presentation of events and in their interpretation.[310] This historiography is the product of a modern self-referential scholarly

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[307] For examples see A. Lewis, 'The Closing of the Mediaeval Frontier 1250-1350', *Speculum* 33 (1958), 479; C. Aslanov, 'Eyewitness vs. Mediated Narratives of Lost Cities at the End of the Middle Ages: Acre, Constantinople, Granada', *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 7 (2009), 169-87; M. Philippides, 'Review of A. Savvides, *Βυζαντινὰ στασιαστικὰ καὶ αὐτονομιστικὰ κινήματα στὰ Δωδεκάνησα καὶ στὴ Μικρὰ Ἀσία, 1189-1240 μ.Χ.*', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 1044, "The eventual *reconquista* of the Palaeologan age never matched the glories of the past."

[308] A. Vakalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek Nation: The Byzantine Period, 1204-1461*, (trans.) I. Moles (New Brunswick, [1961] 1970); I. Moles, 'Nationalism and Byzantine Greece', *GRBS* 10 (1969), 95-107. More reflexively but still problematically see Angold, 'Nationalism', 49-70; Kaldellis, *Hellenism*; R. Beaton, 'Antique Nation? 'Hellenes' on the Eve of Greek Independence and in Twelfth-century Byzantium', *BMGS*, 31 (2007), 76-95; P. Magdalino, 'Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium', in P. Magdalino (ed.), *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Aldershot, 1991), XIV, 1-29.

[309] R. Clogg, 'The Byzantine Legacy in the Modern Greek World: The *Megali Idea*', in L. Clucas (ed.), *The Byzantine Legacy in Eastern Europe* (Boulder, 1988), 253-81; P. Kitromilides, 'The Legacy of the French Revolution: Orthodoxy and Nationalism', in M. Angold (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006), 229-49. For the relevance to Meliarakes, see above 1.3.

[310] See above 1.2 and 1.4.

community.[311] However, it also depends upon the surviving textual traces of the thirteenth-century past.[312] The most important text for the creation of the Nikaian narrative and metanarrative is the *Chronike syngraphe* (*Χρονικὴ συγγραφή*) of George Akropolites, which dominates the so-called 'source' record. The Nikaian-centrism of modern historiography is, in large part, a direct result of the ideological positioning of the *Chronike syngraphe*. Ruth Macrides has successfully challenged the traditional and often uncritical (crude empiricist) interpretation of the *Chronike syngraphe*, as a 'reliable source'. However, her reinterpretation is epistemologically compromised, because, while she identifies the ideologically positioned and rhetorical quality of the text and critiques the uncritical acceptance of the interpretation of both events and characters presented by the *Chronike syngraphe*, she distinguishes this kind of 'bias' and 'rhetoric' from 'basic action'. I argue instead that the ideological and rhetorical qualities, identified by Macrides, make the presentation of even the most 'basic action' highly problematic.

The *Chronike syngraphe* has been used as the principal 'source' for modern historiographical presentations of the Byzantine past between 1204 and 1261:

> …die einzige primäre griechische Quelle… […the only primary Greek source…][313]
>
> Георгий Акрополит является одним из крупнейших историков XIII в. Его основной труд - «Хроника» - служит главным источником по истории Никейской империи и имеет большую историческую ценность.[314] [George Acropolites is one of the principal historians of the 13th century. His main work, *The Chronicle*, serves as the main source of the history of the Nikaian empire and has great historical value.]
>
> …the only contemporary historian of this critical period, George Akropolites.[315]
>
> George Acropolites, a contemporary court historian, is the main source of the political history of the Kingdom of Nicaea for the first part of the thirteenth century.[316]

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[311] See above 1.3.
[312] Note, however, that some modern scholars promote the arguments of modern scholars over those of the Byzantine texts. For example see Macrides' critique of Wilhelm Blum: R. Macrides, 'Review of W. Blum, *Georgios Akropolites, Die Chronik*', *BS* 53 (1992), 275.
[313] Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 5.
[314] P. Zhavoronkov, 'Некоторые аспекты мировоззрения Георгия Акрополита', *VV* 47 (1986), 125.
[315] Nicol, *Despotate*, x.
[316] Karpozilos, *Controversy*, 11.

> The historical narrative by George Akropolites, the main Greek source for the period 1204-1261, has been used by generations of historians to reconstruct the political history of the so-called Empire of Nicaea.[317]
>
> Akropolites' *History* provides the backbone of any modern account of the 'empire of Nicaea'. His is the only narrative of the whole period and it is therefore to him that we turn for our own accounts of what happened.[318]
>
> …the only contemporary Greek narrative for 1203-61…[319]

Below, I challenge the assumed importance, primacy, and singularity of the *Chronike syngraphe*.[320] However, since it dominates modern scholarship, any attempt to rethink thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography must start with this text.

The *Chronike syngraphe* (*Χρονικὴ συγγραφή*) is a prose historiographical narrative text that narrates the period between *c.* 1203 and 1261. It runs to 189 pages (38,487 words) in the most recent critical edition, published in 1903 by August Heisenberg and slightly revised in 1978 by Peter Wirth.[321] The *Chronike syngraphe* survives in numerous manuscripts, the earliest of which date from the early fourteenth or (possibly) the late thirteenth century. However, the manuscript tradition of the text has received limited attention since Heisenberg's early studies.[322] The most common title of the text in the older manuscripts, and consequently the

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[317] Macrides, 'Blum', 275. See also Macrides, *Akropolites*, ix, "the main source for 1204-1261".
[318] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5.
[319] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5.
[320] See below 1.5 and 4.
[321] A. Heisenberg (ed.) and P. Wirth (corr.), *Georgii Acropolitae: Opera* (Stuttgart, 1978), vol. 1, 3-189. For earlier editions see A. Heisenberg (ed.), *Georgii Acropolitae: Opera* (Leipzig, 1903), vol. 1, 3-189; L. Allatios (ed.), *Georgii Acropolitæ Magni Logothetæ et Ducæ Michaelis Ducæ Nepotis Historia Byzantina* (Paris, 1651); I. Bekker (ed.), *Georgii Acropolitae: Annales* (Bonn, 1836); J. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiæ Græcæ* (Paris, 1865), vol. 140, 969-1220. For translations see R. Macrides (trans.), *A Translation and Historical Commentary of George Akropolites' History* (Doctoral Thesis for King's College London, 1978); Blum, *Chronik*. Panagiotou, *Ακροπολίτης*. S. Spyropoulos (trans.), *Γεώργιος Ακροπολίτης, Χρονική συγγραφή: Η βυζαντινή ιστορία της λατινοκρατίας (1204-1261)* (Thessaloniki, 2004); P. Zhavoronkov (trans.), *Георгий Акрополит. история* (St Petersburg, 2005); R. Macrides (trans.), *George Akropolites, The History: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 2007); J. Dayantis (trans.), *Acropolitès, Chronique du XIIIe siècle: L'empire grec de Nicée* (Paris, 2012).
[322] Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 5-55; A. Heisenberg, 'Zwei wiedergefundene Handschriften des Georgios Akropolites', *Eranos* 2 (1897), 117–24; A. Heisenberg, 'Studien zu Georgios Akropolites', *Sitzungsberichte der philos.-philol. und der hist. Classe der k.b. Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Munich, 1899), 463–557; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, iii-xxviii. Heisenberg used fourteen manuscripts for his edition; although there are now twenty-four catalogued on *Pinakes*, most of these are quite late. See *Pinakes/Πίνακες: Textes et manuscrits grecs*, http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr [Accessed 11.11.17]. See also A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study* (Oxford, 2013), 105-6.

modern name for the text, is *Χρονικὴ συγγραφή* (*Chronike syngraphe*), although the text also circulates under the titles *Χρονική διήγησις* (*Chronike diegesis*), *ἱστορικὸν* (*historikon*), and *ἱστοριὰ* (*historia*), as well as under no title at all.[323] These titles were probably composed after the main text, but these *paratextual* signposts still frame how texts are read.[324] These one (or two) word labels, isolated by modern scholars looking for modern-looking titles, are less common in the manuscripts than the name (and often title) of the author, "τοῦ μεγάλου λογοθέτου κυροῦ Γεωργίου τοῦ Ἀκροπολίτου… [George Akropolites, *megas logothetes*]".[325] No 'authorial intention' can be read into this title (regardless of your philosophical position), although I refer to the text as the *Chronike syngraphe* throughout this thesis.[326] The attribution to George Akropolites is universally accepted by modern scholars. Macrides has set out everything modern scholars 'know' about his life in detail.[327] He is understood to have been an important official in the Nikaian polity, holding important titles such as *logothetes tou genikou* (λογοθέτης τοῦ γενικοῦ), *megas logothetes* (by which he is best known), and *praitor* (πραίτωρ). First, a protégé of John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, to whom he owed his education at the Nikaian court, he later became a companion of Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris. However, he later repudiated both, when he served the 'usurper' of Theodore's son John Komnenos-Laskaris, Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[328] The prominence allocated to Akropolites in the titling of the text is matched by modern historiographical

[323] For examples see *Vat. gr. 163* and *Vat. Bar. 85* (for *Chronike syngraphe*), *MS Add. 28828*, *Fir. Ric. gr. 10*, and *Vat. gr. 166* (for *historikon*), *Up. gr. 6* (for *Chronike diegesis*), *Ambr. gr. 73* (for *historia*), and *Par. gr. 3041*, *Vind. hist. gr. 68*, and *Marc. gr. Z 403* (for no Greek title). See Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, esp. iv-xii, 3; Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', esp. 6-12; H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich, 1978), vol. 1, 443, n. 7; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 30, n. 177; E.-S. Kiapidou, 'The Titling of Byzantine Historiographical Texts', *Medioevo Greco* 16 (2016), 132. I refer to it as *Chronike syngraphe* throughout although others have chosen to refer to it in English as the *History*. Macrides' decision to use *history* is involved with her determination to collapse the unhelpful scholarly dichotomy between 'monkish' chronicles and 'proper' histories. See Macrides, 'Preface', x; *Akropolites*, 30, n. 180. Following Beck, 'Mönchschronik'.

[324] On *paratextuality* see below 4.1.

[325] See for example *Vat. gr. 163*, *Vat. Bar. 85*, *Up. gr. 6*, and *Par. gr. 3041*. Note that sometimes the forename is omitted.

[326] I do so mainly to avoid referring to the text through the author. See below 1.5.

[327] Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 5-29.

[328] Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 6-19; N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries (1204-ca.1310)* (Nicosia, 1982), 31-4.

interpretations of the *Chronike syngraphe*, for which the (psycho)analysis of the 'real' Akropolites, from biographical details of his life, is central.[329]

The *Chronike syngraphe* has been divided into eighty-nine sections since the first edition of the text was published by Leon Allatios (often Latinised as Leo Allatius) in 1653.[330] These were maintained in the editions of Immanuel Bekker, who essentially copied Allatios' text for the Bonn corpus in 1836, and then Heisenberg in 1903, and have consequently come to be used throughout scholarship in editions, translations, and historiography (including this thesis) to subdivide the text.[331] Some of these sections/divisions coincide with rubrication in surviving manuscripts, although most do not.[332] These sections have proved heuristically valuable to scholars, because they facilitate reference to the text, although they arbitrarily range from thirteen to one-hundred-and-ninety-one lines in the 1978 edition.[333] Some of these section divisions fit the narrative's sometimes abrupt changes of direction well, whilst others feel quite illogical, not least §77, which is placed mid-sentence.[334] These essentially early-modern *paratexts* imposed by Allatios transform the text in not only 'form', but 'content', since meaning is constructed as much from the narrative structure of the text as from what exactly it says.[335] However, I use these arbitrary section divisions, rather than swap them for some other (equally arbitrary) system (formal or informal).[336] I use them with

[329] See below 1.5.
[330] L. Allatios (ed.), *Georgii Acropolitæ Magni Logothetæ et Ducæ Michaelis Ducæ Nepotis Historia Byzantina* (Paris, 1653). Note that previously Allatios had published not the *Chronike syngraphe*, but the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (*Ποίημα χρονικόν ἡμιτελές*) a closely related text, which scholars describe as an abridged/paraphrastic version of it. Allatios divided this text into eighty-five sections. Heisenberg, 'Studien', 546; Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 23-4; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 443. For an extensive discussion of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, see below 4.4. On Allatios generally see K. Hartnup, *'On the Beliefs of the Greeks': Leo Allatios and Popular Orthodoxy* (Leiden, 2004).
[331] Bekker, *Acropolitae*; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1. Heisenberg's edition, which uses these sections, has been the principal reference point for this adoption. Macrides misattributes the section divisions to Heisenberg: Macrides, *Akropolites*, xi.
[332] For example, in *Up. gr. 6* see rubrication (with some correspondence to section divisions) on ff. 3r, 8v, 11v, 12v, 13r, 13v, 15v, 18v, 19r, 19v, 21r, 21v, 23v, 24r, 26v, 27v, 28r, 28v, 29r, 29v, 30r, 31r, 42r, 44r, 48r, 49r, 50v-51r, 51v, and 53v. See B. Crostini, 'Uppsala University Library, Gr. 6', *Manuscripta: A Digital Catalogue of Manuscripts in Sweden*, https://www.manuscripta.se/ms/100006 [Accessed 10.12.17].
[333] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 32.12-24; 127.24-134.2 (§19; 63).
[334] Bekker, *Acropolitae*, 169.13; Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 159.6 (§77).
[335] On *paratextuality* see below 4.1.
[336] See below 4.6.

an awareness that they contribute to the epistemological fracture between this historiographical text and the past.[337]

Since the *Chronike syngraphe* stops its narration in 1261, this has generally been taken as a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the text.[338] However, this claim should be weakened, since it only provides a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the last parts of the text.[339] Whether or not 1261 was the 'intended' end of the *Chronike syngraphe* remains in question, since the text breaks off mid-sentence, during a description of Akropolites' preparation to deliver several celebratory orations before Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos after Michael's arrival in Constantinople.[340] From this, and what Heisenberg considered the unrevised quality of the text, he argued that it was originally intended to narrate all the way to the 1280s.[341] However, Macrides prefers 1261 as the intended endpoint of the text.[342] Needless to say, uncovering the intended endpoint is impossible. Furthermore, it proves irrelevant, since the *Chronike syngraphe*'s readers, (obviously) can only read the text they have. Most contemporary historians, following Macrides, have read for completeness and found it, because the *Chronike syngraphe* presents a compelling narrative, which feels complete, running from the origins of the ἅλωσις [capture, conquest, or destruction] in 1204 to the narrative closure of ἀνάρρυσις [rescue or deliverance] in 1261.[343] The *Chronike syngraphe*, whether intentionally or not, provides a well-defined beginning, middle, and end, which has heavily influenced the core structure of the modern Nikaian narrative.[344]

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[337] This is most apparent in Macrides' translation, where commentary is inserted between each section division: Macrides, *Akropolites*.
[338] Blum dates the composition to between 1261 and 1267: Blum, *Chronik*, 17-8; 27, n. 40. For a more sceptical approach see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 31, "to pinpoint the precise time of writing of the *History* is a difficult – not to say, impossible – task."
[339] The importance of making such a distinction has been brought out by Alicia Simpson's study of how Choniates' *Chronike diegesis* was reworked at various different points: A. Simpson, *Studies on the Composition of Niketas Choniates' Historia* (Doctoral Thesis for King's College London, 2004); A. Simpson, 'Before and After 1204: The Versions of Niketas Choniates' "Historia"', *DOP* 60 (2006), 189-221; A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study* (Oxford, 2013).
[340] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 189.6-8 (§89).
[341] Heisenberg, 'Studien', 466. For a general agreement about the "haste and lack of revision" see Macrides, *Akropolites*, xi.
[342] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 31; 388, n. 11. See also Blum, *Chronik*, 17-8.
[343] H. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1925), 75, 119; N. Carroll, 'Narrative Closure', *Philosophical Studies* 135 (2007), 1-15.
[344] See above 1.2.

Like the modern Nikaian narrative, which is placed within the (often highly normative) framework of a wider/longer narrative of Byzantine historiography, the *Chronike syngraphe* cannot be extracted from its narrative and even physical context. The *Chronike syngraphe* is regularly found alone in manuscripts.[345] However, it is also found with a wide range of texts, most often historiographical narratives, arranged chronologically.[346] For example, in the oldest manuscript of the *Chronike syngraphe* (*Vat. gr. 163*), used by Heisenberg as his base-text, the text is preceded by the *Synopsis chronike* (*Σύνοψις χρονική*) of Constantine Manasses, the *Chronike diegesis* of Niketas Choniates, and the *Epitome ton katorthomaton* (*Ἐπιτομὴ τῶν κατορθωμάτων*) of John Kinnamos.[347] The most common companion texts are the *Epitome historion* (*Ἐπιτομὴ ἱστοριῶν*) of John Zonaras, which narrates from the creation of the world to 1118 and the *Chronike diegesis* of Niketas Choniates, which narrates the period between 1118 and 1206.[348] Thus, it seems that the *Chronike syngraphe* was read as part of a wider historiographical narrative of the Byzantine past, almost from its inception. This wider context appears to be anticipated by the *Chronike syngraphe*'s *prooimion*, which notes that past happenings (from the beginning of the world) have already been narrated by many writers, to whose work the *Chronike syngraphe* would add something new.[349] Herbert Hunger even went so far as to call the *Chronike syngraphe* a "Fortsetzung [continuation]" of Choniates' *Chronike diegesis*.[350] In the early-modern period, with the first printed editions of

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[345] For example, see *Up. gr. 6*, *MS Add. 28828*, and *Lips. gr. I.*22.

[346] For an example of non-historiographical variation see *Vat. gr. 166*, which contains texts ranging from George of Pisidia's *Hexameron* and Photios' *Letters*, Aristotle and an anti-Latin treatise. Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 8-9.

[347] Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 6-8; O. Lampsides (ed.), *Τοῦ κυροῦ Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Μανασσῆ Σύνοψις χρονική* (Athens, 1996); Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*; A. Meineke (ed.), *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum* (Bonn, 1836).

[348] For the *Epitome historion* see *MS Add. 28828* and *Vind. hist. gr. 68*. For the *Chronike diegesis* see Vat. gr. 163, *Par. gr. 3041*, and *Ven. Mar. gr. Z 403*. Interestingly, in *Par. gr. 3041* the *Chronike diegesis* and *Chronike syngraphe* are totally mixed up together (fol. 137-283). See Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 11.

[349] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 4.1-11 (§1); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 105. See below 2.1. Note that a detailed examination of the relevant manuscripts would be required, for more precise conclusions. The scope of this thesis does not extend to close scrutiny of the manuscripts, so these arguments are principally dependent on Heisenberg's work, with the exception of the Uppsala manuscript, which I have consulted and several digitised manuscripts. I would like to thank Barbara Crostini for her help with the Uppsala manuscript.

[350] Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 443. Note that the dates do not even match up fully. See also A. Madgearu, *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185-1280)* (Leiden, 2016), 3, "George Akropolites (1217-1282), who held important civil and military offices in the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea, continued the historical writings of Niketas Choniates."

the text, the *Chronike syngraphe* was incorporated into (or at least circulated on the edge of) the early Byzantine historiographical corpus, alongside the *Epitome historion* of Zonaras, the *Chronike diegesis* of Choniates, the *Rhomaike historia* (*Ῥωμαϊκὴ ἱστορία*) of Nikephoros Gregoras, and the *Apodeixis historion* (*Ἀπόδειξις ἱστοριῶν*) of Laonikos Chalkokondyles.[351] Today the *Chronike syngraphe* is still used to bridge the gap between Choniates' *Chronike diegesis* and later narrative texts, particularly George Pachymeres' *Syngraphikai historiai* (*Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι*) and (the more detailed parts of) Gregoras' *Rhomaike historia*.[352] In other words, the *Chronike syngraphe* is not now and never has been a text that exists and is made meaningful in a vacuum. Its narrative has always been made meaningful by its positioning within wider narrative frames. Consequently, even if it were possibly to totally understand the meaning of the *Chronike syngraphe* or even of individual statements within it, the text's 'real' or 'original' meaning would still remain elusive, behind further layers of narrative.

The work of Ruth Macrides on the *Chronike syngraphe* has transformed the study of the text. Her analysis has not only modulated the crude empiricism that previously governed analyses of the text, but has also contradicted numerous credulous and uncritical assumptions. An analysis of scholarly approaches to the *Chronike syngraphe*, must essentially divide scholarship into the general consensus before and after her work.[353] As is common in many classical and Byzantine historiographical texts, the *Chronike syngraphe* states, in its *prooimion*, that writers should be impartial arbiters of history, simply saving the past from oblivion:[354]

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[351] Note that the first printed text attributed to Akropolites was not the *Chronike syngraphe*, see below 4.4. On the publication of Byzantine historiographical texts generally see G. Candal, *Bibliographia Historica Byzantina: A Historical and Bibliographical Description of the Early Editions of the Corpus Historiae Byzantinae (1556-1645)* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Oxford, 2016).

[352] See for example Bartusis, *Army*, 11; J. Longnon (ed.), *Livre de la conqueste de la princée de l'Amorée: Chronique de Morée (1204-1305)* (Paris, 1911), xxiv.

[353] It should be noted that her work varies, which is unsurprising given that it has been published over a number of years.

[354] For particularly striking similarities, observed by Macrides, see N. Wilson (ed.), *Herodoti Historiae* (Oxford, 2015), vol. 1, 3-4 (§1.1); T. Büttner-Wobst (ed.), *Polybii Historiae* (Leipzig, [1905] 1962), vol. 1, 17-8 (§14); A. Kambylis and D. Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae, Alexias* (Berlin, 2001), vol. 1, 1.1-10, 2.25-30; Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 23.13-6, 25.1-4 (§1.1). Following Macrides, *Akropolites*, 30, 106, nn. 7-8; R. Macrides, 'The Thirteenth Century in Byzantine Historical Writing', in C. Dendrinos, *et*

> οὔτε γοῦν πρὸς χάριν οὔτε πρὸς φθόνον, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πρὸς μῖσος ἢ καὶ πρὸς εὔνοιαν συγγράφειν χρεών ἐστι τὸν συγγράφοντα, ἀλλ' ἱστορίας μόνον χάριν καὶ τοῦ μὴ λήθης βυθῷ, ἣν ὁ χρόνος οἶδε γεννᾶν, παραδοθῆναι τὰ ὑπό τινων γεγενημένα, εἴτ' ἀγαθὰ εἴτε φαῦλα τυγχάνοιεν.[355] [At all events, the author ought to write neither with favour nor with malice, nor out of hatred or goodwill but for the sake of history alone and so that what has been done by some, whether it be good or bad, is not relegated to the depths of oblivion which time is wont to produce.][356]

Only in the last forty years have modern scholars started to challenge the claims of this *prooimion*, before which the *Chronike syngraphe* was understood to be a generally 'accurate' and 'reliable' account of 'what happened' in the period between 1204 and 1261. The supposed 'accuracy' of the text was principally attributed to the high rank of Akropolites (presumed to have given him access to knowledge about events), while his precise and concise classicising prose, stylistically produced an impression of 'reliability' for early Byzantinists (who were most often first trained as classicists):

> Um solche Fehler zu begehen, war Akropolites zu gründlich historisch und philosophisch geschult, und das Material zu eingehender Darlegung der treibenden Kräfte war ihm durch die höchste amtliche und gesellschaftliche Stellung vertraut und geläufig geworden, es hatte sogar Zeiten gegeben, wo er selbst eine führende Rolle gespielt.[357] [Akropolites had been too thoroughly historically and philosophically trained to make such mistakes. The material for the detailed exposition of the driving-forces [of the growth of the Nikaian polity] had become intimately known and familiar to him through his very-high official and social rank. There had even been times when he himself played a leading role.]
>
> Wohltuend empfindet der moderne Leser an Georgios Akropolites eine gewisse Nüchternheit und einen Hang zur knappen, präzisen Darstellung, die ihn von den meisten byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern und Chronisten unterscheiden.[358] [The modern reader of George Akropolites feels a certain degree of sobriety and a penchant for a concise, precise account which distinguishes him from most Byzantine historians and chroniclers.]
>
> Der klassisch gebildete Schriftsteller hat das Geschehen seines Zeitalters mit besonnenem Urteil und gesunder Lebensauffassung betrachtet, was sein Werk zu einer objektiven und verläßlichen Quelle macht.[359] [The classically educated writer

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al. (eds.), *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Aldershot, 2003), 65.

[355] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 4.18-23 (§1).

[356] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 105.

[357] Heisenberg, 'Studien', 464.

[358] Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 444.

[359] G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* (Leiden, [1942-3] 1983), vol. 1, 266. Quoted in Blum, *Chronik*, 28.

> considered the events of his age with critical judgment and a healthy view of life, which makes his work an objective and reliable source.]
>
> The sources too [for a history of the Nikaian polity] are perfectly adequate. The combination of a history written by one of the chief ministers of the Empire, George Akropolites, and the documentary material…[360]
>
> Akropolites is a reliable historian who had experience as a diplomat, an associate of Theodore II Laskaris, and a military commander, albeit an unsuccessful one…[361]

In other words, scholars assumed that both Akropolites' rank and written style guaranteed the *Chronike syngraphe* as "an objective and reliable work".[362] Consequently, the *Chronike syngraphe* was treated by most as an open window onto the thirteenth-century Byzantine past, that required little or no reconsideration by the modern historian, before it would reveal 'what happened'.

Some scholars, most often those focused on non-Nikaian topics, such as the Trapezuntine, Epirot, and Latin polities identified both the Nikaian-centrism and pro-Nikaian 'bias' of the *Chronike syngraphe*.[363] However, these critiques fell short of a comprehensive critique until Macrides' commentary and translation of the *Chronike syngraphe* was published as a thesis (1978) and then as a monograph (2007).[364] First, Macrides argued that scholars had been too prone to "an acceptance of Akropolites at his own estimation", suggesting that a more serious and holistic analysis of Akropolites' person and 'bias', needed to be taken into account in the analysis of the *Chronike syngraphe*.[365] Second, she argued that the *littérarité* of the text should be systematically incorporated into the study of what it says and means.[366] Her critique was founded as much in a rereading of the author, as the text, which she noted are inextricable:[367]

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[360] Angold, *Exile*, 3.
[361] Bartusis, *Army*, 12.
[362] For further examples, see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 29, 30, n. 177; Panagiotou, *Ακροπολίτης*, 15; Heisenberg, 'Studien', 464. On Akropolites as a scholar see Constantinides, *Education*, 31-4.
[363] For examples and an extended discussion of non-Nikaian orientated studies, see below 1.6.
[364] Macrides, *Translation*; Macrides, *Akropolites*.
[365] Macrides, 'Blum', 275.
[366] R. Macrides, 'George Akropolites' Rhetoric', in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2003), 201-11.
[367] This argument can also be seen in an influential article published as R. Macrides, 'The Historian in the History', in C. Constantinides, *et al.* (eds.), *ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning* (Venice, 1996), 205-24.

> …Akropolites' *History* has been used by later historians to reconstruct the period it covers, but without the benefit of a study of its author. Akropolites' *History* provides the backbone of any modern account of the 'empire of Nicaea'. His is the only narrative of the whole period and it is therefore to him that we turn for our own accounts of what happened. Yet few questions have been asked of the writer. The story he tells is treated separately from who he was, as if it were possible to disengage the two. Indeed, in the case of Akropolites, who tells us so much about himself, such an approach to the *History* is difficult to defend.[368]

Macrides consequently opened her monograph with a twenty-four-page analysis of Akropolites 'the man', which included an extended digression on his titles and offices, before moving on to the text itself, which she interpreted with the aid of the biographical details of Akropolites, that she had set out.[369] In the *Chronike syngraphe*, Macrides identified three fundamental 'biases'. First, she argued that the *Chronike syngraphe* is written under the basic working assumption that the Nikaian polity was the legitimate inheritor of the old Byzantine empire, that its rulers were legitimate emperors, and that consequently the polity's rivals were illegitimate rebels.[370] Second, she argued that the text is 'biased' in favour of the Nikaian polity's last ruler, Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, and against the earlier Laskarid rulers of Nikaia, whose progeny, John Komnenos-Laskaris, Michael had 'usurped' to become emperor. Third, she suggested that the text is (unsurprisingly) 'biased' in favour of its own author, George Akropolites, who features prominently as both narrator and participant in the action described, especially in later parts of the text.[371] Macrides supported her arguments in several short passages in her introduction and consistently throughout her commentary on the text, pointing to the *Chronike syngraphe*'s hostile presentations of the Epirots, Latins, and Bulgarians, its invectives against Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, and their followers, and its encomiastic and unrelentingly

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[368] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5. For an important exception see Zhavoronkov, 'Акрополита', esp. 125.
[369] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5-29. In this she is generally followed by those who treat the text. For example see S. Spyropoulos, *Εξαρχαϊσμοί και εκσυγχρονισμοί των γεωγραφικών και εθνολογικών όρων στην Χρονικήν Διήγησιν του Νικήτα Χωνιάτη και την Χρονικήν Συγγραφήν του Γεωργίου Ακροπολίτη* (Doctoral Thesis for Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, 2009), 143-4; I. Angelakes, *Το μυστήριο της Θείας οικονομίας στη γραμματεία του 13ου αιώνα: η περίπτωση των εκκλησιαστικών ιστορικών Νικήτα Χωνιάτη, Γεωργίου Ακροπολίτη, Γεωργίου Παχυμέρη, Νικηφόρου Γρηγορά* (Doctoral thesis for Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, 2013), 101-5.
[370] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 89-97. Blum, for instance, calls Akropolites a "griechisch-nikänische Patriot [Greek-Nikaian patriot]": Blum, *Chronik*, 43-5.
[371] See also Blum, *Chronik*, 38-40.

(self-)promoting depiction of Akropolites.[372] She does not herself use the term 'bias', however her argument presents the propensities of the text in an analogous fashion and other modern historians have supplied the term themselves:[373]

> What emerges with new clarity is the depth of **the text's Palaiologan bias**, which shaped Akropolites' presentation of past emperors.[374]

Macrides, understands these three biases as products of the author's disposition and circumstances at the time of writing, which can be demonstrated from the biographical details of his life. The pro-Nikaian assumptions of the *Chronike syngraphe* are matched up to a man who lived his entire adult life in the Nikaian polity and served in the higher echelons of its government and army. The pro-Palaiologan bias of the text is understood as an expression of Akropolites' attempt to preserve his own status in a new political landscape dominated by the Palaiologoi and to ingratiate himself with his master and patron, Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos (*r.* 1259-82). His critique of the Laskarids, especially his attacks on Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, whom he savages most aggressively, are presented by Macrides as an attempt to distance himself from his old patrons, who had presided over his rise to importance and whom Michael had overthrown in 1259.[375] The third bias is assumed to be self-explanatory, since it is assumed that any author would surely present themself in a sympathetic light.[376] These three biases are all inextricably mixed together in the text, as can be seen in the especially critical presentation of the Epirots in the *Chronike syngraphe*, thus representing an intersection between Nikaian-centric assumptions, Akropolites' own personal bias, given that he was a prisoner of the Epirots for several years, and the sustained critique of the Laskarids, because he criticises Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris for not doing enough to free him.

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[372] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5-28.
[373] Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 5, 39-41, 89-97.
[374] A. Kaldellis, 'Review of R. Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*', *Speculum* 83 (2008) 460. Emphasis added.
[375] Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 22-8.
[376] Although, note that Gibbon expressed his shock that Akropolites, was so unashamed in presenting himself being beaten by Theodore's men in a particularly vivid passage of the text: Gibbon, *Decline*, vol. 11, 58.

Alongside these biases, Macrides comments on the *littérarité* of the text, with a particular focus on its classicising speeches, the dominant role of kinship, and divine providence.[377] However, such *littérarité* (the discussion of which is almost limitless) principally informs Macrides' analysis where it intersects with the central reading of biases, as it does frequently, for example, in the use of speeches to "reinforce the Nicaean-centred perspective of the narrative" or the methods by which the *Kaiserkritik* of the Laskarid rulers is executed.[378]

Macrides' central arguments about the *Chronike syngraphe*, both regarding its political positioning ('bias') and *littérarité*, are not in themselves problematic. Indeed, they have importantly nuanced the study of the text. However, a framing problem remains, because Macrides concluded from her analysis that although the *Chronike syngraphe* is not reliable when it comes to more interpretive observations, in particular the characterisation of participants in those events, it otherwise constitutes "an accurate and reliable account of events":[379]

> Although Akropolites is precise in his *History* and even meticulous in many respects, his reliability is questionable in his characterizations and pronouncements on various individuals.[380]

In so doing, she establishes a dividing line between the description of 'what happened' (deemed 'reliable') and the interpretation and explanation of those happenings (considered 'unreliable'). However, as I have argued in the introduction, there is no point at which a text like the *Chronike syngraphe* can be used as a 'reliable representation'.[381] The problems that Macrides identifies, and argues dominate the *Chronike syngraphe*, not only challenge the 'reliability' of its interpretive argument and explanatory observations, but the entirety of the text at every level, including what are often considered to be the basic 'facts' of 'what happened' in the past.

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[377] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 51-5.
[378] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 51, n. 311; 55-65.
[379] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 39.
[380] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 40.
[381] See above 0.2.

Further, I depart from Macrides' use of the biography of Akropolites to establish what the *Chronike syngraphe* means. First, in theoretical terms, because I do not believe that a text has just a single meaning, since meaning is located as much in the interpretation as the creation, and second, because Macrides' Akropolites is a product of the *Chronike syngraphe*, which (as Macrides has noted) is "the major source for his [Akropolites'] life".[382] Consequently, the 'real' Akropolites is as much a construct of the *Chronike syngraphe* as the textual statements that 'he' is used to explain. This is not to say that "the author's presentation of himself in his historical narrative" is not central to the meaning of the text, as Macrides has argued, but rather that there is effectively no author outside of the 'historical text'.[383] It therefore requires a circular logic to pluck the 'real' Akropolites out and then use him as if 'contextual' evidence to explain the text. It is not, as Macrides has argued, that "Akropolites' thirteenth century has become our thirteenth century", but rather that the *Chronike syngraphe*, the text itself, has become our thirteenth century.[384] The creation of a 'real' Akropolites to facilitate the interpretation of the *Chronike syngraphe* is a symptom of the failure to let go of the past in the historiography and as such it is complicit in both the category error and epistemological cheat that have dominated thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography.[385]

Macrides' differentiation between basic 'reliability' and interpretive 'bias', as well as her biographical focus on Akropolites, has come to dominate the most sophisticated contemporary approaches to the *Chronike syngraphe* as historiography. This can be seen in both Dimitri Korobeinikov's prefatory examination of the 'sources' for his study of Nikaian-Seljuk relations and Dimiter Angelov's study of Laskarid and Palaiologan rhetoric:

> As a witness, he [Akropolites] is very trustworthy, despite the attempt to vindicate Michael VIII Palaiologos, who usurped the throne. This, as well as his tendency to describe in greater detail the events in which he took part, makes his *History* to some extent 'incomplete'. Sometimes a very careful analysis of his text is needed in order to extract reliable information.[386]
>
> A close friend, teacher, and correspondent of Theodore II Laskaris, Akropolites was an unscrupulous and opportunistic man. Shortly after Theodore II's death in 1258, he

[382] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5.
[383] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 5.
[384] Macrides, *Akropolites*, ix, 5.
[385] See above 0.2.
[386] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 13; M. Kinloch, 'Review of D. Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century*, *EHR* 130 (2015), 699-700.

> switched his political allegiance from the Laskarids to the Palaiologoi, rose to the post of Michael VIII's grand logothete, and wrote a history of Nicaea from the Palaiologan perspective, in which he attacked Vatatzes and Theodore II.[387]

These two studies ask contrasting questions (and even types of question) of different bodies of medieval texts. However, both depend on the *Chronike syngraphe*, and Macrides' reading of it, for the basic narrative arc of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography. Macrides' approach has now come to dominate contemporary approaches to the *Chronike syngraphe*, although some contemporary historians continue to utilise the text less critically, especially where the text is being examined for its 'evidence' of something else, and some older texts continue to exercise influence over more recent scholarship.[388] However, her approach fundamentally fails to challenge the modern Nikaian narrative and metanarrative logic, which still reproduce the *Chronike syngraphe*'s partial, teleological, and Nikaian-/Palaiologan-centric narrative, as well as much of its Nikaian-centric terminology. The *Chronike syngraphe* is still treated as an emporium of knowledge about the past, and although its 'reliability' has been challenged, its absolute quality remains unquestioned. The *Chronike syngraphe* still provides modern historians with exactly what they are looking for, a (more or less) chronologically coherent text, written by an apparently well-informed member of the Nikaian/Palaiologan elite. It has consequently been treated as an interpretable (if not necessarily totally 'reliable') 'source', because its 'biases' have been made simple enough to make *the* 'meaning' of the text accessible.

1.6 – Beyond the *Chronike syngraphe*

The dominance of the *Chronike syngraphe* in modern historiographical constructions notwithstanding, numerous other texts have also been used by modern historians to construct the Byzantine past during the period between 1204 and 1261. These 'other' texts

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[387] Angelov, *Ideology*, 67.

[388] For example, see Angelakes, *μυστήριο*, 103, "Θέτει εξαρχής ως στόχο του την ιστορική αλήθεια με κάποια νηφαλιότητα και ως έναρξη της ιστορίας του επιλέγει την άλωση της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Το ιστορικό έργο του Γεωργίου Ακροπολίτη, η «*Χρονική συγγραφή*», πραγματεύεται τα γεγονότα από το 1203 ώς το 1261 κατά τρόπο κατά βάση αξιόπιστο και αμερόληπτο. [From the beginning, he sets out the historical truth with some sobriety and chooses the fall of Constantinople as a beginning of his history. The historical work of George Akropolites, the *Chronike syngraphe*, deals with happenings from 1203 to 1261 in a fundamentally reliable and impartial way.]" On older scholarship see above 1.3.

have either been incorporated into the Nikaian narrative that has been so decisively shaped by the *Chronike syngraphe*, or been used to construct alternative narratives, with a different geographical, temporal, or political focus. However, although other modern historiographical narratives have been constructed through the exploitation of alternative medieval texts, none has fundamentally disrupted the Nikaian narrative. Even when presented as counter-narratives, these 'alternatives' have tended to accept many of the Nikaian narrative's basic premises, whether terminological or conceptual. In this sub-chapter, I introduce the most important 'alternative' medieval texts for the construction of thirteenth-century Byzantine past. These 'other' texts have been less important for the construction of 'what happened' in the period than the *Chronike syngraphe* for one or more reasons. First, the scope of many of these texts is much more limited, either because they are 'documentary' texts or because they do not narrate the whole period (1204-61).[389] Second, many of these texts were composed later (often in the fourteenth century) and/or have been understood to be principally derived from earlier texts. In addition, I introduce the other modern historiographical discourses that have framed their study, with a particular focus on the manner in which they intersect with the modern Nikaian narrative, which they tend to complement rather than replace. My treatment of each of the texts and modern historiographical discourses aims to introduce, rather than provide exhaustive analysis. Furthermore, this sub-chapter is designed as a companion to chapter two, in which more detailed case studies provide a platform to expand my analysis of the medieval texts and modern discourses introduced here. For example, here I introduce several old French historiographical texts and their role in creating modern narratives about the Latin polity, but I only explore this more fully later (2.2), in my analysis of the so-called battle of Adrianople (1205).

The beginning and end of the period between 1204 and 1261 are the areas where the narration of the *Chronike syngraphe* overlaps most with other narrative historiographical texts. For the early period, the most important of these is the *Chronike diegesis* by Niketas

[389] On the arbitrary construction of 'documentary' texts see M. Vukašinović, 'Doing and Telling Administration and Diplomacy: Speech Acts in the 13th-Century Balkans', in M. Kinloch and A. MacFarlane (eds.), *Trends and Turning Points: Constructing the Late Antique and Byzantine World* (Leiden, in progress).

Choniates.[390] The *Chronike diegesis*, to which (as I have already mentioned) Hunger believed the *Chronike syngraphe* was appended as a "Fortsetzung [continuation]", is attested in three distinct groups of manuscripts, namely the *b(revior)*-, *a*(*uctior*)-, and LO-texts.[391] These different texts (or 'versions') respectively terminate their narratives in 1205, 1206, and 1210/1, overlapping with the beginning of the *Chronike syngraphe*.[392] The *Chronike diegesis* dominates twelfth-century Byzantine historiography in a similar fashion to the *Chronike syngraphe* in the thirteenth.[393] It has (if anything) been accorded greater 'reliability' than the *Chronike syngraphe*, for the passages of the early thirteenth century that it does narrate, because Choniates was both alive and politically active during the period, while Akropolites (1217-82) was then unborn, according to the *Chronike syngraphe*.[394] However, because the *Chronike diegesis* only narrates the first few years of the period (and only the first three or four in any detail), it has only had a limited impact on modern historiography of the wider period, although its 'evidence' has been used to augment the early narrative of the *Chronike syngraphe*.[395]

The most important surviving old French narrative historiographical texts, focusing on the so-called Latin empire of Constantinople, also overlap with the opening passages of the *Chronike syngraphe*.[396] The longest and most detailed narrative is presented by *La Conquête de*

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[390] J.-L. Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (Berlin, 1975); J.-L. Dieten, *Niketas Choniates: Erläuterung zu den Reden und Briefen nebst einer Biographie* (Berlin, 1971).

[391] Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 429-41, esp. 443. Alicia Simpson's recent study of the *Chronike diegesis* has dramatically transformed the study of the text. See Simpson, *Choniates*. On the importance of Simpson's contribution see Angold, 'Simpson', 298, "Niketas has at last found his historian"; A. Simpson and S. Efthymiadis (eds.), *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer* (Geneva, 2009); Simpson, *Choniates*, esp. 68-80.

[392] Note that there is also a *metaphrasitic/paraphrastic* 'version' of the text, which I discuss below, see 4.4.

[393] Note that this dominance is framed in empiricist terms. Simpson, *Choniates*, 1, "The text is unquestionably the single most important source for the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and has therefore rightly been considered essential for any reconstruction and interpretation of the period."

[394] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 6. For the *Chronike diegesis* as a 'reliable' source for Bulgarian historiography see Madgearu, *Asanids*, 2, "The most important one [Greek 'source'] is the history of Niketas Choniates, both because the author was contemporary with the events, and because his work provides detailed records." See below 1.6.

[395] For an example of its use, see below 2.2.

[396] Generally see P. Noble, 'Villehardouin, Robert de Clari and Henri de Valenciennes: Their Different Approaches to the Fourth Crusade', *The Medieval Chronicle* 1 (1999), 202-11; P. Noble, 'Eyewitnesses of the Fourth Crusade - The War against Alexius III', *Reading Medieval Studies* 25 (1999), 75-89; P. Noble,

Constantinople [*The Conquest of Constantinople*] by Geoffrey de Villehardouin, which narrates the story of the fourth crusade and its aftermath, from 1199 to 1207.[397] This narrative is picked up by its so-called 'continuation', the *Histoire de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople* [*History of the Emperor Henri of Constantinople*] by Henri de Valenciennes, which narrates part of the reign of the eponymous ruler of the so-called Latin empire.[398] However, since it only covers the period between 1208 and 1209, it cannot be said to be a literal continuation, although it certainly has been read as such.[399] Alongside these two texts is *La Conquête de Constantinople* [*The Conquest of Constantinople*] by Robert de Clari, which like the text of Villehardouin narrates the story of the fourth crusade and its aftermath up until 1216, although after 1205 there is very limited material.[400]

The two texts entitled *La Conquête de Constantinople*, by Villehardouin and Clari, have been relatively extensively studied as literary texts, at least in comparison to the *Chronike syngraphe*, because they are two of the earliest surviving French vernacular texts.[401] However in historiographical terms they have mostly been understood as contrasting 'sources' for the fourth crusade, with the former being used to represent the 'official' (and thus better informed, if 'biased') narrative of the crusade leadership (amongst whom Villehardouin was a notable figure) and the latter being used as representative of the 'rank and file' or middling knights, which was consequently differently positioned, but less well informed.[402] Like

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'The Importance of Old French Chronicles as Historical Sources of the Fourth Crusade and the Early Latin Empire of Constantinople', *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2001), 399-416.

[397] E. Faral (ed.), *La Conquête de Constantinople* (Paris, [1938-9] 1961), 2 vols. See also M. Wailly (ed.), *La Conquête de Constantinople* (Paris, 1882); C. Smith (trans.), *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (Harmondsworth, 2008), 1-135.

[398] J. Longnon (ed.), *Histoire de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople* (Paris, 1948).

[399] O. Cristea, 'L'épilogue de la quatrième croisade vu par Henri de Valenciennes', *Archaeus* 6 (2002), 195-204, esp. 196. There is a gap between the two texts, including the period between 4th September 1207 and 25th May 1208.

[400] P. Noble, (ed. and trans.), *La conquête de Constantinople* (Edinburgh, 2005), esp. 114-34 (§96-120). See also J. Dufournet (ed. and trans.), *Édition bilingue: publication, traduction, présentation et notes* (Paris, 2004). E. McNeal (trans.), *The Conquest of Constantinople* (Toronto, 1996).

[401] For example, see N. Guynn, 'Rhetoric and Historiography: Villehardouin's *La Conquête de Constantinople*' in W. Burgwinkle, *et al.* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of French Literature* (Cambridge, 2011), 102-10; J. Beer, *Villehardouin: Epic Historian* (Geneva, 1968).

[402] See A. Andrea, 'Essay on Primary Sources', in D. Queller and T. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1997), 302; Tricht, *Renovatio*, 5; G. Labory, 'Les debuts de la chronique en français (XIIe et XIIIe siècles)', in E. Kooper (ed.), *The Medieval Chronicle III* (Rodopi, 2004), 15-6; Y. Harari, 'Military Memoirs: A Historical Overview of the Genre from the Middle Ages to the Late Modern Era', *War in History* 14 (2007), 291, n. 9.

Akropolites' *Chronike syngraphe*, both *La Conquête de Constantinople* of Villehardouin and the *Histoire de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople* by Valenciennes have been understood as fundamentally 'trustworthy', although 'biased' in favour respectively of the crusade's leaders and the emperor Henri.[403]

Like the *Chronike diegesis*, these old French texts have served to complicate the earliest part of Nikaian narrative (especially 1204-1209). However, they have not fundamentally reshaped the narrative of the whole period, because they extend so little into it. Instead, they have played an important role in creating a complementary Latin narrative of 'decline', which inverts the teleology of the Nikaian narrative of 'reconquest':

> After the capture of the town, on the 9th of May 1204, Baldwin of Flanders was elected as emperor and 6 days later he was crowned in the church of Hagia Sophia. The new-born Empire lasted 57 years, until in 1261 Michael Palaiologos restored the Byzantine Empire by recapturing the capital during a surprise attack.[404]
>
> …the Latin Empire of Constantinople slowly withered away until its final demise, in 1261, with the imperial restoration of Michael VIII Palaeologus.[405]

Within the logic of this narrative the Latin empire was effectively a consequence of the fourth crusade, rather than an active military-political entity.[406] This presentation is partly a consequence of the three historiographical narratives introduced above, because in the texts by Clari and Villehardouin, all that followed the fall of Constantinople reads as an epilogue to the main narrative of the crusade.[407] Even the *Histoire de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople*, which generally strikes a more positive tone, reads as an epilogue, because it has become so firmly attached to the end of Villehardouin's *La conquête de Constantinople*.[408] Although these

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[403] Madgearu, *Asanids*, 5, "His account is precise and credible, although Geoffroy attempted to justify the diversion of the crusade towards the Byzantine Empire".
[404] B. Hendrickx, 'The Main Problems of the History of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1261)', *RBPH* 52 (1974), 787.
[405] F. Dall'Aglio, 'The Second Bulgarian Kingdom and the Latin Empire of Constantinople: A General Overview', *Palaeobulgarica* 37 (2013), 113.
[406] See below 2.2.
[407] On the transformation of style between first and second parts of *La conquête de Constantinople* see Beer, *Villehardouin*, 94; Cristea, 'L'épilogue'.
[408] I do not treat this text in detail below, nor has this relatively short text really been extensively analysed elsewhere. See J. Longnon, 'Sur l'*Histoire de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople* par Henri de Valenciennes', *Romania* 69 (1946), 198-241; L.-F. Flutre, '*L'Histoire de l'empereur Henri de Constantinople* par Henri de Valenciennes est-elle un poème dérimé?', *Romania* 65 (1939), 204-17; Noble, 'Approaches'; M. McCormick, 'Henri de Valenciennes', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford*

are by no means the only 'sources' used by modern historians to construct 'what happened' in the Latin polity in this period, the 'documentary', epistolographic, and other texts that have been used to construct the period have proved more difficult to marshal into a compelling narrative that contradicts the Nikaian narrative. Although drawing on a host of other texts, modern historians of the later Latin polity have been forced to depend on Nikaian texts for chronological and narrative framing, into which Latin texts have been inserted. Within the modern narrative of Latin 'decline', 'disasters' dominate the narrative, particularly the Latin defeat at Adrianople (1205) and various deaths of important crusade leaders (including but not limited to Baldwin of Flanders, Boniface of Montferrat, and Henri of Hainault).[409] These moments have contributed to the notion that the Latin 'empire' was fundamentally "stillborn", because of these misfortunes and the structural problems inherent in the initial division of territories, which left the 'emperor' weak in relation to the other Latin rulers and (in particular) the Venetians.[410]

At the other extreme of the Nikaian narrative is the *Syngraphikai historiai* by George Pachymeres, which covers only the last few years of the period, in a narrative stretching (more or less) from 1260 to 1308, although it refers back to earlier periods throughout the text.[411] Just as the *Chronike diegesis* and the old French texts, discussed above, are principally concerned with earlier events, the *Syngraphikai historiai* is focused on later happenings, to which the thirteenth century is merely a backdrop. The text is focused especially on the persons of Michael and Andronikos Komnenos-Palaiologos, and so the thirteenth-century elements of the text are principally related to the ascension of Michael.[412] The *Syngraphikai historiai* has been presented as a contrasting perspective to that of the *Chronike syngraphe*, in

Dictionary of Byzantium (Oxford, 1991), vol. 2, 913-4. The focus of the text and modern historiography has been focused on the person of Henri. S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 1951-4), vol. 3, 127. See below 3.

[409] See below 2.2.

[410] Lock, *Franks*, 43; Oikonomides, 'Décomposition'. I expand on this in my analysis below, see 2.2 and 2.6.

[411] Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 447-53; A. Failler, 'La tradition manuscrite de l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère (livres I-VI)', *RÉB* 37 (1979), 123-220; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 71-5.

[412] See below 2.6.

the sense that it is a pro-Laskaris and anti-Palaiologan.[413] This proves problematic, because it reduces the *Syngraphikai historiai* to a caricatured and subordinate inversion of the *Chronike syngraphe* when deployed as a source of the early thirteenth-century past.[414] Furthermore, it fails to fundamentally challenge the Nikaian-centric (Laskarid and Palaiologan) assumptions of the *Chronike syngraphe*.

In the *Rhomaike historia* by Nikephoros Gregoras, the period between 1204 and 1261 is narrated at the start of a text that stretches from 1204 to 1359.[415] Only the first four books of the thirty-seven book-long *Rhomaike historia* narrate this early period and the main focus of this text is on later happenings and in particular events that occurred in the author's lifetime. Composed in the fourteenth century, the text has principally been compared and contrasted with John Kantakouzenos' *Historie* (*Ἱστορίαι*), rather than earlier texts.[416] For the period between 1204 and 1261 the *Rhomaike historia* is relatively detailed. However, it is still rarely consulted, because its date of composition has been assumed to make it already less 'reliable' than the *Chronike syngraphe*.[417] The strict annalistic structure of the text, has also proved a barrier for historians, who have preferred the apparently more sophisticated *Chronike syngraphe*. Normally in modern historiography the *Rhomaike historia* is lucky to feature in a footnote if the 'same event' is also described in the *Chronike syngraphe*.[418]

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[413] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 71-5. For an example of their comparison see M. Avgerinou-Tzioga, 'The Murder of the Mouzalon Brothers in Byzantine Historiography', in S. Kotzabassi and G. Mavromatis (eds.), *Realia Byzantina* (Berlin, 2009), 13-6. See my critique below 1.6.

[414] For a similar analysis see below 4.2.

[415] Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 453-65; J.-L. Dieten (ed.), *Rhomäische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1973-2007), esp. vol. 1. For other texts by Gregoras and bibliography see, most recently, D. Manolova, *Discourses of Science and Philosophy in the Work of Nikephoros Gregoras* (Doctoral thesis for the Central European University, 2014), 21-6.

[416] A.-M. Talbot, 'Gregoras, Nikephoros', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 2, 875, "as a complement to the memoirs of Kantakouzenos". Generally see L. Schopen (ed.), *Ioannis Cantacuzeni Eximperatoris Historiarum* (Bonn, 1828-32), 3 vols; R. Trone (trans.), *The History of John Kantakouzenos (Book I): Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Thesis for the Catholic University of America, 1979); B. McLaughlin (trans.), *An Annotated Translation of John Kantakouzenos' Histories, Book III, Chapters 1-30* (Doctoral thesis for the University of London (Royal Holloway), 2017); T. Miller (trans.), *The History of John Kantakouzenos (Book IV): Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Thesis for the Catholic University of America, 1975); A. Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène en tant qu'oeuvre littéraire', *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 279-335.

[417] Note for example that Macrides implicitly dismisses the *Rhomaike historia* as being too late to be useful, when she ignores it in her section on "later writers": Macrides, *Akropolites*, 65-75.

[418] For an example of its comparative treatment, see below 2.3.

The anonymous *Synopsis chronike* (*Σύνοψις χρονική*), the *Chronike historia (Χρονικὴ ἱστορία)*, by Ephraim of Ainos, and the anonymous *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (*Ποίημα χρονικόν ἡμιτελές*), like the *Rhomaike historia*, also narrate the entire period from 1204 to 1261.[419] However, with some limited qualifications, they have all been considered to be of only limited historiographical value, because these texts are so closely related to the *Chronike syngraphe*, of which they have been considered to be *paraphrastic/metaphrastic* 'versions', containing little or no 'additional information' that was not already contained in the earlier and therefore 'more reliable' *Chronike syngraphe*. The only exception is the *Synopsis chronike*, which has been understood to provide a pro-Laskarid/anti-Palaiologan perspective, like the *Syngraphikai historiai* and unlike the *Chronike syngraphe*.[420] As such they have been treated principally as part of the text- and source-criticism of the *Chronike syngraphe*, rather than as 'sources'. I analyse these texts in considerable detail in chapter four, where I argue that a historiographical reading of these texts creates substantial problems for traditional historiography.[421]

With the exception of the old French texts, all these texts come from the Nikaian (or post-Nikaian/Palaiologan) tradition/perspective.[422] They therefore focus the majority of their attention on the Nikaian polity, even if, like the *Syngraphikai historiai* and *Synopsis chronike*, they offer contrasting perspectives to the *Chronike syngraphe*. However, other texts present contrasting narratives that focus on different matters, although most modern historians of Byzantium have only been interested in them to the extent to which they intersect with the Nikaian narrative. Modern Seljuk historiography intersects awkwardly with Byzantine historiography, despite recent work, particularly by Dimitri Korobeinikov, which has done much to bridge the gap.[423] The most important (Persian) Seljuk text for the study of both

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[419] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*. See below 4.2-4.

[420] See below 4.2.

[421] See below 4. Note that I only refer to these texts in a very limited way throughout chapter two, because to have engaged with them seriously would have proved impossible. However, I do try to draw attention to them in the footnotes.

[422] Regardless of whether the texts provide a Laskarid or Palaiologan preference.

[423] Korobeinikov, *Turks*. See also C. Melville, 'The Early Persian Historiography of Anatolia', in J. Pfeiffer and S. Quinn (eds.), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honour of John E. Woods* (Wiesbaden, 2006), 135-66, esp. 137-8; S. Yıldız, *Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Seljuk Anatolia: The Politics of Conquest and History Writing, 1243-1282* (Leiden, 2013).

thirteenth-century Rum Seljuk and Nikaian historiography is the *al-Awāmer al-ʿalāʾīya fi'l-omūr al-ʿalāʾīya* (hereafter *al-Awāmer*) by Ibn al-Bībī, al-Munajjima (hereafter Ibn Bībī), which narrates the Seljuk past from the reign of the sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I (*r.* 1192-96, 1204/5-10) (hereafter Kay-Khusraw) to that of Malek Ghiyāth al-Dīn Masʿūd II (*r.* 1283-98, 1303-08).[424] In many ways, the text presents similar problems to the *Chronike syngraphe*. The *al-Awāmer* not only reserves an important functional role for its own author and the events at which he was present, but also has a principal protagonist, in this case the sultan ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Kay-Qubād I (*r.* 1219-36), to whom the text is dedicated, who fulfils a similar role to Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos in the *Chronike syngraphe*.[425] Scholarly debate regarding this highly rhetorical text, written in high-/chancery-style, has also revolved around similar questions of *littérarité* and 'reliability', as summarised by Korobeinikov:[426]

> Despite all the difficulties that the works of Ibn Bībī and Āqsarāyī pose to the historian (poor chronology, didacticism, incompleteness, sophisticated rhetorical style), these sources are nevertheless very reliable, because real, historically documented, and carefully chosen facts stand behind their text.[427]

Korobeinikov's approach here, matches his conception of the *Chronike syngraphe*, which I have already critiqued.[428] Here, his approach also places Korobeinikov (philosophically and practically speaking) closer to Treadgold and earlier Byzantinists than Macrides. Like the *Chronike syngraphe*, the *al-Awāmer* also survives in a *metaphrastic/paraphrastic* 'version', referred to as the *Mukhtaṣar* [*Abridgement*], which is securely dated to the years immediately

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[424] To these the *Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār* (1323) by Āqsarāyī and the anonymous *Tārīkh-I āl-I Saljūq* (*c.* 1299) should be added, but I do not engage with them in detail in this thesis. Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 22-35.

[425] See above 1.5.

[426] For Ibn Bībī's epic style see the portrayal of Kay-Khusraw's confrontation with a Latin knight in Constantinople: Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.), 27-31 (§14-8); D. Korobeinikov, 'A Sultan in Constantinople: The Feasts of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I', in L. Brubaker and K. Linardou (eds.), *Eat, Drink and Be Merry (Luke 12: 19): Food and Wine in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2007), 98-9.

[427] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 32. See also A. Beihammer, 'Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine-Seljuk Relations', *Speculum* 86 (2011), 597-651; N. Asutay-Effenberger and F. Daim, *Der Doppeladler: Byzanz und die Seldschuken in Anatolien vom späten 11. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert* (Mainz, 2015). On Persian/Seljuk historiography, following Korobeinikov, see B. Spuler, 'The Evolution of Persian Historiography', in B. Lewis and P. Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* (London, 1962), 126-32, esp. 132; K. Luther, 'Islamic Rhetoric and the Persian Historians', in J. Bellamy (ed.), *Studies in Near Eastern Culture and History* (Ann Arbor, 1990), 90-8.

[428] See above 1.5. See Kinloch, 'Korobeinikov'.

after the composition of the 'unabridged version' (*c.* 1281-3).[429] However, in direct contrast to the Byzantine/Greek tradition, the *Mukhtaṣar* has been preferred to the 'unabridged version' of the text.[430] Modern Byzantine historians, who have generally only had access to the text through the *Mukhtaṣar* in German translation, do not invoke it as a narrative whole, but in chunks, where it can be compared and contrasted to Greek texts.[431] The problems caused by such a fragmented approach to the text are illustrated by my analysis of the so-called battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander in chapter two.[432] Similarly, my analysis of this event exposes the intersection of the modern historiographical narrative that dominates the historiography of the late Rum Seljuk polity with the Nikaian narrative. In short, thirteenth-century Seljuk historiography is understood as a period of 'fragmentation' and 'decline' in the face of internal divisions within the ruling family, following the conflict over the division of the patrimony of ʿIzz al-Dīn Kılıç Arslān bin Masʿūd II (hereafter Kılıç Arslān) (*r.* 1156-92) between eleven of his relatives, and external threats from the expanding Georgian polity, Mongol incursions, and ultimately the rise of the Ottomans.[433] This negative narrative of Seljuk historiography has complemented the Nikaian narrative.[434]

The *Chronicle of Morea* is the most important narrative historiographical 'source' for modern constructions of the so-called principality of Achaea, a Latin polity mostly focused on the Morea in southern Greece.[435] However, it has also been used as a 'source' for the Nikaian, Epirot, and various other polities, especially in the middle and late thirteenth century. The *Chronicle of Morea*, or more accurately the *Chronicles of Morea*, survives in five 'versions', two Greek (the HT and P 'versions'), one old French, one Italian, and one Aragonese, although

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[429] H. Duda, 'Zur Geschichtsforschung über die Rum-Seldschuken', *ZDMG* 89 (1935), 20.
[430] Throughout this thesis I follow Korobeinikov in referencing the *Mukhtaṣar*. I do so, because it is the only text accessible to me, and then only in German translation. H. Duda (trans.), *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bibi* (Copenhagen, 1959). However, Korobeinikov does so out of choice, a strange decision considering his position regarding *littérarité*: Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 23. On *metaphrasis* see below 4, esp. 4.4.
[431] See below 1.6.
[432] See below 2.3.
[433] Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman*, 111; A. Peacock, 'Georgia and the Anatolian Turks in the 12th and 13th Centuries', *Anatolian Studies* 56 (2006), esp. 128; J. Langdon, 'Byzantium's Initial Encounter with the Chinggisids: An Introduction to the Byzantino-Mongolica', *Viator* 29 (1998), 95-140.
[434] See below 2.4.
[435] For example, see I. Božilov, 'La « Chronique de Moree » et l'histoire de Bulgarie au debut du XIIIe siecle (1204-1207)', *BHR*/*RBH* 5 (1977), 37-57.

all five are hypothesised to be transformations of an 'original' Greek text, said to have been composed in the fourteenth century.[436] When utilised as a historiographical 'source', modern historians generally only deploy the oldest surviving (HT) Greek 'version', which is considered to be 'closest to the original'.[437] Less often the (next oldest) old French text, is also deployed alongside the HT-Greek text, if there are considerable variations.[438] As will become clear from my analysis in chapter two, the *Chronicle of Morea* has tended to be ranked lowest amongst the narrative texts used by modern historians to construct the thirteenth-century past, because of its late date of composition, its low-brow vernacular, and (in the Greek) its verse form:[439]

> The *Chronicle* is a major witness to the forms of vernacular Greek at this time. The unknown author shows good knowledge of the legal niceties of the Moreot feudal procedure and is more familiar with the council chamber than the battlefield; on events outside the Morea he is totally unreliable.[440]

As with the modern historiographies of the so-called Latin empire and the Seljuks of Rum, the narrative arc of the story that is told about the principality of Achaea dovetails into the

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[436] J. Schmitt (ed.), *The Chronicle of Morea* (London, 1904); P. Kalonaros (ed.), *Τὸ Χρονικὸν τοῦ Μορέως* (Athens, 1940); Longnon, *Livre*; A. Morel-Fatio and J. Heredia (eds.), *Libro de los fechos et conquistas del Principado de Morea* (Geneva, 1885); C. Hopf (ed.), *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues* (Berlin, 1873), 414-68. For a full introduction to the texts and manuscript tradition see T. Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea: Historiography in Crusader Greece* (Oxford, 2009), esp. 31-52; D. Jacoby, 'Quelques considérations sur les versions de la Chronique de Morée', *Journal des savants* 3 (1968), 133-89.

[437] For an analysis of the relative statuses of the eight manuscripts (and the five traditions) see Shawcross, *Morea*, esp. 39-42. The perceived lack of importance of the younger texts have had consequences beyond historiography. Kalonaros, for example, only edited the HT-Greek 'version'. Kalonaros, *Χρονικὸν*.

[438] Note that this is a highly simplistic summary. For details see Shawcross, *Morea*, esp. 31-52. For a historiographical analysis of the value of the respective texts see Longnon, *Livre*, xxi-lxxxvi.

[439] See below 2.2 and 2.6. For recent bibliography and less prescriptive historiographical approaches to the texts see C. Marboeuf, *La Chronique de Morée, Structures narratives et temps du révolu* (Doctoral Thesis for the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales Paris, 2009); T. Shawcross, 'Oral Residue and Narrative Structure in the Chronicle of Morea', *Byzantion* 75 (2005), 310-33. On *politikos stichos* see J. Soltic, *The Late Medieval Greek πολιτικὸς στίχος Poetry: Language, Metre and Discourse* (Doctoral Thesis for Ghent University, 2015). Note that the *Chronicle of Morea* is mostly used, like the Seljuk texts, for individual pieces of 'evidence' rather than as a narrative whole. See also M. Jeffreys, *Studies in the Language and Style of the Medieval Greek Chronicle of Morea* (Doctoral Thesis for King's College London, 1972); M. Jeffreys, '*The Chronicle of Morea* – A Greek Oral Poem?', in M. Berza and E. Stanescu (eds.), *Actes du XIVe Congrès international des études byzantines* (Bucarest, 1975), vol. 2, 153-8.

[440] E. Jeffreys, 'Chronicle of the Morea', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 1, 446.

Nikaian narrative. The confluence of these two historiographical narratives comes in the narration of the so-called battle of Pelagonia (1259), discussed below.[441] This story of the polity up to that point has been described as the "apogee" or "golden age" of Frankish Morea, but after the defeat in this battle has been conceived of in terms of the 'decline' and gradual (if inevitable) 'recession' of the polity, in the face of both the 'return' and 'reconquest' of the Nikaians (variously termed Byzantines, Greeks, or Romans) and the polity's increasing dependence on the Angevin 'kingdom', formalised by the treaty of Viterbo (1267).[442] Although more recent trends in scholarship have tended to present the Latin polities, and especially the principality of Achaea, as culturally hybrid societies, this dramatic transformation and sophisticated analysis has not generally been framed by any attempt to rethink 'what happened' in military-political terms, either in the Morea or the wider Aegean world.[443] These, more nuanced approaches to the *Chronicle of Morea*, and the ethnic and social hybridity of the polity it constructs, have the potential to undermine the Nikaian narrative of 'reconquest', built as it is on simplistic oppositional binaries of Byzantine and Latin. However, largely because of its geographical focus on the Morea and its perceived 'unreliability', the *Chronicle of Morea* tends to be subordinated to the Nikaian narrative of reconquest or (at best) presented as an exception, rather than offered as a challenge to the fundamental presentation of 'what happened' offered by the Nikaian narrative.

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[441] See below 2.6.

[442] Shawcross, *Morea*, 238-54; J. Longnon, *L'Empire Latin de Constantinople* (Paris, 1949), 69; S. Runciman, *Mistra: Byzantine Capital of the Peloponnese* (London, 1980), esp. 35-7, especially the chapter entitled "The Return of the Greeks"; Miller, *Latins*, 82-160, especially the chapter entitled "The Greek Revival (1262-1278)"; A. Arsdall and H. Moody, *The Old French Chronicle of Morea: An Account of Frankish Greece After the Fourth Crusade* (Farnham, 2015), 15-6.

[443] Shawcross, *Morea*; T. Shawcross, 'The Lost Generation (c. 1204-c. 1222): Political Allegiance and Local Interests in the Crusader Lands', in J. Herrin and G. Saint-Guillain (eds.), *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (Farnham, 2011), 9-46; T., Shawcross, ''Listen, All of You, Both Franks and Romans': The Narrator in the Chronicle of Morea', in R. Macrides (ed.), *Byzantine History as Literature* (Aldershot, 2010), 91-109; T., Shawcross, 'Greeks and Franks after the Fourth Crusade: Identity in the Chronicle of Morea', in A. Lambert and H. Nicholson (eds.), *Languages of Love and Hate: Conflict, Communication, and Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2012), 141-57. See also S. McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia, 2000); N. Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204-1282* (Turnhout, 2012); J. Harris, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World After 1150* (Oxford, 2012).

The medieval texts produced in the Epirot polity are more explicitly anti-Nikaian. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the legitimacy of the Epirot polity to even exist is a foundational assumption of texts such as the *Chronike syngraphe*.[444] These texts have even been used to oppose Nikaian-centrism by some modern scholars.[445] However, such attempts have been prevented from developing into an alternative paradigm by the vast imbalance in textual survival.[446] The main problem is that there is no narrative historiographical equivalent of the *Chronike syngraphe* or even the *Chronicle of Morea*, that tells the story of the Epirot polity:

> A very distorted picture of the relative importance of the Despotate of Epiros and the Kingdom of Nicaea is presented by the only contemporary historian of this critical period of the Byzantine Empire, George Akropolites. Akropolites, who lived at Nicaea, shared first in the suspicion and later in the open hostility of the Nicene Emperors towards Epiros. The purpose of his work was to prove to succeeding generations that the history of the Kingdom of Nicaea unfolded inexorably and by divine right towards the restoration of Byzantium; and through his careful account of this partisan conception has been accepted as historically just. Unfortunately no contemporary history of Epiros has survived to state the claims of the Despotate in equal terms, and such manuscripts as outlived the whims and rapacities of the various Turkish governors of Epiros go back no further than the fourteenth century.[447]

Instead the principal texts that survive from the Epirot polity are normally categorised as 'documentary' or epistolary, in particular the large corpus of letters and legal judgements of the trinity of Epirot bishops (John Apokaukos, Demetrios Chomatenos, and George Bardanes).[448] This relatively disparate collection of material has been organised into counter-

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[444] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 94-7. See above 1.5. Although it should be noted that the *Chronike syngraphe* also presents Latin polities in this way.
[445] See below 1.6.
[446] See above 0.2.
[447] Nicol, *Despotate*, x.
[448] Only the corpus of Chomatenos exists in a full modern edition, while the others are scattered across various publications. For example, see G. Prinzing (ed.), *Ποικίλματα Διάφορα* (Berlin, 2002); N. Bees, 'Unedierte Schriftstücke aus der Kanzlei des Johannes Apokaukos des Metropoliten von Naupaktos (in Aetolien)', *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 21 (1971-4), 57-160; A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Κερκυραϊκά. Ἰωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος καὶ Γεώργιος Βαρδάνης', *VV* 13 (1906), 335-51; A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Ἰωάννης Ἀπόκαυκος καὶ Νικήτας Χωνιάτης', Τεσσαρακονταετηρὶς τῆς καθηγεσίας Κ. Σ. Κόντου (Athens, 1909), 375-82; A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Συνοδικὰ γράμματα Ἰωάννου τοῦ Ἀποκαύκου, Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου', *Βυζαντίς* 1 (1909-10), 8-30; S. Pétridès, 'Jean Apokaukos, Lettres et autres documents inédits', *Известия Русского Археологического Института в Константинополе* 14 (1909), 72-100; E. Kurtz, 'Christophoros von Ankyra als Exarch der Patriarchen Germanos', *BZ* 16 (1907), 120-42; R.-J. Loenertz, 'Lettre de Georges Bardanès, métropolite de Corcyre,

narratives by some scholars, focusing on the Epirot polity, most notably Alkmene Stavridou-Zafraka, Donald Nicol, and Apostolos Karpozilos:

> George Acropolites, a contemporary court historian, is the main source of the political history of the Kingdom of Nicaea for the first part of the thirteenth century. An ardent supporter of the Lascarids, he wrote the *Χρονικὴ Συγγραφή* which covers the period 1203-1261. In this biased account, Epiros is described as a state led by treacherous opportunists who did not recognize the legitimate heirs to the Byzantine throne. This view was adopted by subsequent Byzantine historians and even modern scholars. The discovery of other contemporary sources led to the rectification of this conception. / Through these sources, the history of the origin and the expansion of the principality of Epiros can now be studied objectively and systematically.[449]

However, not only have such analyses been couched in the sort of empiricism attested in Karpozilos' statement, but the available texts have proved insufficiently coherent to produce a counter-narrative that is capable of confronting the Nikaian narrative on its own terms. The lack of medieval narrative historiographical texts means that modern Narrative Histories of Epiros are always dependent on the framework of the Nikaian narrative.[450] These texts allow the detailed study of ecclesiastical power structures and jurisprudence, but cannot offer an equally compelling military and political account of 'what happened' in the period.[451] As I have already demonstrated above in terminological and conceptual terms, and as I argue below with specific examples, the historiography of the Epirot polity, both in specific readings and as a conceptual whole, is still subordinated to the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative.[452]

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au patriarche oecuménique Germain II 1226-1227 c.', *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν* 33 (1964), 104-18. For a more detailed list of texts attributed to John Apokaukos see Nicol, *Despotate*, 217-9. See also E. Kurtz, 'Georgios Bardanes, Metropolit von Kerkyra', *BZ* (1906), 603-13; J. Hoeck and R.-J. Loenertz, *Nikolaos-Nektarios von Otranto, Abt von Casole: Beiträge zur Geschichte der ost-westlichen Beziehungen unter Innozenz III. und Friedrich II.* (Ettal, 1965), 180, 196-7, 207-9; M. Roncaglia, *Georges Bardanès, Métropolite de Corfou, et Barthelemy de l'ordre Franciscain, Les discussions sur le purgatoire* (Rome, 1953), 56-70.

[449] Karpozilos, *Controversy*, 11.

[450] Most obviously in the terminology allocated to the name of the polity itself. See for example B. Osswald, *L'Epire du treizième au quinzième siècle : autonomie et hétérogénéité d'une région balkanique* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Toulouse, 2011). See above 1.4.

[451] See for example P. Magdalino, 'A Neglected Authority for the History of the Peloponnese in the Early Thirteenth Century: Demetrios Chomatianos, Archbishop of Bulgaria', *BZ* 70 (1977), 316-23. For a major example of this see below 4.

[452] See below 2.5 and 2.6.

The Trapezuntine polity suffers from the same problem as the Epirot polity, because although a historiographical text, by Michael Panaretos, composed in Trebizond, which narrates the period 1203-1426 survives, the *Περὶ τῶν τῆς Τραπεζοῦντος βασιλέων* [Concerning the Megaloi Komnenoi], it provides very limited presentations of the lives of the first two rulers, relevant for the study of this period:[453]

> The chronicle clearly provides a local perspective on Trapezuntine events, counterbalancing the biased perspective on Trebizond easily formed when relying on Constantinopolitan sources.[454]

As a consequence, the story of the early Trapezuntine polity has principally been constructed by its enemies. The result has been the subsumation of the polity's historiography into the narratives of its two major military and political rivals, the Nikaian and Seljuk polities, a phenomenon that is most obvious in the presentation of the so-called fall of Sinope (1214).[455]

No narrative historiographical text has survived from the thirteenth-century Bulgarian polity. Consequently, the Bulgarian (like the Epirot) polity has principally been constructed from a combination of 'documentary' texts and narrative texts from both the Greek/Nikaian (most importantly the *Chronike syngraphe*) and western (principally old French) traditions.[456] Readings of these texts have tended to be channelled by modern nationalist and historical materialist projects.[457] The historiography of the early years of the so-called second Bulgarian empire has focused around a narrative of ethnic and national narratives of 'renewal', 'liberation', and 'reconquest', in the image of the so-called first Bulgarian empire:[458]

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[453] O. Lampsides (ed.), *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παναρέτου Περὶ τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν* (Athens, 1958), 61-81; (trans.) A. Asp-Talwar, 'The Chronicle of Michael Panaretos', in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Byzantium's Other Empire: Trebizond* (Istanbul, 2016), 188-208; A. Vasiliev, 'The Empire of Trebizond in History and Literature', *Byzantion* 15 (1940-1), 333. The text focuses on the reign of Alexios III Komnenos (*r.* 1349-90). Asp-Talwar, 'Panaretos', 174.

[454] Asp-Talwar, 'Panaretos', 174.

[455] See below 2.4.

[456] Madgearu, *Asanids*, 1-10.

[457] Dall'Aglio, 'Overview', 111-2. For an explanation with an archaeological and economic focus see P. Murdzhev, *The Medieval Town in Bulgaria, Thirteenth to Fourteenth Century* (Doctoral Thesis for Florida State University, 2008), 34-40.

[458] F. Dall'Aglio, 'Shifting Capitals and Shifting Identities: Pliska, Preslav, Tărnovo and the Self-Perception of a Medieval Nation', *Bulgaria Medievalis* 2 (2011), 587-601. With a strong focus on

> Болгарская государственность была **восстановлена** в результате победоносного восстания (1185-1186) братьев Асеня и Петра, его руководителей и первых венценосцев Второго болгарского царства…вооруженной борьбы за **освобождение** болгар от византийского владычества, начавшейся с восстания 1185-1187.[459] [Bulgarian statehood was **restored** as a result of the victorious uprising (1185-1186) of the brothers Asen and Peter, its leaders and the rulers [lit. first-crowned men] of the second Bulgarian kingdom…armed struggle for the **liberation** of the Bulgarians from Byzantine domination, which began with the uprising of 1185-1187.]

This modern narrative (buttressed by medieval texts), which projects continuity back to the seventh to eleventh centuries, despite its Bulgarian-centrism has served to reinforce the basic assumptions of the Nikaian narrative and its metanarrative logic, because it frames the Bulgarian polity as 'other'. In emphasising the non-Roman qualities of the polity, the narrative of Bulgarian, 'renewal', 'liberation', and 'reconquest' serves to remove the Bulgarian polity as a potentially legitimate successor to the old Byzantine empire. Indeed, meaning in Bulgarian historiography has even come to be assigned according to the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative. For example, in championing the role of the Bulgarian polity, Vasil Gjuzilev claims importance for the Bulgarians for their role in the Nikaian 'reconquest':

> It is stressed that, once the Latins had conquered Constantinople in 1204, the Bulgarian Kingdom emerged on the historical scene as the main support and defender of the Balkan Orthodox world. It played, having been the main ally of Nicaea, an important role in restoring of the Byzantine Empire in 1261.[460]

Similarly, as I argue below, the Bulgarian victory at Adrianople (1205), has been elevated to importance, because of its role in the Nikaian narrative, rather than Bulgarian historiography.[461] From the 1240s onwards, the Bulgarian polity is presented as going into 'decline', under pressure from the Mongols and to a lesser extent the Nikaians.[462] This

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questions of the ethnic makeup of the polity, particularly the proportions of Vlachs, Bulgarians, and Cumans.

[459] T. Pavlovska, 'Царь Калоян и битва под Адрианополем - 14 апреля 1205 г.', *BHR*/*RBH* 13 (2006), 25; 27. Emphasis added. Note also the historical materialist undertones of "вооруженной [armed struggle]".

[460] V. Gjuzelev, 'Българското царство през XIII век: насоки и фактори във външната му политика', *ZRVI* 46 (2009), 128.

[461] See below 2.2.

[462] Magdearu, *Asanids*, 228-66, "Chapter 9: The Decline of the Asanid State (1241-1280)". On the Mongols see J. Giebfried, 'The Mongol Invasions and the Aegean World (1241-61)', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 28 (2013), 129-39; D. Morgan, 'The Mongols and the Eastern Mediterranean', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4 (1989), 198-211.

trajectory also fits well into the Nikaian narrative, since it opens a vacuum for the Nikaian polity to expand into, allowing emphasis to shift from Bulgaria to the Nikaians' southern 'rivals', who would be defeated at the battle of Pelagonia (1259).[463]

1.7 – Preliminary conclusions

In this chapter, I introduced the Nikaian narrative, the metanarrative logic that sustains it, and a host of (terminological and conceptual) problems that accompany its domination of modern historiographical presentations of the period between 1204 and 1261. I then explored the origins of this modern historiographical construct, first (briefly) in modern historiographical discourse and then (at greater length) in the medieval texts that have been most influential in the Nikaian narrative's construction. Beginning with a detailed examination of the *Chronike syngraphe*, which dominates modern historiography of the period, I then introduced a host of other texts, with which its presentation of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world intersects in a range of ways.

As well as setting out some of the central argumentative strands of the thesis, the analysis of this chapter, provides a foundation for the more detailed textual analysis of specific events and characters that follow in chapters two and three. However, it also speaks to a wider problem (or rather phenomenon) in Byzantine historiography, because much of Byzantine (and other pre-modern) historiography is dominated by a handful of narrative texts, which like the *Chronike syngraphe* are teleological and ideologically positioned. Most closely related to the topic of this thesis is the dependence of modern 'reconstructions' of both twelfth-century Byzantium and the principality of Achaea, respectively, on Choniates' *Chronike diegesis* and the multiplicitous *Chronicle of Morea*.[464] However, the problems created by the ideological and teleological positioning of dominant elements of the so-called 'source record' can be seen in a variety of other periods. Perhaps the clearest examples can be seen in modern attempts to 'reconstruct' the reigns of the much-maligned Iconoclast emperors and Michael III (842-67) from, respectively, anti-Iconoclast and pro-Makedonian texts.[465] Thus,

[463] See above 1.2 and below 2.6.
[464] Shawcross, *Morea*, esp. 22-8; Simpson, *Choniates*, esp. 1-2
[465] For discussion and bibliography see L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680-850* (Cambridge, 2011), esp. 772-99; S. Tougher, 'After Iconoclasm (850-886)', in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, 2008), esp. 292, nn. 1-6.

although this thesis focuses on a relatively narrow period of Byzantine historiography, it also offers avenues for further comparative analysis within Byzantine studies.

2 – Events

> Historical narratives run much too smoothly to support any claim to realistic representation of the events they feature as their subject matter.[466]

2.1 – Introduction: Events and battles

In contemporary historiographical narratives of thirteenth-century Byzantium and (as Hayden White has observed) most other modern historiography, 'event' is understood to mean essentially anything that happened in the past:

> For modern historical studies, a historical event is any occurrence that lends itself to investigation by the techniques and procedures currently in force among the guild of professional historians.[467]

For example, Michael Angold, Cecily Hilsdale, and Peter Lock used the word 'event' respectively, to describe the fall of Constantinople in 1204, the ceremonial entrance (*adventus*) of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos into Constantinople in 1261, and the death of Henri de Hainault.[468] These three examples describe happenings in the past of different magnitudes and complexities. For example, 1204 might be broken down into the first assault of the crusaders, the stealing of relics, the singing of a prostitute on the patriarch's throne, the stubbing of Niketas Choniates' toe, and so on, while Michael's *adventus* could be incorporated into a larger (more complex) 'event', such as the conquest of Constantinople in 1261.[469] It proves difficult to define eventfulness in practical terms, because 'events' have no

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[466] H. White, 'The Historical Event', *Differences* 19 (2008), 17.

[467] White, 'Event', 11. See also H. White, 'The Narrativization of Real Events' *CI* 7 (1981), 793-8.

[468] Angold, *Crusade*, xi, "1204 is an event that has been hanging over me ever since many years ago I embarked on a study of the Nicaean Empire…"; Hilsdale, *Decline*, 28, "Contemporary historian George Akropolites, who witnessed the event, emphasises the reverential tone of the 1261 *adventus*"; Lock, *Franks*, 19, "the last event he [Robert de Clari] recorded was the death of the emperor Henry in June 1216."

[469] S. Zizek, *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (London, 2014), 1, "an event – an amphibious notion with even more than fifty shades of grey. An 'Event' can refer to a devastating natural disaster or to the latest celebrity scandal, the triumph of the people or a brutal political change, an intense experience of a work of art or an intimate decision." Sometimes the multiplicity of such actions are presented through use of the plural. See Bartusis, *Army*, 122, "the events of 1453".

scale, temporal duration, or any other intrinsic limit, as narratologist Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan has eloquently stated:

> Just as any single event may be decomposed into a series of mini-events and intermediary states, so-conversely – a vast number of events may be submerged under a single event-label (e.g. 'The Fall of the Roman Empire'). This is why it may be difficult at some times to maintain an absolute distinction between the notion of 'event' and that of 'succession of events'.[470]

What constitutes 'a historical event' is determined by the positioning of action within a narrative, rather than by any quality of that action itself. Just as the fall of Constantinople can function as beginning, middle, or end (depending on narrative context), so too it can function as a single event, a sequence (or non-sequential multitude) of events, or even as a whole narrative by itself. Since eventness is a property of narrative discourse, rather than the past, I propose to treat the events that make up the Nikaian narrative of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography as what they are, narrative constructs, not representations of past action. This means beginning with a narratological definition. I understand *an event* very simply as a transformation or transition from one state to another.[471] Narratological theorists have long considered events to be central to narratives, with some narratologists even arguing that 'representing' events is *the* core characteristic of narrative discourse.[472]

Within the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative military (and political) events almost entirely monopolise the allocation of significance, because they are the most obvious expressions of movement towards the telos of 'reconquest'. The dominance of military action found in the modern Nikaian narrative and metanarrative are also found in the Byzantine texts, from which they are drawn, which are also predisposed to emphasising military events.[473] The *prooimion* of the *Chronike syngraphe* gives a flavour of its military (and political) focus, in a

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[470] S. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London, 1983), 17.
[471] M. Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto, 2009), 6.
[472] D. Herman, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln NE, 2002), esp. 27-51; 'Events and Event-Types', in D. Herman, *et al.* (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* (London, 2005), 151-2. Events themselves have been understood as inherently narratival. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (trans.) J. Lewin (Ithaca, [1983] 1988), 19, "For me, as soon as there is an action or an event, even a single one, there is a story because there is a transformation, a transition from an earlier state to a later resultant state…" Note that in this chapter, I generally deploy narratological tools. See above 0.2.
[473] On this see Kaldellis, 'Manufacture', 294.

passage in which the narrator described what both he and the authors he sought to emulate and surpass were primarily interested in:

> τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γεγενημένα τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως πολλοῖς τε καὶ πολλάκις ἐξιστορήθη, οὐ χρὴ δὲ λέγειν καὶ εἰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ πλείους ἠναντιοφώνησαν τὰ τῶν βασιλέων συγγράφοντες, ἀλλοιώσεις τε χωρῶν καὶ πόλεων στάσεις καὶ πολέμων συρρήξεις καὶ ἀνδραποδισμοὺς καὶ νίκας καὶ ἥττας καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα συμβαίνει τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς.[474] [However, events from the beginning of the creation of the world have been narrated by many people at many times; one need not mention the fact that most writers of history have contradicted each other in writing about emperors' reigns, territorial change and civic uprisings, the outbreak of wars, enslavements, victories and defeats and all the kinds of things that happen in our times.][475]

Military and political "events/happenings [τὰ…γεγενημένα/ὅσα τοιαῦτα]" dominate the *prooimion*, to the exclusion of almost all other topics. Although the *Chronike syngraphe* does narrate other action, the promise of the *prooimion* is fully realised in a text, which is dominated by military conflict and emperors.[476] Furthermore, the modern Nikaian narrative not only (re)produces its 'main source's' proclivity for military affairs, but often even surpasses it, especially in its more condensed forms.[477]

In medieval and Byzantine military historiography significance is often reserved for major confrontations, normally pitched battles between opposing armies. These battles function as narratival events, which both cause and signpost the transition from one state to another. Battles stand out from the maelstrom of medieval warfare as curiously simple binary affairs. Competitors are divided into opposing sides. For a fixed moment in time, complexity and nuance can be drained from human action, which can be ordered by the dichotomised binaries of us and them, winners and losers.[478] So useful are battles for telling stories and constructing meaning that they feature prominently in many historiographical narratives.

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[474] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 4.5-11 (§1).
[475] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 105.
[476] On the role of rulers see below 3.3.
[477] See above 1.2.
[478] Y. Harari, 'The Concept of "Decisive Battles" in World History', *Journal of World History* 18 (2007), 262: "…battles have a wonderful capacity to simplify history, because they are abnormally dichotomous affairs. History is normally so complex and murky because there is very little in human reality that can be reduced to clear-cut dichotomies. But battles, at least prior to 1914, defied this reality, and seem to have arranged human reality in perfect dichotomies. All the dichotomies that elude historians in human reality, and even all the dichotomies that elude military historians in military reality, make a rare and fleeting appearance in battle."

Battles, dubbed 'significant', 'decisive', or 'important', have habitually been deployed in medieval and modern historiography, to describe and explain phenomena as grand as the so-called collapse of civilisations.[479] The battle of Manzikert is perhaps the most obvious example from Byzantine historiography of a battle being used to describe and explain both short- and long-term social, economic, military, and political change.[480] Much of the argument of this chapter is therefore also applicable to other historiographical contexts, Byzantine and non-Byzantine. In this chapter, when I use the term 'battle', I am referring to the narrativised and constructed event. When referring to the action these battle-events purport to represent I prefer to use the term 'confrontation', not because it is a more objective linguistic sign for the representation of past action, but because this cumbersome term serves to destabilise expectations and constantly emphasise the complexity of military interactions.[481] Here I confront traditional empiricist conceptions of battles, events, and facts, since battles have often been presented as unproblematic examples of 'factual' past happenings by empiricist historians. For example, both Carr and Marwick use the battle of Hastings in 1066 as an example of a "simple" or "basic" fact.[482] However, although events like battles might be basic in the sense that they constitute foundational elements of

[479] This was most explicitly in vogue in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the Narrative Histories of thirteenth-century Byzantium were written. See above 1.2. For examples see E. Creasy, *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: From Marathon to Waterloo* (New York, 1851); G. Malleson, *The Decisive Battles of India: From 1746 to 1849 Inclusive* (London, 1883); T. Knox, *Decisive Battles since Waterloo: The Most Important Events from 1815 to 1887* (New York, 1887); F. Whitton, *The Decisive Battles of Modern Times* (London, 1923); J. Fuller, *A Military History of the Western World* (New York, 1954-6), 3 vols. However, this same logic, albeit less explicitly, still underpins Byzantinists' treatment of military action. See for example Bartusis, *Army*; W. Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army: 284-1081* (Stanford, 1995). Less simplistically, see also S. Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium 1204-1453* (Leiden, 2011); J. Haldon, *Byzantium at War: AD 600-1453* (Oxford, 2003).

[480] J.-C. Cheynet, 'Mantzikert: un désastre militaire?', *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 410-38; A. Bryer, (ed.), *Manzikert to Lepanto: The Byzantine World and the Turks 1071-1571: Papers given at the Nineteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1985* (Amsterdam, 1991); D. Nicolle, *Manzikert 1071: The Breaking of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2013). For more detail see C. Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert* (Edinburgh, 2007); A. Fromherz, 'Making 'Great Battles' Great: Christian and Muslim Views of Las Navas de Tolosa', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 4 (2012), 33-8. For the argument that Manzikert led to a transformation in Byzantine historiography see A. Karpozilos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι* (Athens, 2009), vol. 3, 40-57; A. Karpozilos, 'History Writing as Political Propaganda in Late Byzantium', in A. Ödekan, *et al.* (eds.), *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture* (Istanbul, 2013), 183.

[481] As with my use of the term polity, see below 3.5.

[482] Carr, *What*, 10-11; Marwick, *New*, 152.

narrative discourse, they are neither simple nor basic in the sense meant by Marwick, of unproblematic, indisputable, and given.

The Nikaian narrative, while bookended by the two captures of Constantinople in 1204 and 1261, is internally structured around five battles, as I explained in chapter one.[483] The narrative function of these battles is strikingly similar. Each describes and explains the defeat or decline of polities which opposed, threatened, or challenged the hegemony of the Nikaian polity. A central element of the narratives that construct each battle and an (if not the most) important narrative element for the way in which each event has been endowed with meaning in those narratives is that each defeat resulted in the death or capture of a ruler of one of those opposing polities.[484] The so-called battles of Adrianople (1205), Sinope (1209), Antioch-on-the-Maeander (1211/12), Klokotnitsa (1230), and Pelagonia (1259), as I argue, respectively present the end of the Latin, Trapezuntine, Seljuk, Epirot, and Epirot/Moreot polities as potential hegemonic powers, and therefore as viable threats to the Nikaian polity.[485] Each of these battles are in part explained and given meaning by the capture or death of the rulers of those polities: the Latin, Baldwin of Flanders, the Trapezuntine, David Komnenos, the Seljuk, Kay-Khusraw, the Epirot, Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, and the Moreot, Guillaume II de Villehardouin. In historiographical treatments of these events, the metric for allocating meaning and determining significance has been supplied by the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, the predetermined telos of which is the Nikaian 'reconquest' of Constantinople in 1261. In this chapter, I analyse the medieval textual 'evidence' for the battle-events that have come to structure the Nikaian narrative. In so doing, I demonstrate the discrepancy between medieval and modern constructions of the thirteenth-century Byzantine past.

My selection of these five battles derives primarily from modern historiography and their prominence within the modern narrative, although the action from which they have been constructed is often also attributed significance in Byzantine texts. However, not all these events receive equal attribution of significance in either medieval or modern narrative historiography. For example, 'the battle of Pelagonia' is most often elevated as significant,

[483] See above 0.2.
[484] On the relationship between rulers and polities, see below 3.3 and 3.5.
[485] Note that the fall of Sinope is not generally described as a battle. See below 2.4.

because of its relationship with the terminating motif of the 'reconquest' of Constantinople in 1261, while the Trapezuntine polity has been so consistently marginalised in other ways throughout modern historiography that the fall of Sinope as a significant turning point has often been superfluous to more general treatments.[486] Nevertheless, all five battles fulfil the function of turning points and receive such similar treatment when they are described and explained by scholars for this selection to be heuristically useful.[487]

'Decisive' battles are useful for both describing and explaining action in a military narrative, because they function as easily understandable mechanisms for the transformation of states (for example, from powerful to weak). However, in recent military historiography, such battles have been deemphasised in favour of a more holistic approach to warfare, reallocating significance to other elements of warfare, such as skirmishing and logistics.[488] Such revisionism, despite its empiricist philosophy, has had limited impact on modern Byzantine historiography and apparently none on historiography of the thirteenth century.[489] Following more literal readings of the available Byzantine texts, from such a revisionist perspective, the five 'battles' discussed in this chapter might be conceived of as collections of skirmishes, sieges, and routs, rather than 'proper' battles, understood as single sustained fights between large organised armed forces, not least because none of the surviving medieval texts, which describe them refer to them as 'the battle of *X*'. It is only in modern historiography that battles have been formalised in this way, in response to the necessity of narrativisation. A microcosmic example of modern interpretive paradigms can

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[486] See above 1.4 and 1.6.

[487] For an example of all five battles in one narrative summary see Angold, 'Rump', 731, 737-8, 749; Bartusis, *Army*, 21-7; Gardner, *Lascarids*, 66, 82-3, 86-7, 141-2, 245-9.

[488] Harari, 'Battles', 252-3: "Battles suffer from an eclipse even in their home field of military history. Whereas previously it had been very common for military history books to be little more than surveys of major battles and battle tactics, the New Military Historians have increasingly focused on matters such as recruitment, administration, supply systems, society at war, and the culture of war. Even when narrating or analyzing the operational side of war, they have tended to downplay the importance of set-piece battles. Thus in medieval military history it is now the mainstream opinion that medieval war was dominated by sieges, raids, skirmishes, and ambushes—not by battles."

[489] See for example J. Haldon, (ed.), *General Issues in the Study of Medieval Logistics: Sources, Problems and Methodologies* (Leiden, 2006); J. Haldon, 'Roads and Communications in the Byzantine Empire: Wagons, Horses, and Supplies', in J. Pryor (ed.), *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades* (Abingdon, 2006), 131-58; P. Murgatroyd, *et al.*, 'Modelling Medieval Military Logistics: An Agent-Based Simulation of a Byzantine Army on the March', *Computational and Mathematical Organization Theory* 18 (2012), 488-506; J. Haldon, *et al.*, 'Marching across Anatolia: Medieval Logistics and Modeling the Mantzikert Campaign', *DOP* 65/66 (2011-2), 209-35.

be seen in Harold Lurier's translation of the *Chronicle of Morea*, where he translates "ὁ Γυλιάμος, / ἐπιάστη στὴν Πελαγονίαν" as "Guillaume was captured at the battle of Pelagonia".[490] Thus a geographical marker becomes a formalised battle. However, as I show in this case, even the geographical marker of Pelagonia is disputed.[491] To formalise a multitude of actions into 'the battle of X' is not to 'reconstruct' neutrally a thing that happened, but to simplify action and construct something new. This construction is shaped by the function it fulfils within the narrative in which it is placed.[492] However, formalising actions into 'the battle of X' is to simplify, whatever function that battle-event is then used to satisfy, because battle-events collapse time into an instant of narrative transformation from one state to another, in which narrative meaning supersedes 'what happened'.

As will become apparent, many modern historians have already analysed the majority of the texts which purport to describe these five confrontations. Their work, which has primarily been concerned with working out 'what happened' and in 'what order', makes this study possible. However, despite engaging directly with this literature, my analysis is concerned not with real (or, in textual/*Quellen* critical terms, 'ur') events, but rather with the manner in which events have been constructed in texts, both medieval and modern. Again, I do not deny the existence of past reality, but I am not interested in something that is epistemologically inaccessible.[493] Further, I do not deny that real happenings, such as military confrontations, were meaningful to the people who lived around the Aegean in the thirteenth-century, that they had real (social, political, military, *etc.*) effects, nor that they are presented as meaningful in texts which construct the battle events discussed in this chapter. However, I focus here on the differences both between the different medieval narrative constructions of these events and between those medieval constructions and the synthetic modern constructions that they have been used as sources for. I concentrate on the range of meanings given to these confrontations when they are narrativised, constructed as battles, and then conflated into a single 'real' event in modern historiography according to the logic

[490] Schmitt, *Morea*, 230.3467-8; H. Lurier (trans.), *Crusaders as Conquerors: The Chronicle of Morea* (New York, 1964), 174. For the construction of 'the battle of Vodena' see below 4.12.
[491] See below 2.6.
[492] See above 0.2.
[493] See above 0.2.

of the Nikaian metanarrative. Consequently, I conduct analysis of textual and narrative presentations of battles, which claim as their objects real military confrontations.

'Counterfactual' (also known as 'alternative', 'what if', 'virtual', or 'subjunctive') historiography, whereby supposedly real narratives are challenged by 'alternative' versions, have been the principal method through which modern historians have thought to challenge this and other dominant narratives about the past.[494] Counterfactual questions, such as 'What might have been had the Seljuks won the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander?', are a useful exercise for critiquing Nikaian-centric meaning production. However, counterfactuals offer no sustainable solutions, since they maintain and even reinforce the linear narrative frameworks they purportedly challenge, because they accept and reinforce the significance of events, even as they seek to present alternatives.[495] The transitional or transformative event is reified by counterfactuals, which substantiate what are fundamentally relative and arbitrary claims to meaning, contingent upon narrative contexts and *telē*. Rather than being tools for historiographical subversion (or as reactionary historian Niall Ferguson has argued "a necessary antidote to determinism"), counterfactuals tether historiography more closely to both the notion of historical truth and singular linear narrative historiography.[496] The rhetorical flourish that is counterfactualism is embedded within narrative historiography and rests implicitly behind any application of significance. We cannot simply tell a different story, since to do so is to subject all texts simply to a different subordinating and dominating logic to that of, in this case, the Nikaian metanarrative. Events can only be understood in the context of the narratives in which they are embedded, because events are not real things, but narrative constructs. Consequently, decontextualizing multiple different textual presentations of military action, in search of an empirically 'true' event, is highly problematic.

In this chapter, I do not seek to reorganise these events into an alternative narrative of the thirteenth-century past, that is somehow more 'representative'. Instead, I reconsider the

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[494] This is particularly evident in the counter narratives that have been presented by modern historians of Nikaia's so-called rivals. See above 1.6.
[495] A. Kożuchowski, 'More than True: The Rhetorical Function of Counterfactuals in Historiography', *RH* 19 (2015), 337-56.
[496] N. Ferguson, 'Virtual History: Towards a 'Chaotic' Theory of the Past', in N. Ferguson (ed.), *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* (London, 1997), 89.

passages that have been extracted from various different narrative contexts, not as 'evidence' of 'the battle of X', but as linguistic, narrative, and ideological historiographical texts. I do not offer readings of 'what happened', but rather readings of the meanings that are generated by medieval texts. The medieval textual presentations of these confrontations are both too numerous and too complex to examine exhaustively in this chapter. Instead of aiming at an exhaustive analysis, I have both focused on the textual presentations that have exercised the greatest influence over modern historiographical constructions and sought to use each of the five battle-events to ask different questions of the textual 'descriptions'. In my treatment of the battle of Adrianople (2.2), I set out the basic problems with modern historiography, to which I return throughout the chapter, namely the disjuncture between medieval texts and modern narratives, the methods used by modern scholars to move from the former to the latter, and the role of specific characters within action. In my analysis of the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander (2.3) I emphasise the indeterminacy of seemingly 'basic facts' such as the location, date, and participants in 'the battle', as well as the 'rhetorical' and 'literary' quality of descriptions of these battle-events. After this, I demonstrate how the fall of Sinope (2.4) fits into the construction of the wider Nikaian narrative. In my discussion of the battle of Klokotnitsa (2.5), I demonstrate that these apparently transformative battles are actually subordinated to the rhetorical characterisation of specific characters. However, this point is reinforced by the dominance of particular characters throughout the chapter, a theme which I also develop further in chapter three. In the final example, the battle of Pelagonia (2.6), I bring a number of these problems together, with a particular focus on both characterisation and the construction of meaning in the wider narrative. Although each individual reading offers a different aspect of the problem, together these five case studies serve to illustrate the structure of the Nikaian narrative and the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, as well as the problematic terminology and assumptions that come with it. In particular, by offering this analysis of the defeats of each of the polities framed as Nikaia's rivals, this chapter demonstrates that the historiography of the whole period is structurally rigged in favour of the Nikaian polity. It thus serves the function of reinforcing the argument made in chapter one, by demonstrating that these five modern battle-events are as dependent on the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative as on the medieval texts that have been used as 'evidence' for them. In addition, this chapter provides examples of the theoretical

and philosophical problems overlooked by empiricist historiography, raised in the introduction, and sets up some key examples of the importance of characters in relevant medieval texts for chapter three. However, I limit the extent of my engagement with the medieval texts, in the knowledge that I will engage in a more detailed (although still not exhaustive) textual and transtextual analysis in chapter four, where I select 'events' that have a more limited textual tradition.[497]

2.2 – The battle of Adrianople (1205)

In modern Byzantine historiography the period from 1204 to 1261, when Constantinople was ruled by 'Latins', has often been either dismissed as anomalous or ignored entirely, as illustrated by Mango's introduction, quoted above.[498] In both the construction and refutation of eighteenth-century Gibbonian caricatures of Byzantium as an empire of decline and excess, the 'Byzantine achievement', whether presented as positive or negative, has been treated as a continuous story.[499] In the study of the late Byzantine world, academics have thus accepted, at a basic level, Palaiologan rhetorical claims to imperial continuity and legitimacy.[500] Steven Runciman's extreme description of 1204 as a "crime against humanity" might not monopolise academic historiography as much as it does popular and nationalist imaginings, but less dramatic presentations of the period (1204-61) still start from the assumption that it was fundamentally anomalous and aberrant.[501] The study of the Latin polities of the Aegean, founded after 1204, has been caught in the historiographical backwash of the fall of Constantinople, forming a sub-discipline somewhere between Byzantine and crusader studies, but at the heart of neither.[502] The historiographical obsession both with Constantinople and with 'great events' has seen its fall and 'reconquest' dominate the emplotment of both preceding and subsequent action. Angold, in describing the fall of Constantinople, explicitly outlined his theoretical approach to 'events':

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[497] For a critical introduction to such detailed analysis see below 4.1.
[498] Tricht, *Renovatio*, 1; Mango, 'Introduction', 1. See above 1.4.
[499] R. Byron, *The Byzantine Achievement: An Historical Perspective A.D. 330-1453* (New York, 1964); Jeffreys, *et al.*, 'Discipline', 7-8.
[500] See above 1.4.
[501] Runciman, *Crusades*, vol. 3, 130. Explicitly making this point see Tricht, *Renovatio*, 1-39, esp. 1-14.
[502] For example, see the treatments by Lock, *Franks*; Longnon, *L'Empire*.

> An event has to be judged by its consequences, both short term and long term. The Latin Empire is in a sense a judgement on the events of 1204.[503]

By arguing that an event should be judged by its consequences, the meaning of an event is made dependent on subsequent action. The result is a hyper-teleological and -linear conception of meaning, which is entirely contingent on the way in which events are emplotted.[504] In making the 'reconquest' of Constantinople in 1261 the ultimate judgement and consequence of the fall in 1204, Angold subordinates the Latin polities to a narrative of Byzantine (read Nikaian) continuity. This teleological assumption about how meaning is created (together with a host of loaded vocabulary, discussed above) makes possible the presentation of the Latin empire (and to a lesser extent other polities) as 'stillborn' and inevitably doomed, even when scholars claim to consider their potential.[505]

This mode of presenting the Latin polities of the Aegean (and in particular the so-called 'Latin empire of Constantinople') depends on medieval and modern historiographical presentations of the defeat of crusader forces at the so-called battle of Adrianople in 1205, which is often mentioned in the same breath as the foundation of the Latin 'empire'.[506] The significance of the Latin defeat at Adrianople is indistinguishable from the capture and subsequent death of Baldwin of Flanders, the new polity's first 'emperor' by the Bulgarian ruler Kaloyan (*r*. 1197-1207) (also called Johannitsa).[507] The impulse to dismiss the 'aberrant' Latin intrusion into a Byzantine story is compounded by the construction of the battle of Adrianople as a calamitous defeat, which both predetermined and prefigured the fate of the Latin empire. The core elements of the event in modern Byzantine historiography are the defeat in battle, the fate of Baldwin, and the serious consequences of the first two elements:

> The two armies met in a fierce battle on 14 April 1205 before the walls of Adrianople. Kalojan's Bulgarians and Cumans not only won but also captured the emperor and

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[503] Angold, *Crusade*, 23; 129.
[504] See above 0.2.
[505] Angold, *Crusade*, 129. See above 1.6.
[506] For example, see Angold, 'Rump', 1.
[507] R. Wolff, 'Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1172-1225', *Speculum* 27 (1952), 289. The death of Kaloyan is also bound up in the narration of this early period. See F. Dall'Aglio, 'The Bulgarian Siege of Thessaloniki in 1207: Between History and Hagiography', *Eurasian Studies* 1 (2002), 263-82.

> carried him off to Bulgaria as a prisoner…The defeat at Adrianople, together with Baldwin's capture, threw the Latin Empire into a major crisis.[508]
>
> Then in April 1205 their [the Latins'] success came abruptly to an end. They had alienated and underestimated the Bulgarians, who crushed them at the battle of Adrianople. Many of the crusade leaders were killed. The Latin emperor Baldwin of Flanders was led away into captivity, never again to be seen alive. This defeat revealed how insecure the Latins were in their newly conquered lands.[509]

In particular, Byzantinists have emphasised the long-term consequences of the battle. For Angold:

> …his [Baldwin's] defeat at the battle of Adrianople in April 1205 at the hands of the Bulgarians and his subsequent disappearance meant that the Latin Empire of Constantinople would never fully replace the Byzantine Empire.[510]

Even in modern historiography orientated principally towards the historiography of the so-called second Bulgarian empire, the Latin defeat and the capture of Baldwin still play an important role in the presentation of an equally formalised 'battle of Adrianople', although (in contrast) that role is made meaningful as the validation of the Bulgarian polity and its ruler Kaloyan as important players in early-thirteenth-century politics:[511]

> Dans la bataille d'Adrianople qui eut lieu le 14 avril 1205, un an après la prise de Constantinopple [*sic*], les Bulgares, alliés aux Coumans et aux Grecs, firent subir une défaite écrasante à l'armée latine, firent prisonnier l'empereur Baudouin et l'amenèrent dans leur capitale Tărnovo.[512] [In the battle of Adrianople, which took place on 14th April 1205, a year after the capture of Constantinople, the Bulgarians, allied with the Cumans and the Greeks, defeated the Latin army in a crushing defeat, captured Emperor Baldwin, and brought him to their capital Tărnovo.]

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[508] Fine, *Late*, 81-2.

[509] Angold, 'Rump', 731.

[510] Angold, *Crusade*, 22-3.

[511] Pavlovska, 'Адрианополем', 25-50; G. Prinzing, *Die Bedeutung Bulgariens und Serbiens in den Jahren 1204–1219 im Zusammenhang mit der Entstehung und Entwicklung der byzantinischen Teilstaaten nach der Einnahme Konstantinopels infolge des 4. Kreuzzuges* (Munich, 1972), 48-63. On this intersecting narrative tradition see above 1.6.

[512] V. Gjuzelev, 'La quatrième croisade et ses conséquences pour la Bulgarie médiévale: le tzar Kaloyan, les Latins et les Grecs (1204-1207)', *Studia Ceranea* 3 (2013), 33. With reference to almost identical presentations in I. Božilov and V. Gjuzelev, *История на средновековна България VII-XIV век* (Sofia, 1999), 453-4 and V. Zlatarski, *История на Българската държава през средните векове* (Sofia, 1940), vol. 3, 224-7.

> At the battle of Adrianople in 1205 where the Latin host was routed, many leading crusaders killed, and Emperor Baldwin I taken in captivity from which he never returned.[513]

This standardised and condensed core, of the battle's main features, is used as the causal explanation of other action, including ultimately the failure of the so-called Latin empire of Constantinople.[514] These presentations claim authority from their presentation of the available medieval texts, which they understand to describe the battle. However, closer scrutiny of the medieval texts, from which these modern historiographical presentations have been created, suggests that these texts present far more complex sets of action, which themselves refuse synthesis. Consequently, close examination reveals that the battle of Adrianople in modern historiographical narratives depends as much on the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative as on the medieval texts it claims to use as 'evidence'.

The two most detailed narrations of 'the battle' appear in *La conquête de Constantinople* (hereafter *La conquête*) of Geoffrey de Villehardouin and the *Chronike diegesis* of Niketas Choniates. These two texts have been privileged by modern scholars as the most accurate and reliable descriptions of 'the confrontation'.[515] Modern historiography has coalesced around the narrative elements that appear in both accounts. First, the Roman population of a number of Thracian settlements, including Adrianople, expelled the Latin garrisons that had been placed over them. *La conquête* and *Chronike diegesis* describe this as a change of allegiance from the Latins to the Bulgarians, expressing it in personal terms as a transfer of loyalty from Baldwin and Boniface to Kaloyan.[516] The Latins responded by collecting their forces from various parts of their new territories and seizing several of the settlements that had been captured by the Romans.[517] The Romans withdrew, mostly to Adrianople, where they fortified themselves, and were besieged by Latin forces.[518] Soon the Bulgarian ruler

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[513] K. Petkov (trans.), *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century: The Records of a Bygone Culture* (Leiden, 2008), 230, n. 1.
[514] For the importance of the event see for example S. Marin, 'Venice and Adrianople in 1204-1205: Some Considerations', in G. Popescu and C. Luca (eds.), *Venezia è l'Europa Orientale tra il tardo Medioevo e l'Età moderna* (Venice, 2017), 11-25, esp. 14, "the importance of the battle of Adrianople should be once again underlined and reconsidered."
[515] Wolff, 'Baldwin', 289, "Our two best sources".
[516] On the dominance of rulers in such descriptions, see below 3.3.
[517] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 150-2 (§340-343); Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 614.
[518] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 152-3 (§344), 158-60 (§349-50); Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 614-5.

Kaloyan brought a large force to relieve the siege and occupy Adrianople. After a group of Latin knights, including the emperor Baldwin, pursued a decoy contingent of Cuman/Skythian cavalry from the Bulgarian army, they were surrounded and defeated. Many were killed and Baldwin was captured.[519] This basic narrative, constituted of the shared elements of *La conquête* and *Chronike diegesis*, have become 'what happened' at the battle of Adrianople for modern historians, to which all further textual 'evidence' has been supplementary. However, not only do these other texts offer contrasting 'facts' that cannot be subsumed unproblematically into this simple narrative, but also even the shared elements of *La conquête* and *Chronike diegesis* are emplotted in different ways, to the extent that they generate different actions and meanings, as becomes immediately apparent from a comparative reading.

The defeat of Baldwin and his forces builds momentum for the gloomy end of *La conquête*. It functions as a prelude to the climactic beheading of the corpse of Boniface de Montferrat, which ends the text, a gruesome moment dubbed a "*dolorous domag*e [tragic disaster]".[520] The gloominess and indeed the role of the defeat within the story of *La conquête* is bound up in the theme of the lack of Latin manpower, a constant trope throughout the text.[521] In accordance with this theme, the only consequence that is explicitly linked to the defeat is the departure of five boat-loads of disgruntled pilgrims, including 7,000 men-at-arms and 300 knights.[522] Their departure occurs directly after the retreat from Adrianople in the text and the connection is emphasised by the observation that one of the leaders of those sailing away, Guillaume de Bethune, as well as 100 other knights, were the liegemen of Count Louis

[519] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 166-70 (§357-60); Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 615-7.
[520] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 314 (§500). Villehardouin emphasised the importance of his chosen narrative endpoint by describing Boniface as "*un des meillors barons et des plus larges et des meillors chevaliers qui fust el remanant del monde* [one of the noblest and large-hearted of all the barons, and one of the finest knights in all the world]".
[521] Smith, *Villehardouin*, xxxi, "Villehardouin may have hoped that his work would rouse those who heard it to unite in support of the hard-won empire." On manpower problems and crusader historiography as recruitment tools see B. Kedar, 'The Fourth Crusade's Second Front', in A. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e croisade et ses conséquences* (Paris, 2005), 89-110; C. Tyerman (trans.), *Chronicles of the First Crusade* (London, 2011), xxiv-xxv. See also G. Prinzing, 'Der Brief Kaiser Heinrichs von Konstantinopel vom 13. Januar 1212', *Byzantion* 43 (1973), 418.172-6. For the *topos* of manpower in the *Chronike syngraphe*, see below 4, esp. 4.7 and 4.12.
[522] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 184 (§376). A significant force, even if we do not accept *La conquête*'s numbers as fact, this is supposed to be 'a large number'.

de Blois, who had died outside Adrianople.[523] Immediately after the departure of the ships, *La conquête* depicts the orderly coronation of Henri of Hainault, Baldwin's brother, who largely met the difficulties he faced successfully, except when he was short of manpower.[524] Furthermore, the text also notes that had the troops at Rhaedestos (Ῥαιδεστός) (normally rendered as Rodosto in French scholarship), who were marching to reinforce the Latins before they were defeated, been present during the battle "*il n'i aüssent riens perdu* [they [the Latin forces] would not have suffered any loss]."[525] Thus the manpower issue is elevated as both the primary cause and consequence of the confrontation.

However, what is given more weight in the text than either the confrontation itself or the departure of the boats is an extended description of the Latins' retreat to Constantinople after the rout, the main purpose of which seems to have been to demonstrate just how important Geoffrey de Villehardouin (simultaneously a character in action and the narrator) had been in organising an orderly retreat.[526] While the battle itself lasts five sections (§357-61), the description of the retreat stretches to twelve (§362-74), and Villehardouin, always variously titled, is mentioned eleven times in those twelve sections in the third person.[527] As a result of *La conquête*'s elevated status as a supposedly 'reliable' source, this story has been translated almost unquestioningly into 'what happened'.[528] For example, Jean Longnon the most influential narrative historian of the Latin polity, accepted this presentation of action as fact:

> Ainsi se fit dans des circonstances difficiles cette remarquable retraite, qui, grâce à la décision, au sang-froid et à l'énergie de Villehardouin, sauva l'armée d'un désastre complet et l'empire sans doute d'une ruine définitive.[529] [Thus, in difficult circumstances, this remarkable retreat, thanks to Villehardouin's decision, coolness, and energy, saved the army from a complete disaster and probably the empire from total ruin.]

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[523] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 184-8 (§376-9).
[524] For example, see Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 242 (§429).
[525] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 194 (§384); Smith, *Villehardouin*, 103. See also Longnon, *L'Empire*, 80.
[526] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 170-88 (§362-79).
[527] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, vol. 2, 170-82 (§362-74).
[528] On *La conquête*'s 'reliability', see above 1.6.
[529] Longnon, *L'Empire*, 80.

La conquête's battle of Adrianople is dominated by the themes of lack of manpower and Villehardouin's success. However, in stark contrast, the *Chronike diegesis* omits mention of the number of Latins, their retreat, and even Villehardouin's presence. Even Baldwin's capture receives little emphasis and his subsequent death is only mentioned as a prerequisite for the coronation of his successor Henri much later in the text, without a sense that it was a consequence of the confrontation outside Adrianople.[530] Instead the *Chronike diegesis* creates a totally different event, to which it assigns an alternative set of meanings. In the *Chronike diegesis*, the description of the confrontation itself is simply one part of a wider conflict between Byzantines (presented as Romans) and barbarian invaders, be they Latin or Bulgarian.[531] The confrontation outside Adrianople is attributed little emphasis, appearing as one of several (similarly emphasised) confrontations, such as the Roman defeat outside Arkadiopolis and the Bulgarian conquest of Serres, in a wider struggle over settlements in Thrace and Makedonia.[532] Furthermore, in the *Chronike diegesis*, this conflict is a three-way one between Bulgarians, Latins, and most importantly the Thracian Romans, who are the principal agents in the text, driving and followed by the narrative.[533] The sieges of the Adrianopolitans (first by the Latins and then by the Bulgarians) are the crux around which the story pivots, rather than the battle outside between Latins and Bulgarians. Throughout the *Chronike diegesis* the Byzantines are the text's primary concern, while even the presence of the Latins in the Roman *oikoumene* is presented as a consequence of the Byzantines' own actions (in particular their sins).[534] The so-called battle of Adrianople and the defeat of the Latins is presented as the consequence of the Thracian Romans fighting back, adding to a theme throughout the final parts of the *Chronike diegesis*, in which the cowardly response of the Romans to the Latin invaders is critiqued.[535] The Thracian Romans are presented as *exempla* of an active and united response, which is directly contrasted with the squabbling

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[530] For Baldwin's death see Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 642.
[531] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 613. See above 0.2 and below 2.5.
[532] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 614.
[533] On the Thracian Romans and their relationship with the Latin 'empire' see B. Hendrickx, 'Some Notes on the "State" of Theodoros Branas', *APB* 12 (2001), 118-29; F. Tricht, 'The Byzantino-Latin Principality of Adrianople and the Challenge of Feudalism (1204/6-ca. 1227/28): Empire, Venice, and Local Autonomy', *DOP* 68 (2014), 325-42.
[534] Page, *Being*, 72-93, esp. 75-6; Simpson, *Choniates*, 286-8.
[535] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 612-3. On the negotiations of Adrianopolitans with the Bulgarians see Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 613; H. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984), 336.

potentates of Anatolia, whose factiousness is blamed for the current predicament of the Romans.[536] Here the text picks up on what Paul Magdalino and Alicia Simpson have identified as the main project of the text, namely the explanation of the fall of Constantinople in 1204, principally through '*Kaiserkritik*', aimed both at the old (principally Komnenian) and emergent (such as Theodore Komenos-Laskaris, David Komnenos, Leon Sgouros, Theodore Mangaphas, *etc.*) Roman leaders.[537] The exemplary Thracians are presented as abandoned by the disunited eastern Romans, which the *Chronike diegesis* makes analogous to Choniates' 'bad treatment' by the Romans of Selymbria.[538] Choniates' personal story and the confrontations in Thrace, are thus all incorporated into the main narrative and argumentative thrust of the text, as identified by Simpson.

The Roman Thracians are also central in later Greek texts, which like the *Chronike diegesis* were primarily concerned with Roman affairs. In the *Chronike syngraphe* of George Akropolites, "οἱ τῆς Ἀδριανοῦ οἰκήτορες [the inhabitants of Adrianople]" are the protagonists, caught between Latins and Bulgarians.[539] What Macrides describes as "the battle of Adrianople" receives only as much attention as each of the two sieges of Adrianople (that is by the Latins and then the Bulgarians) and the Bulgarians depredations after their victory.[540] In fact, the Latins barely register at this point in the *Chronike syngraphe*. Indeed, they are at their most prominent only when the *Chronike syngraphe* reports the hearsay that Kaloyan turned Baldwin's head into a decorated drinking cup, a rhetorical flourish drawing on the audience's assumed knowledge of Bulgarian (and earlier Byzantine) historiography/mythology.[541] The *Rhomaike historia* of Nikephoros Gregoras similarly

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[536] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 625-6.
[537] Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, esp. 1-26; Simpson, *Choniates*, 157, "For Niketas, the decline of Byzantium in the late twelfth century revolved around a failure of leadership and the resulting dynastic struggles that weakened the empire from within, undermined imperial supremacy, and invited foreign intervention." See also Kinloch, *Anatolian*, 49-98.
[538] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 593-4.
[539] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 21.20-4 (§13); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 139.
[540] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 21.6-23.19 (§13).
[541] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 22-11-3 (§13); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 142, n. 10, 143, n. 18. In the *Chronike syngraphe* Kaloyan imitates Krum's treatment of the head of the defeated *basileus* Nikephoros (802-11). See C. Mango and R. Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997), 673-4. The *Chronike syngraphe* also plays in a number of other ways with key figures of Bulgarian history, comparing Kaloyan the 'Romanslayer' to Basil the 'Bulgarslayer', while the battle takes second place, see J. Burke, 'Inventing and Re-inventing Byzantium: Nikephoros Phokas, Byzantine Studies in Greece, and "New Rome"', in I. Nilsson (ed.),

emphasised the Thracian Roman context over 'the battle' between Bulgarians and Latins. In the *Rhomaike historia* both the cause and consequence of the confrontation was the control of Thracian settlements, comments on which frame his description of the battle.[542]

The fourteenth-century HT-Greek 'version' of the *Chronicle of Morea* also presents a different event, blending elements found in both the old French and Greek textual traditions, described above. This 'version' of the *Chronicle of Morea*, like the *Chronike diegesis* and *Chronike syngraphe*, is located within a conflict over Thrace, but, like *La conquête*, its focus is on the deaths of Baldwin and Boniface and the fate of the 'Latin empire', and, like both traditions, considerable attention is paid to a detailed description of military strategy.[543] However, this description produces different meanings, because it is embedded in a different narrative context. For example, the description of military action principally generates meaning through intratextual allusion to the so-called 'battle of Pelagonia', a climactic event in the text, in which similar tactics are presented as being deployed.[544] Not only does the text produce different meanings because of these intratextual references, but it also directly contradicts the Greek and old French texts discussed above. For example, it presents the leader of the victorious army as the Nikaian ruler John [Komnenos-Doukas-]Vatatzes, rather than the Bulgarian Kaloyan.[545] In addition, it places the death of Boniface before that of Baldwin, in contrast to the other texts and modern historiographical consensus.[546] The 'evidence' provided by the *Chronicle of Morea* has been dismissed as 'inaccurate', but this passage in the HT-Greek text has nevertheless been identified as a description of 'the battle of Adrianople' and integrated into the footnotes of modern historiographical narratives as 'the same event', even though it presents a very different set of actions.[547] A comparative reading of the four different 'versions' of the *Chronicle of Morea*,

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Wanted in Byzantium (Uppsala, 2015), 9-42; P. Stephenson, *The Legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer* (Cambridge, 2003).

[542] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, esp. vol. 1, 15.3-4, 16.10-2 (§1).

[543] Schmitt, *Morea*, 72.1077-81; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 98-9; Longnon, *Livre*, 22-3 (§70-1). Shawcross emphasises the deaths of Baldwin and Boniface: Shawcross, *Morea*, 337.

[544] See below 2.6.

[545] Schmitt, *Morea*, 70.1033.

[546] Schmitt, *Morea*, 70.1030-78.1167; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 98-100. See also Longnon, *Livre*, 21-3 (§69-71).

[547] On the *CoM*'s 'inaccuracy', see above 1.6. For descriptions of the attribution of the victory to John [Komnenos-Doukas-]Vatatzes as a mistake see Longnon, *Livre*, 22, n. 2; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 97, n.69; Arsdall and Moody, *Morea*, 15.

offered by Shawcross' appendix, further complicates the construction of 'the battle', by demonstrating the disparities even within the textual tradition of the *Chronicle of Morea*.[548]

Alongside the *Chronicle of Morea*, in the footnotes of modern historiographical presentations of 'what happened' at 'the battle of Adrianople', are numerous other 'minor texts', which for various reasons (principally lack of detail), have been considered to be less 'important' as 'sources' of 'the battle'.[549] These include several letters by Henri of Hainault to various people in the West and short mentions in the *Chronica* of Alberic de Trois-Fontaines and the *Chronicon Anglicanum* attributed to Ralph of Coggeshall.[550] However, these texts have had little impact on 'the battle' that dominates modern historiography, although 'the battles' presented in these two Latin chronicles are perhaps the closest to the battle-event that features in the more concise contemporary Nikaian narrative, because they are already so heavily formalised and simplified. Instead, it is readings of *La conquête*, *Chronike diegesis*, and (to a lesser extent) *Chronike syngraphe* that have informed modern historiographical constructions. However, even the 'evidence' of these privileged texts has been extracted from their linguistic, narrative, and ideological forms and redeployed by modern historians in search of a singular real battle. For example, the details of military action found in *La conquête* are used by modern historians, while the encomiastic presentation of Villehardouin is ignored as embellishment, just as the notion that this victory saved the Nikaian polity has

[548] For example, while the HT-Greek, old French, and Italian texts offer John [Komnenos-Doukas-] Vatatzes, the Aragonese offer Kaloyan: Schmitt, *Morea*, 70.1033; Longnon, *Livre*, 22 (§69); Morel-Fatio and Heredia, *Morea*, 16 (§59); Hopf, *Chroniques*, 420. Note especially that the old French 'version' barely registers 'the battle', see Shawcross, *Morea*, 338. See below 4.

[549] For the way in which such texts are subordinated to the longer texts see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 141, "In addition to Chon. and Vill., other contemporary sources for the events of 1205–7 are…" Note that Macrides does not reference any 'versions' of the *Chronicle of Morea* or the two Latin chronicles, discussed below.

[550] R. Pokorny, 'Zwei unedierte Briefe aus der Frühzeit des lateinischen Kaiserreichs von Konstantinopel', *Byzantion* 55 (1985), 199-202; P. Scheffer-Boichorst (ed.), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hannover, 1874), vol. 23, 885.25-47; J. Stevenson, (ed.), *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London, 1875), vol. 99, 161.12-22; A. Andrea (trans.), *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden, 2000), 287-8; 307-8. On the composition and authorship of the *Chronicon Anglicanum* (attributed to Ralph of Coggeshall) see A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca, 1974), 322-4. Note that the *Chronica* and *Chronicon Anglicanum* offer strikingly similar narratives, in which the story of a visiting (eyewitness) priest holds together stories that are principally designed to authenticate relics. For a comparative analysis see Andrea, *Sources*, 265-75.

been stripped from the *Chronike diegesis*, without the Thracian *exempla* or the critique of Byzantine leadership in Anatolia, with which it is totally intertwined.[551]

This brief textual examination, demonstrates the extent to which modern historians have constructed an event that functions within the narrative they are trying to tell. 'The battle of Adrianople' is a great Latin defeat in which the new emperor is lost/killed and which begins the long decline of the polity. To create this event modern historians' approaches to the medieval texts fluctuates selectively between incredulity and outright dismissal. Scholars first dissect their 'sources' and then put the pieces back together with little regard to where those pieces came from. This process can be seen at a larger scale, since 'the battle' is merely one fragment that has been selected and positioned as 'important', while others, such as the Latin victories at the so-called battles of Adramyttion (1205) and the Rhyndakos river (1211) or the so-called treaty of Nymphaion (1213/4), which have also been formalised into battle-events and treaties, are given less prominence in modern historiography, since as Latin victories they do not contribute usefully to the Nikaian narrative.[552]

There is a complex relationship between the medieval texts and modern historiography that has not only gone unproblematised, but has become 'fact', through repetition. 'The battle of Adrianople' has become a 'fact' that can be used to interpret and assign meaning to other actions. However, on closer inspection modern historiography can be demonstrated to use this battle as a turning point to subordinate the entire fate of the Latin polity to that of the Nikaian. The modern battle-event is not totally divorced from the medieval texts, but scholars have given their chosen fragments of them meanings that they did not have in the context in which they have survived. This study offers a basic introduction to most of the elements that will come in the following four sub-chapters, the discrepancies between medieval and modern narratives, the role of characterisation, and the prioritisation of certain texts (and types of text) over others.

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[551] Fine, *Late*, 83.

[552] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, 126-32 (§319-23); G. Prinzing, 'Heinrichs', 395-431; Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 26.10-28.11 (§15); F. Miklosich and J. Müller (eds.), *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana* (Vienna, 1860-90), vol. 4, 35; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 151-2, n. 10; Tricht, *Renovatio*, 353-64; I. Booth, 'Theodore Laskaris and Paphlagonia, 1204-1214: Towards a Chronological Description', *ΑΠ* 50 (2003-4), 151-224. See for example in Gardner, *Lascarids*, esp. 84-5; Angold, 'Rump', 737.

2.3 – The battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander (1211/2)

The so-called 'battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander' (1211/2) dominates the intersection of Seljuk historiography with the Nikaian narrative, during the period 1204-61, within which it functions to remove the Seljuks as a potential threat to Nikaian hegemony, just as 'the battle of Adrianople' removed the Latins.[553] Furthermore, the Seljuk defeat has been attributed particular significance as a turning point, especially in Seljuk historiography, because the sultan Kay-Khusraw I was killed.[554] Alexis Savvides, the scholar who has written most extensively on 'the battle', attributes it significance second only to the battles of Manzikert (1071) and Myriokephalon (1176), both of which have been used by historians as epoch-defining 'turning points' in Byzantine and Seljuk historiography:[555]

> …the battle of Antioch-ad-Maenderum in Phrygia, considered to be the third most hotly contested confrontation between the Byzantines and the Seljuks since Manzikert (Malasgirt) in 1071 and Myriocephalum (Çardak) in 1176[556]

Modern historiographical conceptions of thirteenth-century Nikaian-Seljuk relations have come to revolve around the one-sided interpretation – that is totalising Nikaian victory – of a battle, for which the source record is even acknowledged by modern historians to be ambiguous.[557] This conception of the battle is an artificial construction, which functions as a stagingpost on a pre-conceived trajectory of Nikaian growth. Modern historians have variously viewed this as a moment that entrenched a more or less lasting peace between the Nikaian and Seljuk polities.[558]

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[553] Angold, 'Rump', 737. Other 'internal' Seljuk historiography is largely ignored, which serves to lead to Roman-centric explanations for Seljuk action.
[554] For example Songül Mecit is interested only in the moment because of the death of Kay-Khusraw, see S. Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs: Evolution of a Dynasty* (London, 2014), 83; Y. Ayönü, 'İslam ve Bizans Kaynaklarına Göre Antiokheia Savaşı', *EBAD/JABS* 1 (2015), 1-12.
[555] On Manzikert, see above 2.1 and below 2.4. On Myriokephalon see Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, 98-9; M. Konečný, 'The Road to Myriokephalon: The Policy of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in Asia Minor (1143–76)', *Oriental Achive* 80 (2012), 371-88.
[556] A. Savvides, 'Acropolites and Gregoras on the Byzantine Seljuk Confrontation at Antioch-on-the-Maeander (AD 1211): English translation and commentary', *Tarih Araştımalar Dergisi* 5 (1990-1), 93. See also A. Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East: Its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor, the Cilicians of Armenia and the Mongols, A.D. c. 1192-1237* (Thessaloniki, 1981), 97.
[557] The title of Savvides' chapter is indicative of the two fundamental outcomes attributed to the event and the importance it has been accorded: Savvides, *East*, 91, "The Counter-Attack of Lascaris: Victory over the Seljuks in Antioch on the Maeander and Long-Term Peace-Treaty".
[558] See below 2.3.

The textual 'evidence' for 'the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander' reflects the political, social, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world. However, even those scholars with multiple competencies or collaborative help have tended to write from within a specific disciplinary and linguistic competency. The whole Nikaian narrative, a story written from predominantly Laskarid and Palaiologan Greek texts about the entire Aegean world, is, in part, a product of this disciplinary isolationism. In modern historiographical treatments of 'the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander', this Greek-centrism can be seen in detail. Savvides, in his detailed study, acknowledged that modern historians tend to prefer either the Persian or Greek texts.[559] However, despite noticing this problem Savvides himself entirely dismissed the principal Persian language Seljuk account:

> Ibn Bibi's account was biased and it had almost no common points with the Greek sources; in the ensuing examination of the battle I have not used it…[560]

By recognising that Ibn Bībī's *Al-Awāmer* was 'biased', Savvides turned from previous consensus that uncritically accepted the 'evidence' of what Alexander Vasiliev called a "detailed, vivid, and reliable account".[561] Some scholars, such as Scott Redford, now rightly caution such simplistic readings of the *Al-Awāmer*:

> Ibn Bībī's narrative and imputed motives must not be taken as reflections of the truth, even though he had access to many sources then that we do not now possess.[562]

Counterintuitively, however, Savvides' hypercriticism did not extend as far as the Greek texts, despite the similarities between the *Al-Awāmer*'s eulogistic presentation of Kay-Khusraw and the *Chronike syngraphe*'s construction of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[563] Furthermore, he also largely ignores the two Armenian texts used by modern scholars as 'sources' for 'the battle', the *Chronicle* of Smbat Sparapet (late thirteenth century) and the anonymous *Chronicle*, attributed to King Het'um II (late thirteenth/early fourteenth

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[559] Savvides, *East*, 99. This is unsurprising considering the number of languages required to study accurately the texts and modern literature from both traditions. Korobeinikov is one of the few scholars who has competency in most of them. Kinloch, 'Korobeinikov', 699.
[560] Savvides, *East*, 99, n. 1.
[561] Vasiliev, 'Foundation', 28. It does not help that Byzantinists generally only have access to the difficult Persian text through the German translation of the abridgement (*Mukhtaṣar*). See above 1.6.
[562] S. Redford, *Legends of Authority: The 1215 Seljuk Inscriptions of Sinop Citadel, Turkey* (Istanbul, 2014), 62-3. Note that this critical approach is still framed in empiricist terms.
[563] See above 1.6.

century).[564] An exoticising *Orientalism* and Hellenocentric rhetorical preference underwrites the hierarchy of 'evidence' which Savvides has constructed to judge the historicity of texts.[565] Consequently, the *Chronike syngraphe*'s presentation of action dominates, with occasional additions from the later and consequently 'lesser' Byzantine sources, including the *Rhomaike historia* of Gregoras, the hagiography of John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes by George of Pelagonia, an oration by Niketas Choniates, a letter by his brother Michael Choniates, and one of the so-called 'short chronicles' edited by Peter Schreiner, although all these texts are secondary and supplementary to the *Chronike syngraphe*.[566] Elements from the *Al-Awāmer* are only drawn on when no 'evidence' is provided by Greek texts.[567] In short, modern historians have a wealth of medieval texts from which to construct 'the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander'. However, these texts differ dramatically in the presentation of such basic 'facts' as the date and location of the confrontation, the sizes of the armies involved, and both the sequence and nature of events. Nevertheless, modern historians have sought to formalise this disparate array of texts into a single 'real' past. From the decisions made, it is clear that modern historiographical constructs such as this battle not only depend on empiricist and ideological preferences for particular texts, but are also underpinned by the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative.

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[564] R. Bedrosian (trans.), *Smbat Sparapet's Chronicle* (Long Branch, 2005), §100; R. Bedrosian (trans.), *Chronicle, Attributed to King Het'um II* (Unpublished translation), §5.

[565] Niketas Choniates compares Kay-Khusraw to the arrogant Xerxes and calls Laskaris the superior of Alexander the Great, while Michael Choniates wrote that Laskaris can only be compared to the great warrior emperors Basil II *Bulgaroktonos* and Heraklios, yet for Savvides their evidence is less biased. J.-L. Dieten (ed.), *Nicetae Choniatae: Orationes et Epistulae* (Berlin, 1972), 132; S. Lampros (ed.), *Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ Σωζόμενα* (Athens, 1879-1880), vol. 2, 179.354-5. That being said, Ibn Bībī's *Al-Awāmer* needs to be considered as a work of 'literature' as much as any other text. There is inadequate space here to do justice to the panegyric tone of the text, see generally Yıldız, *Mongol*; Melville, 'Persian', 135-66.

[566] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 18.13 (§1); A. Heisenberg, 'Kaiser Johannes Batatzes der Barmherzige: Eine Mittelgriechische Legende', *BZ* 14 (1905), 215-6 (§25); Dieten, *Orationes*, 132; Lampros, *Ἀκομινάτου*, vol. 2, 179.354-5; Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, vol. 1, 53 (§4.5).

[567] See above 1.6.

To start with, the very date of 'the battle' is highly contested.[568] The now accepted date of 1211 appears only in the *Mukhtaṣar*.[569] However, this date has been plucked from the text and appended to a narrative of military action principally derived from other texts. However, from the *Al-Awāmer* the battle can only be dated to after 1207 (and the conquest of Antalya/Attaleia), while the other Greek texts offer no absolute dates, and both Armenian texts date the confrontation to 1209.[570] Consequently, Savvides' route to the 'true' past involves attaching the date supplied by other texts to action presented (principally) by the *Chronike syngraphe* (and to a lesser extent the *Rhomaike historia*).[571]

It is not just the date that proves problematic. Three different locations have been given for 'the battle' by three different groups of texts, while some give no location at all. The *Al-Awāmer*, its *Mukhtaṣar*, and the *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, a chronicle by Ibn Al-Athīr probably composed in Mosul in the early thirteenth-century, place the battle vaguely in the region of Alaşehir (Philadelphia).[572] The *Chronike syngraphe* and *Rhomaike historia* place the battle near Antioch-on-the-Maeander.[573] The Armenian *Chronicle* of Smbat Sparapet (late thirteenth century) and the anonymous *Chronicle attributed to King Het'um 'II'* (late thirteenth/early fourteenth century) both place the battle at Honaz (Chonai).[574] None of the other texts used

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[568] I cover this dispute only briefly. For more detailed analysis see F. Tricht, 'La politique étrangère de l'empire de Constantinople, de 1210 à 1216', *Le moyen âge* 107 (2001), 219-38, esp. 221-6; J. Longnon, 'La campagne de Henri Hainaut en Asie Mineure en 1211', *BARB* 34 (1948), 442-52; P. Zhavoronkov, 'Никейско-латинские и никейско-сельджукские отношения в 1211–1216 гг.', *VV* 37 (1976), esp. 48-9; Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, vol. 2, 190; Prinzing, 'Heinrichs', 406; Savvides, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', 93, n. 1.

[569] Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.), 50 (§39), 328, n. 31; Savvides, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', 93, "Modern research has conclusively established that the battle of Antiochad-Maenderum…took place i[n] the spring or early summer of A.D. 1211 and not in A.D. 1210, as it was previously believed." See also Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, vol. 1, 53 (§4.5).

[570] Bedrosian, *Smbat*, §100; *Het'um*, §5. Although note that Smbat's *Chronicle* dates the capture of Constantinople by "the counts of Venice and Flandre" to 1207, demonstrating a threeyear discrepancy with traditional dating schemes, which would convert the date of 1209 into 1211. See S. Nersessian, 'The Armenian Chronicle of the Constable Smpad or of the "Royal Historian"', *DOP* 13 (1959), 157; Savvides, *East*, 100, n. 3.

[571] Savvides, *East*, 101.

[572] Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.), 48-50 (§37-9); Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, vol. 12, 154-5. See also, A. Savvides, *Ο Άραβας ιστοριογράφος Ίμπν-αλ-Αθίρ (1160-1233) και το παγκόσμιο χρονικό του ως πηγή για την ιστορία των σταυροφορίων και των Βυζαντίνο-σελτζούκικων σχέσεων* (Athens, 1981), 7; 13, n. 20; Savvides, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', 93, n. 2.

[573] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 15.21-3 (§11); 16.10-11 (§10); Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 17-21 (§1). The modern village of Başaran. See Barnes and Whittow, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander'.

[574] Bedrosian, *Smbat*, §100; Bedrosian, *Het'um*, §5.

as sources offer any location. Thus, the medieval texts locate the battle in different places, without any way of demonstrating that any is more 'correct' than another.[575] The modern historian must simply choose their preferred text. For Byzantinsts this tends to be the *Chronike syngraphe*, while Seljuk historians prefer the *Al-Awāmer*, each of which (respectively) dominate Byzantine and Seljuk historiography. Battles of Antioch-on-the-Maeander, Alaşehir, and Honaz all exist together. The different names nicely illustrate the problems with attributing significance to a single defining moment, such as a battle, when the textual record attests to a plurality of battles, each inseparable from their specific narrative context.

Savvides has attempted to figure out the 'actual' size of the armies, by comparing the various numbers that he found in the medieval texts.[576] For the Nikaian army, he preferred the number 2,000 (including 800 Latins) offered by Akropolites' *Chronike syngraphe* and Gregoras' *Rhomaike historia* to the 3,000 offered in John's hagiography.[577] Unable to follow the *Chronike syngraphe* for the numbers of the Seljuk army (since it includes none, Savvides is forced to choose between the 20,000 offered by Gregoras' *Rhomaike historia* or the 60,000 offered by the hagiography.[578] Here pre-conceived 'source' hierarchies are used to dismiss the hagiography, while narrative context is largely ignored. By presenting a small Nikaian force defeating a larger Seljuk one, the Nikaian victory is magnified, in what is a common ancient, medieval, and indeed modern *topos*.[579] The *Mukhtaṣar* offers no absolute numbers. However, the text breaks from its prose Persian narrative, to insert an Arabic proverb, in which the Nikaian army is described as "as numerous as sand, ants, rain and pebbles, which cannot be calculated or counted".[580] This proverbial simile fulfils the same function as the

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[575] Alaşehir/Philadelphia and Honaz/Chonai are located very close to each other, but Antioch-on-the-Maeander is over 50km away from both.
[576] Savvides, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', 96, n. 7.
[577] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 16.6-9 (§9); Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 18.15-9 (§1); Heisenberg, 'Batatzes', 215 (§25). Savvides also added the *Synopsis chronike*, which here follows the *Chronike syngraphe*: Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 454.24-456.30. See above 1.6 and below 4.2.
[578] Savvides, *East*, 100-1; Savvides, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', 96, n. 7, 99, nn. 14-5.
[579] For debate on numbers in Byzantine historiography see J. Haldon, 'Kudama Ibn Djacfar and the Garrison of Constantinople', *Byzantion* 48 (1978), 78-90. In contrast see W. Treadgold, 'Notes on the Numbers and Organisation of the Ninth-Century Byzantine Army', *GRBS* 21 (1980), 269-88; Treadgold, *State*, 145, 277, 412, 576, 843.
[580] Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.), 48 (§37). Note also the similar language in the anonymous 'short chronicle', although it does not specifically refer to the size of armies: Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, vol. 1,

numbers 20,000 and 60,000 in the Greek texts, which are equally rhetorical. Thus, in accepting the Greek numbers as more 'accurate' representations of the past than the *Mukhtaṣar*'s simile, Savvides applies modern empiricist and western-centric standards of 'truthfulness' to the texts and thus the past he constructs:[581]

> In a sense we have accepted at face value and perpetuated the terms of the nineteenth-century debate according to which numbers are somehow purer and less susceptible to subjective influences than other sources of information.[582]

Numbers of armies, especially of this magnitude, are rare in Byzantine historiography.[583] As such they are deployed for specific effect. It is notable that one of the few comparable armies explicitly recorded in a contemporary text (14,000 Cumans), is the force presented as defeating the Latins at outside Adrianople in Villehardouin's *La conquête*.[584] The two battles thus seem to be attributed similar importance in the respective texts.

In the end the size of the various armies is superfluous to the narrative of 'the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander', because all the medieval texts from which it has been constructed focus on the fight between the two leaders, Kay-Khusraw and Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris.[585] A quasi-epic duel is described by most of the texts identified as 'the battle'. They are all different, although most include Kay-Khusraw's death and a consequent Seljuk defeat. According to the *Chronike syngraphe*, the sultan, who was winning the battle, finds and defeats Theodore, knocking him on the head and off his horse with a mace. As Kay-Khusraw ordered him to be taken away, Theodore struck the hind legs of the Sultan's horse. Consequently, Kay-Khusraw fell from his horse and was decapitated by an unseen, presumed divine, entity.[586] The account presented in Gregoras's *Rhomaike historia* is similar,

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53.4-5 (§4.5), "καὶ ὁ εἷς διώξει χιλίους καὶ οἱ δύο μετακινήσουσιν μυριάδας [And one pursued 1,000, and two chased myriads]". The description of the Nikaian force in the letter by Henri of Hainault to 'the West' is similarly unspecific. See Prinzing, 'Heinrichs', 414.86-7, "*maxima Grecorum multitudine… et etiam Latinorum* [great throng of Greeks…and even Latins]".

[581] On simile, metaphor, and metonymy, see below 3.2.

[582] J. Scott, 'A Statistical Representation of Work: *La Statistique de l'industrie à Paris, 1847-1848*', in J. Scott (ed.), *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1999), 114.

[583] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 98.

[584] Villehardouin, *La conquête*, 162 (§352).

[585] Note that most of the textual 'references' to 'the battle' have been identified because of their depiction of this duel, creating a circular logic.

[586] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 17.5-14 (§10). See also Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 7600-55; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 207.21-209.15 (§10); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 454.24-456.30. Not that

differing only in attributing Theodore's attack to the forelegs of the sultan's horse and the sultan's murder to Theodore himself.[587] An oration by Niketas Choniates, which has also been associated with the battle, states that Laskaris was first unhorsed, before he struck Kay-Khusraw from his horse, who was then decapitated, although it did not mention by whom.[588] In John's hagiography, in complete contrast, the Byzantines are presented as winning the battle before the duel, while the *Al-Awāmer* reports that the victorious sultan, after his army had defeated the Nikaians, and he had unhorsed Theodore, was killed by a fleeing Frank almost by accident, because his guards were busy looting.[589]

Modern historians would normally be wary of the historicity of something, such as a duel, that bears so many rhetorical elements and functions as such a distinct motif.[590] There are a wide range of models, which could be drawn on, including the multitude of duels in Homeric (and to a lesser extent Vergilian) epic, biblical examples, such as the story of David and Goliath, examples from historical narratives, such as the duel between Bardas Phokas and Bardas Skleros in Skylitzes' *Synopsis historion*, or even Alexander's duel with the Indian king Porus at the battle of the Hydaspes river.[591] However, Byzantinists have simply copied this duel wholesale into their narratives of 'what happened', without considering the consequences of its rhetorical construction for the construction of past action:[592]

> A like fate might have overtaken the rest of the army if the Sultan had not made a direct attack on Theodore himself. He unhorsed him calling to his attendants "Carry him off!" when Theodore aimed a dexterous sword-cut at the legs of the huge mare on which the Sultan was mounted, and brought the rider to the ground.[593]

Savvides is aware of the *Chronike historia* and *Synopsis chronike*, but effectively ignores them: Savvides, 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', 94.

[587] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 17-21 (§1).

[588] Dieten, *Orationes*, 16.170-5.

[589] Heisenberg, 'Batatzes', 215-6 (§25); Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.), 47-50 (§36-9).

[590] Lilie, 'Reality'. See above 1.3 and below 4.12.

[591] A. Thomas and D. Monro (eds.), *Homeri, Opera* (Oxford, 1931), 5 vols; R. Mynors (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis: Opera* (Oxford, 1969). 1 Sam. 17; 2 Sam. 21:19; J. Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum* (Berlin, 1973), 13.9; W. Kroll, *Historia Alexandri Magni* (Berlin, 1926), vol. 1. §3.4. For Laskaris as Alexander see Dieten, *Orationes*, 129-47.

[592] See S. Kyriakidis, 'Accounts of Single Combat in Byzantine Historiography: 10th-14th Centuries', *Acta et Classica* 59 (2016), esp. 125-6.

[593] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 82.

> In the battle at Antioch on the Maeander the Nicaean army was almost defeated, but Laskaris met the sultan in person and after a short duel killed him.[594]

The story of the duel is used by modern historians to make their narratives more engaging, as can be seen in Gardner's use of direct speech. This function runs parallel to the claims of these texts to narrate the past.

Modern historians cannot prove that there was a duel at all, let alone whether Theodore struck the sultan's horse in "the hind legs [τοὺς ὀπισθίους πόδας]", following the *Chronike syngraphe*, or "the forelegs [τοὺς ἐμπροσθίους πόδας]", following the *Rhomaike historia*.[595] Few would, and I believe none have yet, argued this 'point of fact' either way.[596] To choose between such options makes the logic on which such a decision would rest appear arbitrary. However, the same arbitrary logic is in fact implemented elsewhere:

> Gregoras says that Theodore cut it [the sultan's head] off and raised it on a spear, but the narrative of Acropolita seems here to be preferred.[597]

Applying the logic of Gardner here, modern historians should be able to argue that it was in fact the forelegs of the sultan's horse that were hit. When pushed to its extreme, the arbitrariness of the logics applied by modern historians become apparent. However, these logics underpin the construction of the date, location, and armies of 'the battle', not least by Savvides.

Even if the texts offered unmediated reference to past action, their deployment to create a battle-event in the Nikaian narrative is problematic. The battle is presented as a conclusive Nikaian victory, which defined Laskarid-Seljuk relations for almost a century, effectively removing the Seljuks as a threat to Nikaia, which could then expand towards Constantinople and defeat the Latins:

> Kai-Khusrai's death in 1211, apparently in single combat with Laskaris at Antioch-on-the-Maeander, [led] to a truce with his successor and the concentration of Greek attention on the Latins in Constantinople.[598]

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[594] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 149; 217.
[595] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 17.9 (§10); Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 21.1-2 (§1).
[596] Gardner prefers simply "the legs": Gardner, *Lascarids*, 82.
[597] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 83, n. 1. Here Gardner misses the implication of the *Chronike syngraphe*, which implies divine intervention, and assumes that "his head was cut off by one of the soldiers near": Gardner, *Lascarids*, 82-3.
[598] Lock, *Franks*, 55. See also his argument that the battle led "to significant changes of fortune".

> He [Laskaris] then marched forth from the capital to Antioch on the Maeander where he won a resounding victory which ensured peace on the eastern frontier for the next half century.[599]

However, even the *Chronike syngraphe* explicitly states twice (at two totally different points in the text) that the result of the battle was ambiguous:[600]

> νικᾷ γοῦν ἐντεῦθεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸ πλεῖστον ἐξηττημένος· οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶχεν ἐπὶ τοῖς πρόσω χωρεῖν, μετὰ μετρίων ἐλλελειμμένος.[601] [So, in this way, the emperor was victorious, although he was largely defeated for, left with meagre forces, he could not advance at all.][602]

> διὰ ταῦτα, ὥς φασί τινες, καὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως νίκην ἀκηκοὼς ὁ Ἑρῆς 'νενίκηται' ἔφη 'ὁ Λάσκαρις, οὐ νενίκηκεν'.[603] [That is why, as some say, when Henry heard about the emperor's victory, he remarked, "Laskaris was vanquished, not victorious."][604]

Not only does the presentation of 'the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander' in modern Byzantine historiography stretch even the 'evidence' of the Nikaian-centric *Chronike syngraphe*, but it also ignores a range of causal factors prioritised by modern Seljuk historians, such as the divisions surrounding Kılıç Arslān's patrimony and the aggression of Georgia and the Mongols.[605] Antioch-on-the-Maeander has come to mark the start of an "inviolable truce" that secured Nikaia's eastern border 'permanently'.[606] However, the reduction of a host of problematic textual 'references' to multiple different treaties to one

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[599] C. Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (Boston, 1996), 61.
[600] Theodore's characterisation is created in direct contrast with other characters. See below 3.2-3.
[601] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 17.14-6 (§10). This actually should be read as a reference the so-called 'battle of Vodena' in which Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos is unable to advance, because of his lack of manpower. See below 4.12.
[602] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 131.
[603] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 27.13-4 (§15).
[604] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 148; 151, n. 9. Note that direct speech is used, which is relatively infrequent in the *Chronike syngraphe*.
[605] Generally, see above 1.6. Note that these narratives are also formalised and dominated by battle-events, such as the so-called battles of Basiani (1203) and Köse Dağ (1243), respectively Georgian and Mongol victories that frame narratives of Seljuk historiography. Generally see Peacock, 'Georgia', esp. 126, 133-5; Giebfried, 'Mongol', 129-39; Morgan, 'Mongols', esp. 198, 201; E. Göksu, 'Kösedağ Savaşi (1243)', *Tarihin Peşinde/Pursuit of History* 2 (2009), 1-14; M. Demir, 'Rumlaşan Selçuklular Sahte Ricatı Unuttu: Kösedağ Savaşı (3 Temmuz 1243)', *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi/Academıc Journal of History and Ideas* 4 (2017), 229-47. For the relevance of 'the battle of Basiani' in modern Georgian historiographical narratives see W. McBrayer, *Let There Be War: Competing Narratives and the Perpetuation of Violence in Georgia* (Masters Thesis for Ohio University, 2009), 21, 32.
[606] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 17.17 (§10); Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman*, 120; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 93, 132, n. 8; Gardner, *Lascarids*, 83.

moment, is simplistic, prioritising teleological narrative progression over the medieval texts.[607] In addition, the Nikaian narrative depends on two centralised and firmly controlled polities with solid (modern) borders and the power to meaningfully police such a treaty. In stark contrast, recent studies of Seljuk-Byzantine borders, in various periods, suggest more flexible and devolved administrative, military, and frontier structures.[608] Moreover, the lands of the upper Maeander valley between the two polities have been understood to constitute a "buffer-state" between Konya and Nikaia, especially before Manuel Mavrozomes' death (*c.* 1230).[609] However, even modern historians keen to complicate the construction of a permanent, static, and linear border have implicitly assumed that 'the battle' was critically important, incorporating that assumption into the structures of their analyses, such as their periodisation:

> While studying the troublesome period of 1187-1211 (from the division of the Sultanate between the sons of Kılıç Arslān II to the battle at Antioch on the Maeander), one cannot help wondering how frequent were the various contacts between the members of the royal dynasties and the aristocracies of both states.[610]

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[607] On the various treaties and potential treaties see Korobeinikov, 'Sultan', 93-108. Also see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 92-4.

[608] The often-quoted passage of the *Syngraphikai historiai* concerning Byzantine and Turkoman border issues is worth considering here for the separation between central control and border provinces, see Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 33.12-35.27 (§1.6); C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkley, 1995), esp. 60-117. John Langdon has even argued that there were also major centrally run campaigns (even "crusades"), which complicates the story, despite pushing George of Pelagonia's hagiographical narrative to its limits: J. Langdon, *Byzantium's Last Imperial Offensive in Asia Minor: The Documentary Evidence for and Hagiographical Lore about John III Ducas Vatatzes' Crusade against the Turks, 1222 or 1225 to 1231* (New York, 1992), 9, n. 21. For nomadic separation from central administration, despite their later focus, consider D. Korobeinikov, 'The Revolt in Kastamonou, c. 1291-1293', *BF* 28 (2004), 87-118; Korobeinikov, *Turks*; R. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington, 1983). Ibn Natif a chronicler who lived in Homs reports frequent fighting between 1211 and 1230. See I. Booth, 'The Sangarios Frontier: The History and Strategic Role of Paphlagonia in Byzantine Defence in the 13th Century', *BF* 28 (2004), 53; Booth, 'Theodore', 159. See also K. Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, 2008), esp. 28-66; K. Hopwood, 'Nicaea and Her Eastern Neighbours', in E. Kermeli and O. Özel (eds.), *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes'* (Istanbul, 2006), 39-45.

[609] S. Yıldız, 'Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes and his Descendants at the Seljuk Court: The Formation of a Christian Seljuk-Komnenian Elite', in S. Leder (ed.), *Crossroads between Latin Europe and the Near East: Corollaries of the Frankish Presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (12th-14th centuries)* (Würzburg, 2011), 55-77; S. Redford, 'Maurozomes in Konya', *Proceedings of the First International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium* (Istanbul, 2010), 48-50; S. Métivier, 'Les Maurozômai, Byzance et le sultanat de Rūm: note sur le sceau de Jean Comnène Maurozômès', *RÉB* 67 (2009), 197-207; Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman*, 116.

[610] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 110; 115.

In short, the 'battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander' serves a clear function within the Nikaian narrative framework, removing the Seljuk polity as a threat to Nikaia. However, the complex and contradictory textual record defies assimilation. In their efforts to synthesise the disparate textual references and 'reconstruct' what happened, modern historians have started from assumptions imbued with the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative and imposed this logic onto the texts that they find, outstripping in Nikaian-centrism even the Nikaian propagandist *Chronike syngraphe* of Akropolites.

2.4 – The fall of Sinope (1214)

Modern scholarship has presented the polity centred around Trebizond, which formed in *c.* 1203/4, as peripheral to the story of Constantinople's loss and 'recovery', and thus as peripheral to what Angold has described as "the mainstream of Byzantine history".[611] In response to Byzantine treatments of the Trapezuntine polity, cast by George Ostrogorsky as "insignificant and remote", revisionists, foremost amongst them Anthony Bryer, have argued that Trapezuntine exceptionalism makes Trebizond more, rather than less, worthy of study.[612] Part of this revisionist conception of Trapezuntine and Pontic exceptionalism was rooted in its perceived peripherality. However, this revisionist defence cedes too much ground to a Nikaian- and Constantinople-centric conception of Byzantium, namely that 'Byzantine history proper' from 1204 to 1261 was essentially Nikaian history and that Trebizond is not really part of that story. Antony Eastmond has convincingly argued for a "broader definition of Byzantium" through analyses of the material remains of the Trapezuntine polity, carefully located in its Byzantine, Anatolian, and Caucasian contexts.[613] Eastmond even explicitly argued that this kind of analysis can "free us from the literary construction of Byzantium produced in Nicaea."[614] However, even his sophisticated analysis has internalised some of the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, by framing Trebizond as a

[611] Angold, 'Rump', 737.
[612] G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (trans.) J. Hussey (New Brunswick, 1957), 383. For Pontic exceptionalism see A. Bryer, 'Greeks and Türkmens: The Pontic Exception', *DOP* 29 (1975), 113-48; A. Bryer, 'A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, An Additional Note', in *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980), 38-45; A. Bryer, 'A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, c.979-c.153', in *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980), 164-87.
[613] Eastmond, *Art*, 11.
[614] Eastmond, *Art*, 12.

viable 'Byzantium', according to the normative measures of the 'old empire'. Eastmond's careful studies of material culture and the built environment only excavate space around the dominant historiographical narrative, because they have not challenged its foundational premises on their own, primarily textual, terms. As with the Epirot 'documentary' texts, the material used by Eastmond opens different questions, but does not offer an explicit challenge to old questions and entrenched assumptions about 'what happened'.[615]

The first decade after the fall of Constantinople saw the formation of a number of polities, territorial shifts, and constant military confrontation narrated in a number of texts. In Paphlagonia the interests of the Nikaians, Seljuks, Latins, and Trapezuntines all overlapped. Here I focus on this early period and the conflicts in Paphlagonia (*c.* 1214), particularly the attack on and fall of the settlement of Sinope (modern Sinop) by the Seljuks, where Alexios Komnenos, ruler of Trebizond, was captured by the Seljuks.[616] This confrontation has traditionally marked the end of Trapezuntine involvement in broader Byzantine history, understood in terms of a Nikaian narrative.

The judgements of Savvides and Miller are illustrative of the 'importance' that has been attributed to the attack on Sinope in 1214, which has also been heralded by Rustam Shukurov as 'significant', through repeated comparison to 'the battle of Manzikert':[617]

> During the Paphlagonian war, there were no bloody battles, no hundreds falling in action. Yet, its historical significance can be compared with that of the crucial battle of Mantzikert (1071). From the standpoint of the future of Hellenism in Asia Minor in general, the loss of Sinop by the Byzantines (no matter whether « Nicaean » or « Trapezuntine » Byzantines) meant in fact that the Byzantine Greeks lost forever the possibility of a strategic initiative in the northern part of the Byzantine-Turkish front.[618]
>
> In 1214, his [Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris'] bargain with the Seljuks over Sinop resulted in his brilliant victory over the Grand Comneni. But that victory, which had a local and therefore restricted positive meaning, in the context of the general strategy of the survival of Byzantine civilization, may be evaluated only as a decisive defeat. This defeat is comparable with the Manzikert catastrophe in 1071. If the

[615] Eastmond's study constitutes one of the most illustrative examples of sophisticated research being forced into a broken narrative framework. See above 1.4 and 1.6. For a very recent alternative framing see A. Asp-Talwar, *Trebizond and Constantinople, 1204-1453* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Birmingham, 2018), 15-36.
[616] For the complexities of this, see below 2.4.
[617] See above 2.1 and 2.3.
[618] R. Shukurov, 'Trebizond and the Seljuks (1204-1299)', *Mésogeios* 25-6 (2005), 88-9.

> Byzantine defeat at Manzikert opened the doors of Anatolia to the Seljuqs, the Byzantine victory of Lascaris closed the doors of Anatolia to the Greeks forever. The process of Turkification of the peninsula had acquired an irreversible character.[619]
>
> The most important event in Byzantine-Seljuk relations following the battle of Antioch in 1211 was the attack of Kaikaus I on Sinope, one of the main naval bases of the Grand Comneni on the Black Sea coast, in the year 1214.[620]
>
> The results of the loss of Sinope were far-reaching.[621]

This event, more clearly than the other examples in this chapter, illustrates the aggregation of multiple descriptions of action into a single manageable 'event', because the textual record for the early Trapezuntine polity, and especially its Paphlagonian expansion, is particularly fragmentary and convoluted.[622] 'Reconstructing' a full and coherent narrative of events, the primary task to which modern historians have so far applied themselves, has thus proved difficult, since it is fundamentally impossible with the texts available.[623] Importantly, almost none of the relevant fragmentary textual record was created by or for Trapezuntines, not least because Michael Panaretos's narrative is very limited for this early period.[624] Here, as elsewhere in Trapezuntine historiography, the story of the early polity has been constructed by its enemies and as a result, has been subsumed into Nikaian- and Seljuk-centric historiographical narratives, medieval and modern.

The abundance of epigraphic texts, created during the extensive Seljuk repair and reconstruction of the fortifications of Sinope, which give the date of the capture of the settlement as 1214 and the repairs as 1215 have set the telos for the story that modern historians tell.[625] However, the two texts, which modern historians have used in order to construct a coherent narrative that explains and describes 'the attack on Sinope' in 1214, Ibn

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[619] Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 91.
[620] Savvides, *East*, 125. In this text Savvides problematically frames the Byzantines as one entity, without laying out any criteria for his elision of Trapezuntine and Nikaian. See also Korobeinikov, *Turk*; Kinloch, 'Korobeinikov', 700.
[621] W. Miller, *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire* (London, 1926), 11.
[622] R. Shukurov, 'The Enigma of David Grand Komnenos', *Mésogeios* 12 (2001), 125-6.
[623] This is however, not to say that historians have not tried. The most extreme case of this is Ian Booth who literally attempts to construct a full chronology on the basis of almost no evidence: I. Booth, 'Theodore Laskaris and Paphlagonia, 1204-1214: Towards a Chronological Description', *ΑΠ* 50 (2003-4), 151-224.
[624] Lampsides, *Παναρέτου*, 61.1-21-62.1; Asp-Talwar, 'Panaretos', 188. See above 1.6.
[625] S. Redford, 'Sinop in the Summer of 1215: The Beginning of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture', *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 16 (2010), 124-49, 538; Redford, *Legends*.

Bībī's Seljuk-centric *Al-Awāmer* and Nicholas Mesarites' so-called *Account of Political and Ecclesiastical Events*, focused on the Nikaian polity, deny simple amalgamation.[626] Shukurov has explicitly stated how he approached the 'evidence' provided by these texts:

> Ibn Bībī gives the most detailed and reliable version of the course of events, although he almost completely omits their dates. In contrast, Mesarites gives only a few allusions to the relevant events, but provides us with the exact dates for them. Thus, a parallel reading of these two basic sources allows us to reconstruct the Trapezuntine-Seljuk war of 1214 quite accurately.[627]

Shukurov's approach is representative of modern historiography concerning this and many other topics. The result of this treatment is that vague statements in the text of Mesarites have been read as coded allusions to characters and events in the *Al-Awāmer*, which has provided the interpretive framework. The attempt to construct a single 'true' historical event has meant that these two texts have been combined despite their contradictions.

The *Al-Awāmer* presents how the new Seljuk ruler ʿIzz al-Dīn Kay-Kaus (*r.* 1211-20) (hereafter Kay-Kaus) captured Sinope after surprising the ruler of the Trapezuntine polity, Alexios Komnenos, who was outside the city hunting and feasting. The Sinopitans refused to surrender until Kay-Kaus ordered Alexios to be tortured before the walls, at which point the inhabitants capitulated.[628] The basic core of this story is contradicted by a passing comment in the thirteenth-century Syriac historiographical narrative of Bar Hebreus (or Abû'l-Faraj) which stated that Alexios was killed.[629] Mesarites writes in relation to the Nikaian occupation of Paphlagonia, but does not set out a narrative of events. Instead he makes the action the background to his discussion of ecclesiastical affairs. Mesarites' 'evidence' has been elided with the *Chronike syngraphe*'s description of the occupation of Paphlagonia.[630] However, the *Chronike syngraphe* implies that the invasion occurred in *c.*

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[626] On this text see A. Heisenberg (ed.), *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion* (London, 1973), 3 vols; M. Angold (trans.), *Nicholas Mesarites, His Life and Works (in Translation)* (Liverpool, 2017); A. Vasiliev, 'Mesarites as a Source', *Speculum*, 13 (1938), 180-2. See above 1.6.

[627] Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 80.

[628] Ibn Bībī, *Mukhtaṣar* (trans.), 64-5 (§54-5).

[629] E. Budge (trans.), *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus* (London, 1932), vol. 1, 369. Generally see H. Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography* (Piscataway NJ, 2005).

[630] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 18.1-4 (§11), "Περιεγένετο δὲ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Θεόδωρος καὶ τοῦ τῆς Παφλαγονίας κρατοῦντος Δαυίδ, καὶ Ἡράκλειαν παρεστήσατο καὶ Ἄμαστριν καὶ τὴν πᾶσαν πέριξ χώραν καὶ τὰ πολίχνια. [The emperor Theodore also prevailed over the ruler of Paphlagonia,

1211.[631] In these accounts two different things are being discussed, Seljuk and Nikaian invasions of parts of Paphlagonia. They may, as modern historians have assumed, been connected, but the 'evidence' for this is *ex nihilo*.[632]

This methodology has been taken as far as it can by Shukurov, who still acknowledges that there are many details which cannot be filled in.[633] However, in an attempt to 'reconstruct' what happened, modern historians have failed to read textual descriptions of action in their narrative contexts. Confused periods of unspecific conflict do not function well in modern historiographical narratives, either for describing, explaining, or allocating meaning to the past. Consequently, while some specialists have acknowledged the texts' shortcomings, in 'mainstream' historiography all these complex conflicts in Paphlagonia have been condensed in order to work for the Nikaian narrative. Just like the *Chronike syngraphe*, modern historians have created a single coherent entity for which the fall of Sinope functions as both an endpoint and a useful summary mechanism. The period 1205-14, leading up to 1204, which is explicitly treated as a separate period by both Savvides and Shukurov, has thus come to function as a period of flux. After this period ended in 1214, a new status quo of Nikaian superiority emerged, narrated by Nikaian-centric texts. Historiographical interpretations range from this being the moment where a mighty contender was defeated to the inevitable moment when a weak rival was finally and inevitably removed from competition for Constantinople, the universal metric by which success is ultimately judged.[634] Regardless of their specific angle the synthesis of disparate action into 'the fall of Sinope' has allowed meaning to be imposed on action:

> …the loss of Sinope and his western provinces cut him off from direct contact with the rival Empire of Nicæa. Nor was it altogether an evil that the loss of Sinope and

David, and brought to terms Herakleia and Amastris and all the surrounding land and fortresses.]" For the translation see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 132.

[631] On the problems with the *Chronike syngraphe*'s chronology see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 83.

[632] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 151.

[633] Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 78-86. Building on previous studies, see Vasiliev, 'Foundation'; Vasiliev, 'Mesarites'; A. Bryer, 'David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios', *ΑΠ* 42 (1988-9), 161-88.

[634] Booth even goes so far as to imply that the Seljuks saved the Trapezuntines from the inevitable success of the Nikaian polity: Booth, 'Paphlagonia', 209, "Sinope now free but the Sultan takes it thereby ending any hope of Laskaris taking it." This is similar to the logic that made the 'battle of Adrianople important because it allowed the Nikaian polity to embed itself. See above 2.2.

> his western provinces cut him off from direct contact with the rival Empire of Nicæa.[635]
>
> …in 1214 the Empire of Trebizond became a vassal state to the Sultanate of Iconium. The capture of Sinope by Izz-ad-Din cut off the Trapezuntine Empire from the Nicaean and Latin Empires. Henceforth for a considerable time, Trapezuntine foreign policy, disconnected from the west of Asia Minor, was limited to relations with Iconium and Georgia.[636]
>
> …effectively cutting off the empire of Trebizond from the mainstream of Byzantine history. It became instead a 'Greek emirate', and its history involves that of Anatolia and the Black Sea rather than the late Byzantine empire's.[637]
>
> While Turkish possession of Sinope screened the Empire of Trebizond from further attacks by Nicaea, henceforth Alexios' claim to be Byzantine emperor rang hollow, and the Empire of Trebizond ceased to be of more than local importance.[638]
>
> In any case, after 1214, the lands of the Grand Comneni were confined to approximately the borders of the former province of Chaldia. Thus the Empire of Trebizond was drastically reduced to a marginal regional power incomparable in importance to the Seljuks and Nikaians.[639]

It suits a narrative of Nikaian success to combine several years of intensely confusing conflict in Paphlagonia together, since Trebizond's swift departure from the political scene allows Nikaia to monopolise legitimacy and importance.[640] From a Byzantine perspective, or rather within the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, the fall of Sinope signposts the end of Trebizond as a contender for Constantinople, the metric of success which has been prioritised.[641]

In this case, the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative has been complemented by the traditional narrative of Seljuk historiography, which viewed largely through the Seljuk-centric and often encomiastic *Al-Awāmer*, of Ibn Bībī, and a modern programme of pan-Turkic nation-building, saw the early thirteenth century as a Seljuk golden age of pre-

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[635] Miller, *Trebizond*, 11.
[636] Vasiliev, 'Foundation', 30.
[637] Angold, 'Rump', 737.
[638] Treadgold, *State*, 718.
[639] Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 92.
[640] The same phenomenon can be clearly identified in the brisk treatment of the polities of the Kaystros and Maeander valleys, Rhodes, and Attaleia: Kinloch, *Anatolian*, 81-98.
[641] See above 1.4.

Mongol 'independence'.[642] The fall of Sinope, combined with the capture of Antalya (1207), has been used to mark out a new period of Seljuk hegemony in Anatolia, which itself is projected towards the *telē* of the battle of Köse Dağ (1243), the Seljuk subordination to the Mongols (of both the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate), and ultimately Ottoman hegemony.[643] As Redford has argued, the conquest of Sinope must be seen as part of the ongoing struggle of Kay-Kaus and the central Seljuk power in Konya to assert its authority over the Seljuk territories. The epigraphic evidence of Sinope, Antalya, Bayburt, and Konya all point towards the complex negotiation of power going on within the Seljuk world at the time.[644] The event of the fall of Sinope in 1214 has been extracted from this alternative narrative context and implanted into the Nikaian narrative, where it has been used to mean something different.

Because the Nikaian narrative was constructed anachronistically it now seems to make sense that the arbitrary line between Trapezuntine power in the Aegean and some kind of alternative Pontic future be placed at the fall of Sinope, since after this event the Trapezuntine and Nikaian polities never again shared a border. In framing the Trapezuntine polity within this narrative, the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative consistently downplays the importance of Trebizond.[645] However, in 1204 the city was economically more important than Nikaia, probably third only to Constantinople and Thessaloniki in importance.[646] Yet historians are swift to dismiss Trebizond as provincial and peripheral, implicitly assuming that Nikaia was not. For example, Angold states that Trebizond was "the most remote" Byzantine polity and similar statements, even by Trapezuntine specialists, are a consistent

[642] Generally and for relevant bibliography see A. Peacock and S. Yıldız, 'Introduction', in A. Peacock and S. Yıldız (eds.), *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London, 2013), 1-22.
[643] Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 113; R. Bedrosian, 'Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods', in R. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times* (New York, 1997), vol. 1, 250.
[644] Redford, *Legends*.
[645] See above 1.4.
[646] D. Jacoby, 'Venetian Commercial Expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean, 8th-11th Centuries', in M. Mango (ed.), *Byzantine Trade, 4th-12th Centuries* (Farnham, 2009), 371, n. 7. Attaleia has been treated similarly. See S. Redford and G. Leiser, *Victory Inscribed: The Seljuk Fetihname on the Citadel Walls of Antalya, Turkey/Taşa Yazılan Zafer: Antalya İçkale Surlarındaki Selçuklu Fetihnamesi* (Istanbul, 2008); Kinloch, *Anatolian*, 93, n. 411.

feature of scholarship.[647] This statement assumes a Constantinople-centric definition of remoteness. Decentring the framework of interpretation allows modern historians to see Trebizond at the heart of a network that penetrates the Caucasus, the Near-East, the Steppe, central Anatolia, and the Pontic littoral, as well as the Aegean and Mediterranean.[648] The same treatment has occurred for Arta and Ioannina, the key urban centres of Epiros, which are presented as peripheral to Constantinople rather than central to an Adriatic and a western-Mediterranean facing world. Importantly, in the Byzantine world the sea often connected communities more effectively than land, meaning that regions, such as Trebizond, which appear geographically distant, were economically and culturally highly connected.[649] These types of connection can be seen clearly in the close relationship between the Crimean peninsula and both Constantinople and Trebizond.[650] The highly connected nature of the Pontic coast can be seen in Ibn al-Athir's account of the consequences of the loss of Sinope for Seljuk trade coming from the Iranian plateau via Sivas.[651] That some parts of the route were held by different political powers was no barrier to interaction, trade, and connectivity, as Bryer's study of the heartlands of the Trapezuntine polity clearly demonstrates.[652] The relationship between the Seljuk polity and its neighbours was above all pragmatic in terms of trade, as is testified by the string of Seljuk caravanserai that lead towards Nikaian territory.[653]

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[647] Angold, 'Rump', 731. See also Angold, *Government*, 12; Vasiliev, 'Foundation', 3, "remote Trebizond". See above 1.4.

[648] For a portrait of the interconnectedness of this world see Eastmond, *Tamta's*.

[649] A. Bryer, 'Shipping in the Empire of Trebizond', in A. Bryer (ed.), *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980), 3-12; A. Bryer, 'The Littoral of the Empire of Trebizond in Two Fourteenth Century Portolano Maps', *AΠ* 24 (1961), 97-127. On connectivity see J. Preiser-Kapeller, 'Liquid Frontiers: A Relational Analysis of Maritime Asia Minor as Religious Contact Zone in the 13th-15th Century', Unpublished paper delivered at the workshop 'The Reception of Islam in Anatolia and its Neighbours' (Istanbul, 6.-7.9.13); A. Avramea, 'Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries', in A. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Washington DC, 2002), 57-90.

[650] J. Shepard, ''Mists and Portals': The Black Sea's North Coast', in M. Mango (ed.), *Byzantine Trade, 4th-12th Centuries* (Farnham, 2009), 421-41; A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge MA, 1936).

[651] D. Richards (trans.), *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period* (Aldershot, 2008), vol. 3, 113 (§242).

[652] A. Bryer, 'The Littoral of the Empire of Trebizond in two Fourteenth Century Portolano Maps', *AΠ* 24 (1961), 97-127.

[653] K. Erdmann, *Das anatolische Karavansaray des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1961-76), vol. 1, 235. For Sinope generally see Redford, 'Sinop', 124-49, 538.

Moreover, it is strange to construct the fall of Sinope as an absolute and permanent fixture in 1214, when the city was captured and held by Trapezuntine forces twice in the thirteenth century for significant periods (1225-8 and 1254-66).[654] The narrative construction of the fall of Sinope in 1214 as a turning point has imposed an arbitrary, anachronistic, and Nikaian-centric endpoint onto events that speak instead to a multiplicity of fluid narratives. Trebizond continued to be closely engaged with 'mainstream' Byzantine politics and only with hindsight can the capture of Sinope be endowed with such significance.[655] Even Angold, in stark contrast to his other dismissive rhetoric, is forced to concede that the name Komnenos, which was so heavily stressed by the Trapezuntine rulers, made them potentially "the most dangerous" threat to the Laskarids of Nikaia.[656]

2.5 – The battle of Klokotnitsa (1230)

Within the Nikaian narrative, the so-called battle of Klokotnitsa (1230) functions similarly to the battles of Adrianople, Antioch-on-the-Maeander, and the fall of Sinope.[657] 'The battle', which saw Bulgarian forces defeat an army of the Epirot/Makedonian polity, as well as the capture, and subsequent blinding, of the Epirot ruler Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, has come to mark a turning point in both the historiographical narrative of the Epirot/Makedonian polity and of the Nikaian narrative within which it is embedded.[658] For modern scholars, military defeat in 1230, coupled with Theodore's capture, has conveniently signposted the zenith of Epirot power and foreshadowed its perceived future political-military weakness, peripherality, and, most importantly, its failure (or inability) to 'recapture' Constantinople. Modern historiographical consensus is well summarised by brief mention of the battle in an art historical study:

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[654] Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 92-9, 120-5. Although the hagiographical work of John Lazaropoulos does not match Muhammad al-Hamawı's odd testimony, nor that of Ibn Bībī and Ibn al-Athīr, in all respects, Shukurov has argued that during the period 1225-8 Sinope was controlled by Trapezuntine forces. Shukurov, 'Trebizond', 97.

[655] Vasiliev, 'Foundation', 26-7.

[656] Angold, 'Rump', 734. See above 1.6.

[657] It is perhaps most similar to that of 'the battle of Adrianople', because the battle was not won by the Nikaians, but the Bulgarians. For one of the many articles, the chronology of which is determined by the date of 'the battle', see Giarenis, 'κράτη', 250-67.

[658] On the Epirot polity see above 1.4 and 1.6.

> After the disaster at Klokotnica in 1230, the territory of the State of Epiros was drastically reduced. The principality continued to weaken, and it never reached the level of power and influence it had had during Theodore's rule.[659]

The combination of a military defeat and the removal of a polity's ruler, as with the other events considered in this chapter, put another of Nikaia's potential rivals, to use John Fine's phrase, "out of the running for Constantinople."[660] However, it is not only Fine that has explicitly conceived the significance of the battle in these terms:[661]

> He probably hoped that a victory against Bulgaria would eliminate a serious rival in the race for Constantinople.[662]

When placed within the sweeping arc of the Nikaian narrative, the meanings attributed to this battle have been framed in macro-political and -military terms. However, in the medieval texts, from which 'the battle' has been 'reconstructed' by modern historians, there are no descriptions of the military confrontation itself longer than a single sentence. Instead, the texts cited as 'sources' for 'the battle' are almost exclusively concerned with Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, particularly his (personal) defeat, capture, and blinding. Although most of these elements of Theodore's fate can be found in the majority of the texts used by modern historians as sources for the battle of Klokotnitsa, they are given dramatically different meanings in the various narrative contexts in which they are found. A sustained comparison of these medieval narratives, both with each other and with modern historiography, demonstrates the extent to which the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative has superseded the 'evidence' of these texts.

The dominant interpretation of the confrontation has been inherited directly from Akropolites' *Chronike syngraphe*.[663] However, the *Chronike syngraphe* explicitly states that it was not especially concerned with the confrontation itself, which it skips over quickly:

> καὶ ὡς ἐν μικρῷ τὸ πᾶν παραστῆσαι, κατὰ κράτος νικᾶται παρὰ τῶν Βουλγάρων καὶ τῶν Σκυθῶν ὁ Θεόδωρος, καὶ συλλαμβάνεται μὲν παρὰ τῶν πολεμίων οὗτος, οὐκ ὀλίγοι δὲ καὶ τῶν προσγενῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐν τέλει τε καὶ λογάδων, καὶ τὰ

[659] L. Fundić, 'Art and Political Ideology in the State of Epiros during the Reign of Theodore Doukas (r. 1215-1230)', *Byzantina Symmeikta* 23 (2013), 240.
[660] Fine, *Late*, 126.
[661] On this capitalist rhetoric, see above 1.2.
[662] Magdearu, *Asanids*, 201.
[663] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 41.11-43.13 (§25); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 178-9.

> ἐκείνων πάντα λεία τοῖς Βουλγάροις ἐγένετο.[664] [To present the whole situation in brief, Theodore was completely defeated by the Bulgarians and Scyths and he was captured by the enemy, while not a few of his relations, his officials and chosen men, and all their possessions, became booty for the Bulgarians.][665]

The *Chronike syngraphe* seems almost incidentally to mention that Theodore was "completely defeated [κατὰ κράτος νικᾶται]" and captured along with many of his men, because it illustrated the primary drive of this section of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s narrative, which constitutes a concerted attack on the character of Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas and, through him, the legitimacy of the Epirot/Makedonian polity. The passage reads as a *psogos* (ψόγος) or invective against Theodore, in which the *Chronike syngraphe*'s chief criterion for the inclusion of material is its critique of Theodore, and Epirot rulership more generally. The passage and Theodore's defeat is foreshadowed by his earlier depictions in the *Chronike syngraphe*. In his first appearance he is cast as a traitor, betraying the confidence of Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris, to whom he is subordinated in the text.[666] In later passages Theodore's traitorous characteristics are embellished and extended. The *Chronike syngraphe* depicts Theodore as arrogant and divergent by suggesting that he has no conception of order and hierarchy (τάξις):

> Ὁ δὲ Κομνηνὸς Θεόδωρος, ὃν πρὸ μικροῦ ὁ λόγος ἱστόρησε, μὴ θέλων μένειν ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ τάξει…[667] [But Theodore Komnenos, whom the account mentioned a short time ago, was not willing to remain in his proper place…][668]

Both immediately before the Klokotnitsa *psogos* and after he was released by the Bulgarian ruler Boril Asen (*r.* 1207-18), the *Chronike syngraphe* depicts Theodore not only as arrogant, but also as a sly trickster, beguiling the inhabitants of both Adrianople and Thessaloniki:

> ἀπατηλοῖς δὲ λόγοις τοὺς οἰκήτορας ὑπελθών, ὡς πλουτίσειε τούτους ἄκρως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ῥωμαίων ὑπερυψώσειε, πείθει τὸ μὲν τοῦ βασιλέως ἐξαγαγεῖν στράτευμα ἔξω, αὐτὸν δὲ εἰσαγαγεῖν.[669] [Beguiling the inhabitants with deceitful

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[664] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 42.10-15 (§25).
[665] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 178.
[666] In the very first mention of him, he is set up as a traitor, abandoning his service to Theodore Laskaris and fleeing to Epiros to oppose him: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, esp. 24.24-5-25.1-2 (§14). This is part of a wider narrative, which subordinates of Epiros to Nikaia.
[667] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 33.14-5 (§21).
[668] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 162.
[669] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 40.4-7 (§24).

> statements that he would make them extremely wealthy and raise them above other Romans, he persuaded them to expel the army of the emperor and to admit him.][670]

The main thrust of the *psogos* of the *Chronike syngraphe* is that Theodore is an oath-breaker, who is punished for his treachery. In preparation for this critique of Theodore, the *Chronike syngraphe* starts the passage, which includes the so-called battle of Klokotnitsa, by mentioning the treaty between Theodore and the Bulgarian ruler John Asen, which had been sealed with a marriage alliance.[671] Immediately after including this temporally much earlier event, the *Chronike syngraphe* recounts how Theodore transgressed his oath and invaded Bulgarian territory, expecting, in his arrogance, the Bulgarians to flee before him.[672] The *Chronike syngraphe* thus distorts its chronology, placing the treaty and transgression alongside each other in order to emphasise the duplicity of Theodore. In the subsequent passage the arrogant and quasi-tragic figure of Theodore thus gets his just deserts, when he is defeated by a small force of Bulgarians led by the wronged John.[673]

The *Chronike syngraphe* makes several careful intratextual references, which are central to understanding this passage, and from which the so-called 'battle of Klokotnitsa' cannot be separated. The *Chronike syngraphe* implicitly contrasts Theodore negatively with Manuel Kammytzes, the Nikaian general whom Theodore had forced to withdraw from Adrianople. When, before Theodore, Kammytzes "did not dismount or make obeisance as to an emperor [οὐκ ἀπέβη τοῦ ἵππου οὐδὲ ὡς βασιλεῖ προσεκύνησεν]", he was beaten by Theodore himself.[674] While Kammytzes' loyalty is contrasted with Theodore's oath-breaking in the following passage, the *Chronike syngraphe* also compares Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas to Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, who had his mace-bearers beat Akropolites, in one of the most extended and vivid sections of the text.[675] Both Theodores are presented as haughty arrogant fools who mistreat their inferiors. By associating Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris with Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas the *Chronike syngraphe* also undermines his imperial legitimacy, thus promoting his patron Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[676]

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[670] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 172.
[671] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 41.11-18 (§25).
[672] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 41.18-42.2 (§25).
[673] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 42.2-43.13 (§25). See also Macrides, *Akropolites*, 83.
[674] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 40.1-20, esp. 12-3 (§24); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 172.
[675] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 127.24-134.2 (§63).
[676] See above 1.5 and below 4.12.

Manuel Kammytzes is rewarded with the rank of *megas hetaireiarches* on return to Nikaia, by John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, while Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas is rewarded with ignominious defeat, and thus justice is served.[677] The passage also prefigures the Bulgarian Tsar John Asen's breaking of a treaty arranged through a marriage pact with John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes and the Nikaians, which features later in the text.[678] This time it is the same John Asen that defeated Theodore, who breaks a treaty with John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes and suffers for it. This careful allusion links the Bulgarians and Epirots as unjust, barbarous, and explicitly non-Roman enemies of Nikaia.[679] One of the key insults levelled at Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas in the *Chronike syngraphe* is that the new hierarchy, which he created after his capture of Thessaloniki, was as inadequate and barbarous as that of the Bulgarians:

> βασιλεὺς οὖν ἀναγορευθεὶς ὁ Θεόδωρος βασιλικῶς ἐχρῆτο τοῖς πράγμασι, δεσπότας τε προυβάλλετο καὶ σεβαστοκράτορας μεγάλους τε δομεστίκους, πρωτοβεστιαρίους καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν πᾶσαν τάξιν βασιλικήν. ἀφυῶς δὲ ἔχων περὶ τοὺς τῆς βασιλείας θεσμοὺς Βουλγαρικώτερον ἢ μᾶλλον βαρβαρικώτερον ταῖς ὑποθέσεσι προσεφέρετο, οὐ τάξιν γινώσκων οὐδὲ κατάστασιν οὐδὲ ὅσα ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις ἀρχαῖα ἔθιμα καθεστήκασιν.[680] [When Theodore was proclaimed emperor, he dealt with affairs in an imperial manner: he appointed despots and *sebastokratores*, *megaloi domestikoi*, *protovestiarioi,* and all the rest of the imperial hierarchy. But, being naturally unsuited to the institutions of the imperial office, he handled matters in a Bulgarian or, rather, barbarian fashion for he did not understand hierarchy or protocol or the many ancient customs which have been established in the palaces.][681]

The barbarity of the Bulgarians has further implications for the Epirots, and indeed the Latins at Adrianople, because it comments on their lack of worthiness. 'True Romans' sanctioned by God ought to triumph over barbarians, but here Theodore is defeated by barbarous Bulgarians.

The passages of the *Chronike syngraphe*, cited as evidence for the battle of Klokotnitsa, have been used to 'reconstruct' the past as if they were extricable from their narrative and ideological positioning. Acknowledging in a vague and generalising sense that the *Chronike*

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[677] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 40.18-20 (§24).
[678] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 52.10-57.15 (§34-6).
[679] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 90-2; 94-7; Page, *Being*, 11-26.
[680] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 34.5-12 (§21).
[681] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 162.

syngraphe is 'anti-Epirot' is insufficient if passages such as this are still treated as evidence of a battle independent of the psogic attack against Theodore that dominates the text. There is no military confrontation in the *Chronike syngraphe*, only a story about Theodore. The minimal description of any military confrontation and the focus on the person of Theodore is common to most of the texts identified and used by modern historians as sources for the battle.[682] However, although they produce a similar focus on Theodore, they create different meanings, which have been largely ignored, as these texts have been swept up as additional, supporting, or confirmatory evidence of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s narrative and the Nikaian narrative into which it has been fitted.[683]

One such 'additional' text is the fourteenth-century *Rhomaike historia*, by Nikephoros Gregoras, which recounts the defeat, capture, and blinding, of Theodore in a single sentence:[684]

> εἰληφὼς, συῤῥήγνυσιν αὐτῷ πόλεμον ἰσχυρὸν, καὶ νικᾷ καὶ χειροῦται τοῦτον καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύττει, τῆς δίκης ὀψὲ περιελθούσης αὐτὸν, ὧν τε τὴν νόμιμον περιεφρόνησε τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλείαν, βασιλείας ἑαυτῷ περιθεὶς ὄνομα·[685] [Having overtaken him, he [Asen] engaged him [Theodore] in a mighty war, and defeated and took him prisoner, and dug out his eyes. Thus justice at last encompassed him, for the ways in which he had despised the lawful empire of the Romans, having bestowed upon himself the name of imperial power.]

There is no battle at all outside of the defeat of Theodore by Asen. Instead the confrontation is rolled into a single event with Theodore's capture and blinding. This offers a significant break with the *Chronike syngraphe*, according to which Theodore's blinding occurred a long time after his capture.[686] This tripartite event of Theodore's defeat, capture, and blinding reoccurs in most of the other 'sources' for the battle, with the blinding implicitly occurring immediately afterwards (as will become clear below). Suffice it to say here, although Theodore is at the heart of the presentation, the event constructed by the *Rhomaike historia* is

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[682] Many texts have simply been ignored by most historians. I deal in the following sub-chapter with the most prominently cited. However, for a fuller analysis of the later tradition see V. Gjuzelev, 'Битката край Клокотница (9 март 1230 г.) в средновековния историко-литературен спомен и в народното предание', *Palaeobulgarica* 4 (2011), 41-54.

[683] For an example of the presentation of the *Chronike syngraphe* first and supporting evidence either in footnotes or later in the text see Magdearu, *Asanids*, 201-2.

[684] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 28.9–17 (§1). See above 1.6.

[685] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 28.13–7 (§1).

[686] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 43.14-9 (§26). On the other texts see below 2.5.

substantively different to that of the *Chronike syngraphe*. More than that, it also constructs different meanings. The passage reads as an epilogue to a description of the Bulgarian polity and as a preface to a eulogistic description of John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes. Only in this intratextual context can the passage be understood. The *Rhomaike historia* makes Asen the aggressor in direct contrast to the *Chronike syngraphe*. However, even observing this has not stopped modern historians from using the *Rhomaike historia* as 'evidence' of the 'same' event.[687] Furthermore, the *Rhomaike historia*'s focus on the unlawfulness and illegitimacy of Theodore's claims to imperial power is placed in explicit contrast to John. The Romans under Theodore, we are told, suffer when Asen takes over, but those under John prosper in a number of ways.[688] The account is brief, but despite the presentation of Theodore's defeat, capture, and blinding cannot be said to describe the same action.[689]

The same can be said of another text used by modern historians writing about 'the battle of Klokotnitsa', a letter (written in Hebrew) by the Rabbi Jacob ben Elijah to (or rather against) the apostate Saul (turned mendicant friar Paul 'Christiani'), both of whom lived and preached in Iberia (and southern France) in the mid-thirteenth century.[690] This letter's composition appears to have been closely related to the so-called disputation of Barcelona (1263), in which the letter's recipient, the friar Paul (*né* Saul), was the principal Christian/Dominican disputant (arguing against the Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides)) in a debate on the relative merits of Christianity and Judaism performed before James I of Aragon (*r.* 1213-76).[691] Scholars have been unable to date the letter with

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[687] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 180, n. 3.
[688] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 28.17-30.12 (§1).
[689] Note that the *Rhomaike historia* does not mention Klokotnitsa as the location of 'the battle' and that only the *Chronike syngraphe* specifies any location, see Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 41.11-43.13 (§25); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 178-9. See above 2.3.
[690] For the original Hebrew edition see J. Eisenstein (ed.), וכוחים אוצר (New York, 1955-6), 184-93. For translations see S. Bowman, *The Jews of Byzantium, 1204-1453* (Tuscaloosa, 1985), 228-9; A. Sharf, *Jews and Other Minorities in Byzantium* (Ramat-Gan, 1995), 150-2. For a recent overview of Christian-Jewish relations in thirteenth-century Iberia see R. Vose, *Dominicans, Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Cambridge, 2009); P. Tartakoff, *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Crown of Aragon, 1250-1391* (Philadelphia, 2012); R. Zorgati, *Pluralism in the Middle Ages: Hybrid Identities, Conversion, and Mixed Marriages in Medieval Iberia* (New York, 2012); B. Garland, 'Jewish and Christian Converts in the Judeo-Christian Religious Discussion of the Middle Ages', *Miscellanea Medievalia* 4 (1966), 264-82.
[691] On the disputation of Barcelona generally see R. Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and its Aftermath* (Los Angeles, 1992); Vose, *Dominicans*, 170-8; C. Roth, 'The Disputation of Barcelona (1263)', *The Harvard Theological Review* 4 (1950), 117-44. On disputations more generally see

precision, although it is generally agreed that it dates to either shortly before or soon after the disputation in 1263 (a range from *c.* 1259 to the early 1270s is generally accepted, although not always explicitly argued for).[692] The letter constitutes a polemic against apostasy, in which the recipient Paul (*né* Saul) is the principal target, and (more broadly) against the repression of Jews by Christians (with a particular emphasis on Christian rulers).

The letter supports its argument with reference to eight individuals who were, according to the logic of the text, punished by God for their poor treatment of the Jews. The first seven of the eight examples are drawn from the rulers of various thirteenth-century polities. Four Byzantine examples (namely Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, John Komnenos-Laskaris, and Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos) (3-6) are sandwiched between the rulers of Morocco (1), Majorca (2), and Baghdad (7).[693] The stories of the fates of these rulers are followed by the final example of Nicholas Donin (8), the apostate known for his role in the so-called Disputation of Paris (1240), before the letter turns its attention fully to Paul (*né* Saul) himself.[694] This text (as a whole) has been used by scholars studying various aspects of thirteenth-century Iberian and Jewish historiography. However, the examples given in the letter (most often taken individually) have also been instrumentalised as 'sources' for the histories of the characters, events, and places presented in them.[695] The third example in the letter, is relevant here, since it presents the defeat of "Theodore the wicked Greek" by "King Asen":

A. Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance* (Philadelphia, 2013).

[692] For the most concerted attempt to date the letter see R. Chazan, 'The Letter of R. Jacob Ben Elijah to Friar Paul', *Jewish History* 6 (1992), 51-63; Chazan, *Barcelona*, 27-9. Note that Andrew Sharf does not give a date with his partial translation of the 'Byzantine sections' of the letter, Sharf, *Jews*, 148-59. Similarly, although Robin Vose notes that the letter "is perhaps the earliest known source to mention Christiani", he fails to mention what that date might be, citing only Robert Chazan's article, which suggests a pre-1263 date: Vose, *Dominicans*, 143, n. 32. Byzantinists tend to simply cite the date as *c.* 1270. For example, see Bowman, *Jews*, 54; 228; G. Prinzing, 'In Search of Diasporas in the Byzantine "Successor State" of Epirus (c. 1210-1267)', in C. Christ, *et al.* (eds.), *Union in Separation: Diasporic Groups and Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean (1100-1800)* (Rome, 2015), 134.

[693] Note that scholars have numbered this list slightly differently, depending on whether or not they elide multiple rulers into the same story.

[694] On the disputation of Paris (1240) see J. Rosenthal, 'The Talmud on Trial: The disputation at Paris in the Year 1240', *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 47 (1956), 58-76; 145-69.

[695] For the inaugural historicist reading of the text see J. Mann, 'Une source de l'histoire juive au XIIIe siècle: La lettre polémique de Jacob b. Elie à Pablo Christiani', *RÉJ* 82 (1926), 363-77. Following Mann, see Roth, 'Disputation', 120, "an extremely interesting polemical letter replete with historical detail."

> And now I will inform you of what happened to Theodore the wicked Greek whose heart the Lord made fat and whose eyes He blinded, so that he ruled in the obstinacy of his heart and acted wickedly to our people, profaned our faith, confiscated their wealth and plundered their possessions. And when a Jew would come before him he would turn his eyes and make sport with him while sitting on high as if he did not see him. And the Lord our God stiffened his spirit and gave him the courage to revenge himself against his enemies. Thus this Theodore the Greek went out to fight with King Asen. He sought not his peace but waged war with him. King Asen, however, killed most of his knights in the battle as well as the best of his commanders. Then the wicked Theodore fell into his net and was captured by him. [696]

The letter continues, noting that after his capture Asen told two Jews to blind Theodore, that these Jews (taking pity on him) refused, that they were consequently hurled to their deaths from a "lofty mountain", and finally that Theodore was blinded regardless.[697]

The letter thus presents this story about Theodore as an allegorical and moralizing lesson for Paul (*né* Saul), as well as hinting at a threat of divine vengeance for his actions. It explicitly presents a narrative about what happens to those who mistreat the Jews and consequently lose God's grace. Nevertheless, this story of Theodore's defeat, capture, and blinding has been co-opted as a 'source' for the battle of Klokotnitsa. This story gives us the elements that have come to be essential to modern presentations of the event, namely the defeat, capture, and blinding of Theodore, although again in ambiguous order, as well as adding an additional story about the two Jews. These elements have thus been incorporated into the narrative presented by the *Chronike syngraphe* and with it the Nikaian narrative of 'what actually happened', either as anecdotal aside or footnote. One scholar has even gone so far as to attempt to locate mountains from which the recalcitrant Jews from the story could have been cast, searching the environs of Klokotnitsa, Thessaloniki, and Tarnovo for appropriately lofty peaks.[698] This kind of ultra-empiricist reading seems to overstate the

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For a more recent empiricist reading of this text as 'evidence' for the Jews in thirteenth-century Epiros see B. Osswald, 'The Ethnic Composition of Medieval Epirus', in S. Ellis and L. Klusakova (eds.), *Imaging Frontiers, Contesting Identities* (Pisa, 2007), 125-54.

[696] Bowman, *Jews*, 228.

[697] Bowman, *Jews*, 228-9.

[698] Sharf, *Jews*, 157, "The difficulty is topographical: Neither near the site of the battle, nor near Thessalonica, nor for that matter in the region of the Bulgarian capital of Tirnovo, does the configuration of the land - a river valley, a plain and a plateau respectively - fit the probability of "a mountain reaching up to heaven"." On the blinding see Fine, *Late*, 124-5; Sharf, *Jews*, 157.

referential potential of the text, even within the traditional empiricist paradigms that this thesis attempts to challenge.

This story about Theodore must be read within the narrative arc of the whole letter and its argument; in particular it must be considered carefully alongside the other east Roman *exempla* in the letter, the Nikaian rulers John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, John Komnenos-Laskaris, and Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[699] According to the letter, the two Laskarid rulers, John and Theodore, forced the Jews in their territory to apostatise. As a direct consequence, both die gruesomely and their deaths are narrated in detail and with some satisfaction. Michael on the other hand, reversed this policy on coming to power, and acts as the agent of divine justice by blinding and castrating Theodore's son (John).[700] It is worth noting that the mismatch between the medical ailments and physical punishments attributed to each ruler in the letter and the *Chronike syngraphe* has not prevented scholars from accepting the central veracity of the letter.[701] However, beyond this, the two east Roman *exempla* must be considered together in order for them to be understood, since they clearly speak to each other. Günter Prinzing has argued for the letter's 'source' coming from the anti-Laskarid/pro-Palaiologan literary milieu in which the *Chronike syngraphe* was also created after the conquest of Constantinople in 1261.[702] As Prinzing has also pointed out, the Epirot example serves once more to equate the Laskarids with the Epirots in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of both. Thus, although the letter seems to complement the sentiment of the *Chronike syngraphe*, the project of stripping 'details' from this text for an empiricist description of some formalised 'battle of Klokotnitsa' remains problematic.

Similarly, the letter serves to reinforce the similar focus on Theodore found in the *Chronike syngraphe*, as well as the *Rhomaike historia*, since he is again the central character in the passage. However, although he is presented negatively in both the *Chronike syngraphe* and the letter, that negativity is constructed differently, in the former as barbarous arrogance and

[699] Note that all these *exempla* are rolled together into a single story element in the letter.
[700] Bowman, *Jews*, 229-30.
[701] Sharf, *Jews*, 153, "This information has never been questioned by Jewish or general historians - perhaps because Jacob's other instances of persecution, in Spain and Morocco, are independently well attested."
[702] Prinzing, 'Diasporas', 134-5.

in the latter as evil and rapacious (in explicit contrast to the merciful Jews). In both the *Chronike syngraphe* and the *Rhomaike historia* Theodore represents the potential for Epirot legitimacy, whereas in Jacob's letter, he embodies the fate of apostates and 'anti-Semites'. In other words, each text presents a different Theodore and attributes different meanings to his defeat and capture, in accordance with its narrative and ideological goals. Some of these coincide with each other. However, the project of modern historiography and the Nikaian narrative demands that these alternative stories, Theodores, and meanings be elided into a single past reality, with one story, one Theodore, and one meaning. This (more) critical reading of the referential potential of the letter does not constitute an attempt to deny that Rabbi Jacob ben Elijah was linked into the well-attested intellectual and economic networks and communities (Jewish and otherwise) that spanned the Mediterranean world, including Byzantium, most notably attested in the twelfth-century *Itinerary* of Benjamin of Tudela.[703] As Prinzing has demonstrated, the milieu from which such a letter, as well as its hypothetical informants or sources, might have come offers alternative avenues for reading the text.[704] However, even if all such informants were not hypothetical it would not mean that the letter's referential quality would be dramatically revised. The function of the story of Theodore within the letter is still principally illustrative and moralising.

A similar set of relationships can be seen in two Latin chronicles, by Richard of San Germano and Alberic de Trois-Fontaines, as well as the Greek hagiography of Saint Theodora of Arta, in which Theodore's defeat, capture, and blinding are mentioned briefly as asides in the presentation of other action. In one sentence, Richard's *Chronica* mentions a battle between Greeks after which Theodore was blinded:

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[703] M. Adler (trans.), *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Critical Text, Translation and Commentary* (London, 1907). See also D. Jacoby, 'Benjamin of Tudela in Byzantium', *Palaeoslavica* 10 (2002), 180-5; D. Jacoby, 'The Jews in the Byzantine Economy (Seventh to Mid-Fifteenth Century)' in R. Bonfil, *et al.* (eds.), *Jews in Byzantium* (Leiden, 2011), 219-56; D. Jacoby, 'The Jewish Community of Constantinople from the Komnenian to the Palaiologan Period', *VV* 55 (1998), 31-40; A. Panayotou, 'Jews and Jewish Communities in the Balkans and the Agean until the Twelfth Century', in J. Aitken and J. Carleton Paget (eds.), *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, 2014), 54-76, esp. 59-63; J. Holo, *Byzantine Jewry in the Mediterranean Economy* (Cambridge, 2009), esp. 63-75. More generally see S. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley CA, 1967-93), 6 vols; J. Goldberg, *Trade and Institutions in the Mediterranean* (Cambridge, 2012).

[704] Prinzing, 'Diasporas', 134-5. See above 2.5.

> Eodem mense Aprilis in Gr[a]ecorum imperio factum est pr[o]elium inter Gr[a]ecos, in quo Commiano captus est, et utroque lumine orbatus.[705] [In the same month of April in the empire of the Greeks a battle was waged between the Greeks, in which Commiano [Komnenos] was captured, and in both [eyes] he was deprived of light.][706]

Richard neither locates 'the battle' at Klokotnitsa, nor distinguishes between the Romans and Bulgarians, describing both sides as Greeks. In the otherwise almost entirely unrelated and generally parochial account of events in the lands in the immediate vicinity of Montecassino, Theodore's fate is an interesting novelty from a distant land.[707] Alberic, while more often concerned with eastern affairs and aware that it was not an internal 'Greek' conflict, is nevertheless interested in the same elements as Richard:

> Alsanus rex Bulgarie, frater Alexandri, successorem Michaelis, videlicet ducem Durachii Theodorum, cepit et excecavit, qui quondam comitem Petrum Autisiodorensem captivaverat.[708] [Alsanus the king of Bulgaria, [and his] brother Alexander, captured and blinded, the successor of Michael, that is Theodore the dux of Dyrrachion, who before that time had captured count Peter Autisiodorensem [de Courtenay].]

Similarly, although a differently orientated text, much more invested in this content, the hagiography of Theodora presents the 'battle' in a similar aside:

> Τῇ Ζαγορᾷ Θεόδωρος ἐπιστρατεύσας ὁ βασιλεὺς, πόλεμον ἐποίει Ἀσὰν τοῦ βασιλέως Βουλγάρων, καὶ νικηθείς, παρ' ἐκείνου χειροῦται, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς στερείται·[709] [The emperor went on campaign in Zagora, and made war against Asan, the emperor of the Bulgarians. And he was defeated and taken prisoner by him, and deprived of his sight.][710]

Thus, in these passing 'references', just as much as the longer narratives, 'the battle of Klokotnitsa' is concerned primarily with the person of Theodore.[711] I explore the reasons for

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[705] C. Garufi (ed.), *Ryccardi de Sancto Germano, notarii, Chronica* (Bologna, 1937), 166, 31-2, n. 5, 20-6.
[706] That Theodore is referred to as Komnenos is important for legitimacy claims of the Epirots. See above 1.4 and 1.6.
[707] G. Loud, 'The Chronicle of Richard of S. Germano, 1189-1199' (Unpublished paper, 2002), http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/download/1123/the_chronicle_of_richard_of_s_germano_1189-99 [Accessed 12.05.16].
[708] Scheffer-Boichorst, *Monumenta*, vol. 23, 927.5–7.
[709] Migne, *Patrologiæ*, vol. 127, 905.b. Note that Gjuzelev cites the Latin in 906.b: Gjuzelev, 'Клокотница', 42.
[710] A.-M. Talbot (trans.), 'Life of St. Theodora of Arta', in A.-M. Talbot (ed.), *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Washington, 1996), 330.
[711] See for example their appearance in the footnotes of one of the earliest Narrative Histories of the period: C. Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren* (Prague, 1876), 251, n. 6.

and consequences of this in greater detail in the following chapter.[712] However, in the context of the construction of the so-called battle of Klokotnitsa, it is important to observe the almost complete absence of any martial confrontation and the total dominance of the person of Theodore.

A final text that features more prominently than these narrative asides as an additional 'source' for 'the battle' is an inscription on a column in the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Veliko Tarnovo, which has been dated to shortly after 1230 (along with the whole church), because it references Theodore's defeat:[713]

> In the year 6738 [1230] I, John Asen, in Christ God faithful tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians, son of the old Tsar Asen, built from the foundations and adorned with paintings the whole of this most honorable church in the name of the Holy Forty Martyrs with whose help in the twelfth year of my reign, in the year this temple was being painted, I made war in Romania and defeated the Greek army and captured their Tsar, Kyr Teodore Komnenos, together with all his *bolyars*. And I occupied all of his land from Odrin [Adrianople] to Drach [Dyrrhachium], Greek and also Arbanashka [Albanian] and Serbian; and the towns around Tsarigrad [Constantinople] and this very city were held by the Frizes [Latins], but they were also subjugated to my empire; because they had no other Tsar but me and thanks to me they spent their days, because God ordered this, because without Him neither a deed, nor a word is done. Glory to Him for all ages! Amen.[714]

The majority of the inscription is about John Asen's building of the church, territorial conquests (in relative detail), and claims to imperial titles and power, while the confrontation that it celebrates receives relatively little attention and is treated in only one short sentence.[715] In this Bulgarian text a laudatory rhetoric for Asen has replaced the invective against Theodore found in the Greek texts. However, the capture of the person of Theodore still dominates the presentation of military action itself, in so far as that is presented at all in the text.

The positioning of 'the battle of Klokotnitsa' within the Nikaian narrative is vitally important, because it first stops and then reverses a compelling narrative of triumphal

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[712] See below 3.
[713] Most are simply ignored. I deal here with the most prominently cited. For a fuller analysis of the later tradition see V. Gjuzelev, 'Битката край Клокотница (9 март 1230 г.) в средновековния историко-литературен спомен и в народното предание', *Palaeobulgarica* 4 (2011), 41-54.
[714] Petkov, *Voices*, 425; K. Popkonstantinov and O. Kronsteiner (eds.), *Старобългарски надписи* (Vienna, 1997), vol. 2, 166-8.
[715] See below 2.5.

military expansionism. From its foundation up until 'the battle of Klokotnitsa', the Epirot polity is presented as "moving from victory to victory" in Byzantine and modern texts.[716] For example, an important Epirot prelate, Demetrios Chomatenos, lists the bishoprics incorporated by the expanding polity in this period.[717] Moreover, even the *Chronike syngraphe* lists the cities captured by the Epirots and grudgingly credits Theodore with capturing Peter de Courtenay.[718] The culmination of this successful expansionism has been depicted as the incorporation of much of Makedonia, Thessaly, and Thrace, including Thessaloniki, into the polity, by 1224. The capture of the city, led to increasingly prominent imperial claims and rhetoric from the Komnenian rulers of what was at the time the territorially largest Roman-identifying polity in the Aegean world. This increased confidence took various forms, including, but not limited to, claims of imperial and ecclesiastical titulature.[719] Given that the polity had been presented as successful up until this point, 'the battle of Klokotnitsa', a terminating motif for Epirot power and transitional motif in the Nikaian narrative of 'reconquest', is attributed the capacity for dramatic political, military, social, and economic change:

> After Klokotnica, Thessaloniki-Epirus was a shell of what it had recently been; the weakness of Theodore's administration is shown by the speed with which the kingdom collapsed after his capture.[720]
>
> The fortunes of the newly-established empire were soon reversed after the battle of Klokotnica (1230).[721]

So critical is the battle of Klokotnitsa conceived to be that it has accrued wider significance by virtue of being deemed significant. For example, scholars have argued that after the battle of Klokotnitsa in 1230 John Asen started attaching the qualifier 'of the Bulgarians and Greeks' to the title of Tsar.[722] It seems plausible from the evidence such scholars present,

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[716] Fine, *Late*, 122.
[717] Prinzing, *Πονήματα*, 369.33-370.47 (§112.3).
[718] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 26.9 (§14). See also Scheffer-Boichorst, *Monumenta*, vol. 23, 927.5–7.
[719] Karpozilos, *Controversy*, 70-86.
[720] Fine, *Late*, 126.
[721] N. Kontogiannis, '*Translatio Imaginis*: Assimilating the Triple-Towered Castle in Late Byzantine Coinage', *BZ* 106 (2013), 719.
[722] Following Macrides, *Akropolites*, 182, n. 15. See G. Ilinski, *Грамоты болгарских царей* (Moscow, 1911), 13; T. Gerasimov. 'Sceaux bulgares en or des XIIIe et XIVe siècles', *BS* 21 (1960), 63-8; M. Hendy (ed.), *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and the Coinage of Byzantium* (Northampton, 1989), 296-7. For the *Chronike syngraphe*'s characterization of Asen see Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 64.6-65.3 (§39).

including an inscription found at Stenimachos/Stenimaka (modern Asenovgrad) and attestations of various coins and seals, that such a change can be dated to approximately this period.[723] However, given that the less ambitious title of 'tsar and autocrat of the Bulgarians' is deployed in the commemorative inscription in the Church of the Forty Martyrs at Tarnovo specifically commemorating Asen's victory, it seems to push the case too far to associate this change with such exactitude to the battle itself.[724] The battle of Klokotnitsa acts as a useful narrative peg, from which to hang interpretations of a host of complex material, which is not quite so orderly as scholars might like. This critique principally concerns the form in which scholars have presented their observations regarding changes in titulature, but form (as I have argued) is inextricable from content.[725] Here the close association of battle and titulature provides a useful example of the way in which battle-events, like those discussed in this chapter, have come to monopolise the wider allocation of meaning.

It is against the backdrop of this rapid military-political expansion and ideological confidence and articulation, that the *Chronike syngraphe* and modern scholars' narratives must be considered. Given the knowledge that 1261 would see the Nikaian 'reconquest' of Constantinople, it has been assumed by scholars that these successes were merely insubstantial surface gains. However, the urban centres that are recorded by both the *Chronike syngraphe* and the commemorative inscription in Tarnovo as being captured in the immediate aftermath of the battle, are limited to those most recent conquests in northern Makedonia and Thrace. Thessaloniki remained Epirot. The defeat at Klokotnitsa is thus particularly significant in narrative terms because it completely reverses the previous narrative concerning Epirot power, which was one of prolonged growth and aggressive expansionism. However, the first military interaction between Epirots and Nikaians had seen Nikaian forces forced to abandon the important urban centre of Adrianople.[726]

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[723] Petkov, *Voices*, 426, "In the year 6379 [[*sic*] 1231], fourth *indiction* I, Asen, from God elevated *tsar* of the Bulgarians and the Greeks, as well as of other countries, installed *sevast* Alexius and built this fortress."; B. Zlatarski, 'Асеновият надпис при Станимака', *Известия на Б'лгарско Археологическо Дружество* 2 (1911 [1912]), 241-3. Note that the year 6379 runs from 1 September 1230 to 31 August 1231.

[724] Petkov, *Voices*, 425. For the full translation see above 2.5.

[725] See above 1.2 and 1.3.

[726] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 40.1-20 (§24).

In the *Chronike syngraphe* the battle's primary function is to illustrate the negative personal characteristics of Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, just as Antioch-on-the-Maeander lauds Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris and his relationship with God. Other texts which relate the fate of Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas have simply been co-opted into reinforcing or adding to the *Chronike syngraphe*'s narrative. Often, they have complementary themes, albeit framed in different ways and supplying different meanings. Akropolites' *Chronike syngraphe*, Gregoras' *Rhomaike historia*, Jacob's letter, the inscription from Tarnovo, and the three short passages in other texts all focus, to some extent, on portraying Theodore negatively. Thus, even when modern historians have looked beyond the *Chronike syngraphe*, they have failed to escape the construction of a military confrontation that is subordinated to the actions and character of Theodore. Both the emphasis placed on and the number of different textual attestations of the fate of Theodore demonstrate that this story could be made meaningful. I do not wish to suggest that either these passages in the texts or the real confrontations that have been assumed to stand behind these presentations of Theodore's capture were not meaningful or important either within their texts or in reality. However, that is not the same as accepting the reality of battle of Klokotnitsa, as presented in modern historiography, or the meanings associated with it, within the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative.

Furthermore, the *Chronike syngraphe* has come to be accepted as so closely related to 'what happened' that even a colourful detail that it reported as hearsay has become 'fact', through repetition in modern historiography:

> …**ὥς φασί τινες** κἀν τῇ σημαίᾳ τὸν ἔγγραφον ὅρκον τοῦ Θεοδώρου ἀπαιωρήσας.[727] […**some say** that he hung Theodore's written oath on his standard.][728]
>
> The battle was fought at a place called Clocotnitza, and the Bulgarians, who used the parchment of the broken treaty as a standard, were entirely successful.[729]
>
> Asen, fired more by the justice of his indignation than confidence in his numbers, went into battle with Theodore's oath of alliance pinned to his standard.[730]

[727] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 42.7-8 (§25).
[728] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 178.
[729] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 141.
[730] Nicol, *Despotate*, 110.

> He marched out to meet Theodore, with a copy of their treaty, including Theodore's seal and oath, affixed to his standard.[731]
>
> За да повдигне духа на войската си и да покаже справедливостта на воденатa война, българският цар заповядал да набучат на копие договора между него и епирско-солунския император.[732] [To raise the spirit of his army and show the justice of the war, the Bulgarian tsar ordered that they put the contract between him and the Epirot-Thessalonikan emperor on a banner.]

Much 'importance' and transformation has been attributed to the battle-event referred to as 'the battle of Klokotnitsa' by modern historians.[733] However, this attribution of 'importance' is underpinned by decontextualized empiricist readings of complex and ideologically-positioned texts, in which characterisation often supersedes the presentation of military-political action. In addition, modern historians have accepted story elements that even the *Chronike syngraphe* explicitly signalled as hearsay and incorporated them uncritically into their narratives.

2.6 – The battle of Pelagonia (1259)

In 1259, according to modern historians, a series of hostile military-diplomatic interactions occurred, somewhere in the region of Pelagonia and Kastoria (in Makedonia), between, on the one side, Epirot, Moreot, and Hohenstaufen forces and, on the other, Nikaian forces. The sum of these interactions has been designated as 'the battle of Pelagonia' in modern historiography, and although modern historians regularly mention the complexity and the multiple interactions that constituted 'the battle', they universally fall back on single-event nomenclature.[734] Modern historians of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world have singled out this battle as a significant event in their narratives:

> It is the larger result of the battle that entitles it to rank as a **decisive** one in the history of Western Europe.[735]
>
> Pelagonia was one of the most **important** battles of the thirteenth century, possibly of the entire period of later Byzantine history.[736]

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[731] Fine, *Late*, 124.
[732] Gjuzelev, 'Клокотница', 42.
[733] For a largely unrelated topic see also R. Macrides, 'Subversion and Loyalty in the Cult of St. Demetrios', *BS* 51 (1990), 195.
[734] Nicol, *Despotate*, 186.
[735] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 248. Emphasis added.
[736] Geneakopolos, *Michael*, 73. Emphasis added.

> Although Michael II Doukas was soon able to recover, regroup, and again make trouble for Michael VIII, the battle of Pelagonia was of great **significance**.[737]

The variously described 'significance', 'importance', and 'decisiveness' of the battle of Pelagonia in modern scholarship is constructed by the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative. As in the previous four examples, the battle marks the defeat of the Nikaian polity's rivals, in this case the Epirot/Makedonian and the Latin/Moreot forces. This Nikaian victory is compounded by the capture of Guillaume II de Villehardouin, the ruler of the principality of Achaea. However, the very existence of this confrontation contradicts the linear internal logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, since it implies that neither 'the battle of Adrianople' nor 'the battle of Klokotnitsa' were as 'significant' as modern historians have claimed, since by 1259 both the Epirots and Latins, albeit in slightly different political formations, have been resurrected as potential threats to Nikaian hegemony.[738]

Even more problematic than this internal contradiction in the Nikaian narrative is the additional significance that historians apply to 'the battle', which, within the Nikaian narrative, functions as the final turning point, after which the dominance of the Nikaian polity and the 'reconquest' of Constantinople by Nikaian forces became 'inevitable'. As such, the significance of the so-called battle of Pelagonia in modern scholarship relies, in large part, on the causal link postulated between the 'battle' and the capture of Constantinople in 1261. This causal link dominates literature concerning 'the battle':

> En septembre 1259 se livra près de Pélagonia, à l'ouest de la Macédoine, une bataille qui décida du sort do l'empire latin de Constantinople et de la restauration de l'empire grec dans son antique capitale[739] [In September 1259, a battle was fought near Pelagonia, west of Macedonia, which decided the fate of the Latin empire of Constantinople and the restoration of the Greek empire in its ancient capital.]

> The reconquest of Constantinople on July 25, 1261, by troops of Michael VIII Palaeologos, Emperor of Nicaea, restored the Byzantine Empire after fifty-seven years of Latin occupation. For the success of this event nothing was more important than Palaeologos' victory at Pelagonia in 1259.[740]

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[737] Bartusis, *Army*, 38-42. Emphasis added. See also Lurier, *Conquerors*, 21.
[738] See above 2.2 and 2.5. For a summary of a period of Moreot history framed as "Greek raids, resistance and recovery, 1210-64" see Lock, *Franks*, 80-84. For the Epirot polity between 1230 and 1259 see Nicol, *Despotate*, 113-79.
[739] J. Longnon, 'La bataille de Pélagonia en 1259', *Journal des savants* (1955), 136.
[740] Geanakoplos, 'Pelagonia', 101.

> Most important, Pelagonia paved the way for the restoration of the Byzantine Empire by removing the menace of a Latin attack from the west, thus freeing the hands of Michael Palaeologos for the task of recovering Constantinople.[741]
>
> …Pelagonia may at least justly be regarded as the prelude to the recovery of Constantinople by the Greeks.[742]
>
> …this victory left Michael VIII Palaiologos as the dominant force in the Balkans. It could only be a matter of time before his armies recovered Constantinople.[743]
>
> It was an important step before the recovery of the imperial city of Constantinople in the possession of the Nicaean Empire and the revival of Eastern Roman Empire.[744]

However, the allocation of significance in this way and the postulation of this causal link says more about the narrative goals of modern historians than the texts they draw on, because such a link is not present in the texts which purport to describe 'the battle'. The mono-dimensionality of the event and the significance with which it is combined mask a conflicted and divergent textual record, as well as the purpose for which these texts were written.

When interpreting 'the battle of Pelagonia', modern historians have always implicitly started from the empiricist premise that it is possible to reconstruct, at least in part, the 'true' event. They have argued extensively over the exact date that the confrontation occurred, the 'true' number, ethnicity, and disposition of the combatants, the location of the battle, the exact routes of the armies to the battlefield, the diplomatic relations of the rulers of the polities involved, and the correct titles and offices of the Nikaian generals.[745] To this end the *Chronike syngraphe*, *Syngraphikai historiai*, *Rhomaike historia*, and the *Chronicle of Morea*, as well as a number of other texts have been mined for 'facts' and mixed together to get as close as possible to some kind of 'ur-battle'. This approach usefully demonstrates contradictions in

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[741] Geanakoplos, 'Pelagonia', 135.
[742] Nicol, *Despotate*, 186.
[743] Angold, 'Rump', 749.
[744] Mihajlovski, 'Pelagonia', 275.
[745] Generally see J. Wilksman, 'The Campaign and Battle of Pelagonia 1259', *Βυζαντινός Δόμος* 17-8 (2009-10), 131-74; D. Nicol, 'The Date of the Battle of Pelagonia', *BZ* 49 (1956), 68-71; Geanakoplos, 'Pelagonia', 99-141; Mihajlovski, 'Pelagonia', 275-84; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 362-4; M. Dendias, 'Le roi Manfred de Sicile et la bataille de Pélagonia', in *Mélanges Charles Diehl* (Paris, 1930), vol. 1, 55-60; J. Longnon, 'Le rattachement de la principauté de Moree au royaume de Sicile en 1267', *Journal des savants* 3 (1942), 134-43. Note that here I largely sidestep Hohenstaufen/Sicilian interactions, because they are similarly sidelined in the texts that modern historians have used to construct 'the battle'.

the 'source material'. However, it constructs a conglomerated 'faux-true' event that is not attested in any individual text and can never be verified.

The testimony of the *Chronike syngraphe* once more sits at the heart of modern historiographical interpretations, yet it neither places 'the battle' at Pelagonia, nor offers up the simplistic, formalised, and reified battle-event that is to be found in the modern Nikaian narrative.[746] In the relevant passages, the *Chronike syngraphe*'s main focus is the person of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, whom it presents encomiastically (as throughout the rest of the text).[747] The passage containing the description of the so-called battle of Pelagonia is no exception. The passage immediately follows Michael's 'usurpation' of power from John Komnenos-Laskaris, after the death of his father Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris.[748] The growing threat of Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas of Epiros, is intertwined, in the *Chronike syngraphe*, with the narrative of Michael's 'usurpation'. The threat of the Epirot-Latin alliance creates the necessity for strong leadership in Nikaia, which, the *Chronike syngraphe* implies, the young John clearly cannot provide. The threat that the Latin-Epirot army poses thus allows Michael to demonstrate his strength and ability to bring both victory and stability.[749] That, in its treatment of 'the battle', the *Chronike syngraphe* is primarily concerned with Michael can be seen most clearly in his allocation of responsibility for the victory. The *Chronike syngraphe* attributes all credit for the victory directly to Michael, through the vector of his brother John:

> Συνήθροιστο γοῦν παμπληθὴς στρατιά, καὶ κατὰ τοῦ αὐταδέλφου τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος τοῦ σεβαστοκράτορος Ἰωάννου τὴν ὁρμὴν ἐποιοῦντο. ὁ δὲ—καὶ γὰρ εἶχε τὰς συμβουλὰς ἀγαθὰς ἐκ τοῦ αὐταδέλφου καὶ βασιλέως—στρατηγικῶς τοὺς ἀντιπάλους μετήρχετο.[750] [A very large army was assembled and they set themselves in motion against the monarch's brother, the sebastokrator John. But he—for he had good advice from his brother the emperor—struck back at his adversaries strategically.][751]

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[746] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 171.8-173.18 (§81); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 363, n. 8. The text states only that the Laskarid forces attacked from Boril's wood (a site which cannot be located) and that after the battle prisoners were taken in Kastoria, Platamon, and elsewhere.
[747] See above 1.5.
[748] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 153.4-163.17 (§74-8); D. Geanakoplos, 'The Nicene Revolution of 1258 and the Usurpation of Michael VIII Palaeologos', *Traditio* 9 (1953), 420-30.
[749] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 156.19-159.6 (§76), 161.9-25 (§78).
[750] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 168.16-21 (§81).
[751] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 360.

Since the *Chronike syngraphe* goes to great pains to stress that it was strategy that won the 'battle', this is tantamount to attributing total responsibility to Michael.[752] Macrides has implied that this reference to Michael's involvement is verified by the encomiastic speech of Manuel Holobolos.[753] In his *encomion* for Michael, Holobolos, like the *Chronike syngraphe*, allocates the victory at Pelagonia to the contributions of Michael. Unlike the *Chronike syngraphe*, the encomion by Holobolos has been classified generically as rhetoric and so only plays a backing role in the 'representation' of 'the battle' in modern historiography, not least because it is full of elaborate similes, such as one that compares Michael to Alexander the Great, marshalling his forces when capturing the capital of Sogdia.[754] However, rather than corroborating the 'factual evidence' of the *Chronike syngraphe* and suggesting that there was a 'real battle', this comparison instead highlights the encomiastic quality of the *Chronike syngraphe*, thus undermining the relationship that has been assumed between its presentation of action and the past. The finale of the section concerning 'the battle', in which the *Chronike syngraphe* considers the significance of the victory, is illustrative of the encomiastic tone of the text:

> τοιαύτην γοῦν νίκην οἱ τῶν ἡμετέρων ταῖς βασιλικαῖς συμβουλαῖς κατωρθώσαντο ὥστε τὴν αὐτῆς φήμην εἰς πάντα τῆς γῆς περιέναι τὰ πέρατα· ὀλίγας γὰρ τοιαύτας νίκας εἶδεν ὁ ἥλιος. τηνικαῦτα γοῦν πάντα τε ἄστη καὶ πᾶσαν χώραν ὑφ' ἑαυτοὺς πεποίηνται οἱ ἡμέτεροι.[755] [Such a victory did our men accomplish with imperial counsel[s] that its fame visited all the ends of the earth. The sun has seen few such victories. At that time our men subjected every town and every territory.][756]

It was "ταῖς βασιλικαῖς συμβουλαῖς [by the imperial counsels]" of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos that the battle was won; these were the main concern of the *Chronike syngraphe*. Mention of the sun emphasises Michael's imperial legitimacy, alluding to both the tradition of comparing emperors to the sun in imperial panegyric and the associated *prokypsis* (πρόκυψις) ceremony.[757] He may be hundreds of miles away on the other side of the

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[752] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 362, n. 6.
[753] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 362, n. 6.
[754] M. Treu (ed.), 'Manuelis Holoboli, Orationes' in *Programm des königlichen Victoria-Gymnasiums* (Potsdam, 1906), vol. 1, 40.11–22.
[755] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 171.3-7 (§81).
[756] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 361.
[757] For similar uses by Choniates in the *Chronike diegesis* see Simpson, *Choniates*, 50. On *prokypsis* see Angelov, *Ideology*, esp. 41-2; A. Heisenberg, *Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit* (Munich,

Bosporus, but Michael dominates the text. Furthermore, Michael's importance and presence is emphasised when immediately after the confrontation the defeated forces swore an oath to Michael and the captives taken are explicitly linked to him by reference to them being sent to him.[758]

Even within the *Chronike syngraphe* the great victory that is constructed and attributed to Michael's "imperial counsels" is neither associated with the capture of Constantinople in 1261, nor even more short-term military-political gains. The *Chronike syngraphe* at first comments on the capture of urban settlements in Thessaly and Epiros by John Palaiologos' forces.[759] However, it then describes the apparent 'revival' of the Epirot rulers and their victorious 'recovery' of the main urban centres of Epiros, Arta and Ioannina.[760] Here the *Chronike syngraphe* deflects blame from Michael, attributing the defeats to the disobedience (literally lack of hearing, ἀνηκοΐαις) and disorder (ἀταξίαις) of his inferiors, concluding that:[761]

> …διὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡ περιφανεστάτη ἐκείνη νίκη ἡ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἐπιλάμψασα ἐν οὐ πολλῷ τῷ χρόνῳ πρὸς τοὐναντίον κεχώρηκεν.[762] [It was for these reasons that the most bright victory which shone upon the Romans, in not much time, had given way to the opposite.][763]
>
> …οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἀρχὴν κακῶν τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων εἴληφε πράγματα, καὶ τὰ καλῶς ταῖς βασιλικαῖς συμβουλίαις γεγενημένα ταῖς τῶν στρατηγούντων ἀνηκοΐαις καὶ ἀταξίαις εἰς τὸ μηδὲν σχεδὸν ἢ καὶ πάνυ μικρὸν κατηντήκασιν.[764] [This then was the beginning of bad times for Roman affairs. The good achievements which had

1920), 85-97; M. Jeffreys, 'The Comnenian Prokypsis', *Parergon* 5 (1987), 38-53; M. Jeffreys, 'Prokypsis', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 3, 1732-3. More generally on imperial sun imagery see H. Hunger, *Prooimion: Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden* (Vienna, 1964), 75-83.

[758] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 170.1-9 (§81).

[759] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 171.8-16 (§82); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 365.

[760] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 171.8-173.18 (§82); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 365-6.

[761] This absence of *taxis* reflects interestingly on the *Chronike syngraphe*'s presentation of Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas. See above 2.5. Furthermore, throughout, the *Chronike syngraphe* deflects blame from Michael. Thus, even when present and leading the Christian contingent of the Seljuk army against the Mongols and their Turkish allies, he is totally absolved from responsibility for their defeat. See Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, esp. 137.25-138.20 (§65).

[762] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 82.14-6 (§82).

[763] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 365. Slightly adapted.

[764] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 172.19-23 (§82).

> been brought about by imperial counsel were reduced to almost nothing, or very little, because of the disobedience and lack of discipline of those in command.][765]

The victory at Pelagonia, thus gives way immediately to reversal in "τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πράγματα [Roman affairs]". This passage of defeat in Epiros, after a brief aside concerning the allocation of titles to Nikaian elites, with which the *Chronike syngraphe* is very concerned, is followed by a description of the failed attempt to take Constantinople.[766] Michael was forced to depend on treachery, because of insufficient forces:

> …οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦγεν ἀξιόμαχον στρατιὰν εἰς τοιαύτης πόλεως πολιόρκησιν[767] […for he was not leading an army worthy of besieging such a city][768]

However, the traitor Anselm fails and the Nikaians are forced to withdraw and make a truce with the Latins.[769] The *Chronike syngraphe*'s description of this episode, is short and intentionally plays down the scale and amount of effort put into the attempt, especially compared to the descriptions of Gregoras' *Rhomaike historia*, Pachymeres' *Syngraphikai historiai*, and Holobolos' oration.[770] In particular, blame is aimed at Anselm and his lack of truth and deceitfulness. Yet, despite his best efforts, Michael's retreat from Constantinople and acceptance of a one-year truce reads ignominiously and hardly matches with Nicol's representative assertion about the situation following 'the battle of Pelagonia'.

> The only possible rival for the prize and the only competent defender of the city seemed to have fallen at one blow, and the way was at last clear for the restoration of the Byzantine Empire.[771]

The *Chronike syngraphe*'s description of the capture of Constantinople in 1261 does nothing to demonstrate that Nicol's claims are 'accurate'. The capture of Constantinople is universally reported as having occurred when a group of Nikaian troops happened to pass Constantinople while the Latin garrison was away.[772] The capture of Constantinople in 1261,

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[765] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 365.
[766] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 173.19-175.19 (§83).
[767] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 174.3-4 (§83).
[768] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 367.
[769] There is debate as to whether this is Anselm de Toucy or Anselm de Cahieu: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 369, n. 3.
[770] For the *Rhomaike historia* and *Syngraphikon historion* see below 2.6. Note also the corresponding passages here: Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 543.16-545.13; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9365-431; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 269.9-271.8 (§81). See below 4.2.
[771] Nicol, *Despotate*, 186.
[772] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 181-3 (§85); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 375-6.

rather than being the demonstration of the cumulative growth of the Nikaian polity, was due to the "προνοίᾳ θεοῦ [providence of God]", which is invoked twice in the description of the fall of the city, once at the beginning, once at the end, so that divine providence literally frames the conquest.[773] The *Chronike syngraphe* reinforces the presence of divine agency by noting that "ἀντελάβετο γὰρ κἀκείνων θεός [God held them [the Latins] back]" in their raid on Daphnusia.[774] The theme of divine providence is thus carefully intertwined with the person of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos. Michael's divine favour is even woven into the space in which action occurs, since in the description of the Latins' return from Daphnusia the church of the archangel Michael is carefully noted.[775] This is not coincidental, but rather another method by which Michael is both made present and divinely sanctioned. Modern historians have argued that the accident, which allowed the capture of Constantinople, was made possible and likely by the Nikaian dominance following victory at Pelagonia. However, the disparity between the Nikaian narrative in modern scholarship and the *Chronike syngraphe*, demonstrates the extent to which the Nikaian metanarrative has created a logic of its own.

Unlike the *Chronike syngraphe*, the *Syngraphikai historiai* of George Pachymeres is decidedly un-encomiastic concerning Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, since in part it blames him for the 'tragic' state of affairs at the time of the text's composition (the late thirteenth century).[776] More explicitly than the *Chronike syngraphe*, the *Syngraphikai historiai* uses 'the battle of Pelagonia' to discuss Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos and contemporary events in Nikaia, although it presents a directly contradictory impression of its central character.[777] The first two books of the *Syngraphikai historiai*, which cover the period before 1261, and especially the sections before 1259, are concerned primarily with explaining how Michael came to rule the eastern Romans. The brief description of 'the battle' itself is overshadowed by a much longer

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[773] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 181.10; 183.19 (§85).
[774] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 183.3 (§85). On divine providence in the *Chronike syngraphe* see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 54-5. See below 3.4.
[775] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 183.4-6 (§85); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 376. The *Chronike syngraphe* is the only text that mentions this church.
[776] Pachymeres' text is explicitly concerned with the reigns of Michael and Andronikos Palaiologos.
[777] For a full analysis of the ideological positioning of the *Syngraphikai historiai* see A. Failler, 'Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère', *RÉB* 38 (1980), 5-103; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 447-53. Especially in contrast to the *Chronike syngraphe* see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 71-5; Macrides, 'Writing', 70-2. Regarding this confrontation see Failler, 'Chronologie', 33-9. See above 1.6.

description of the diplomatic negotiations, which both preceded and proceeded the confrontation.[778] However, more importantly, the description of both the negotiations and 'the battle' are sandwiched between extended passages concerning how Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos gained popularity/'usurped' John Komnenos-Laskaris and how he came to be ruler in Nikaia.[779] In the *Syngraphikai historiai*, military action in the west is used to reflect explicitly on "τὰ πράγματα [the affairs]" of the east. Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas' 'rebellion' is presented as a response to the 'usurpation' of Michael, since he is presented as invading when he "ἀκούσας τὰ [πράγματα] κατ' ἀνατολὴν [heard about the affairs in the east]".[780] Later the *Syngraphikai historiai* portrays Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas as gloating over the weak/sickly "state of affairs [πραγμάτων]" in the east.[781] Moreover, after describing the confrontation, the *Syngraphikai historiai* immediately returns the attention of the audience to Nikaian affairs, by following the Nikaian commander, Alexios Strategopoulos, who led the conquering forces as he returned to Nikaia:

> Ὡς γοῦν ἐπανῆκον μετὰ λαμπρῶν τῶν τροπαίων, κατειλήφει μὲν καὶ ἔτι ὁ Στρατηγόπουλος ἐν ἀκαταστασίᾳ τὰ πράγματα, οὐκ ὀλίγα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ Παλαιολόγῳ συναίρεται τῆς ὀρέξεως.[782] [And when they returned with these magnificent trophies, Strategopoulos found affairs to be in a state of disarray still, and he was not slow to undertake the will of Palaiologos.][783]

The *Syngraphikai historiai* thus uses military conflict in the west as a medium through which to reflect on the state of affairs in the east that allowed Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos to come to power. In short, the *Syngraphikai historiai* and *Chronike syngraphe* are both principally concerned with using military action as a vector for the discussion of the character and actions of Michael, although he was not present at 'the battle'. Like the *Chronike syngraphe*, the *Syngraphikai historiai* makes no attempt to link the confrontation at Pelagonia to the capture of Constantinople in 1261. Again similarly, it presents the capture of Constantinople as an accident. However, going even further than the more positive *Chronike syngraphe*, the

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[778] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 115.7-127.7 (§1.30-2). Note that the *Syngraphikai historiai* does not locate 'the battle' geographically at Pelagonia.
[779] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 101.18-115.6 (§1.25-9); 129.1-149.12 (§2.1-9).
[780] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 115.9 (§1.30).
[781] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 115.19-20 (§1.30).
[782] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 121.22-5 (§1.31).
[783] N. Cassidy (trans.), *A Translation and Historical Commentary of Book One and Book Two of the Historia of Georgios Pachymeres* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Western Australia, 2004), 40.

Syngraphikai historiai presents the capture as an almost farcical spectacle. The conquering 'hero', Alexios Strategopoulos, is presented not only as less important than other characters, but as hesitant, dithering, and terrified as he enters the city, only to be outdone in his fear by the panic-struck Latin ruler Baldwin of Courtenay (*r.* 1228-73), who shed his imperial regalia as he fled to his ship.[784] Passing judgement on the conquest, the *Syngraphikai historiai* uses the *protosekretis* Senachereim as a mouthpiece to relate how negative the capture of the city would be for the Romans in the story he was about to narrate:

> "Ὢ οἷον", εἶπεν, "ἀκούω. Τοῦτο ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἡμέραις ἐταμιεύετο· τί γε ἁμαρτοῦσιν, ὡς ἐπιζῆν καὶ βλέπειν τοσαῦτα δεινά; Τοῦ λοιποῦ καλόν τις μὴ ἐλπιζέτω, ἐπεὶ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ αὖθις πατοῦσι τὴν πόλιν."[785] ["O, what news I hear! He said. "This was reserved for our time. What sins have we committed to live to see such a great disaster? Let nobody hope for anything good for the future, since the Romans are again walking in the city."][786]

In short, the *Syngraphikai historiai* contradicts many of the assumptions of both the *Chronike syngraphe* and the modern Nikaian narrative. However, the 'evidence' it supplies has been co-opted into the structuring framework supplied by the Nikaian metanarrative.

In the *Rhomaike historia* of Nikephoros Gregoras, Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos is also the main focus of the passage in which 'the battle' is narrated. As with the *Rhomaike historia*'s entire treatment of the early thirteenth century, its account of 'the battle' is very brief. Indeed, it is so short that there is barely a confrontation at all, although, as in both the *Chronike syngraphe* and *Syngraphikai historiai*, the diplomatic negotiations in advance of the confrontation, both the marriage alliances and the messenger sent by John Komnenos-Palaiologos to the Latins are narrated in greater detail.[787] The text simply narrates a rout, which resulted in many Latins being captured.[788] However, more important than this brief sketch, which is also not located at Pelagonia, is the passage that follows it. The description of the rout, which is the climax of book three, is followed at the start of book four, by the

[784] Thus the anti-Latin discourse intersects with the anti-Palaiologan flow of the text. Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 195.1-203.29 (§2.27). The *thelmaterioi*, who let the Nikaians into the city are the principal actors in the narrative.
[785] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 205.8-10 (§2.28).
[786] Cassidy, *Pachymeres*, 73.
[787] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 71.10-74.16 (§3).
[788] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 74.16-75.7 (§3).

most important result of the event, namely the proclamation of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos:

> Ἀλλὰ τούτων οὕτως ἐκεῖ τελουμένων, ἐπὶ τῆς ἀσπίδος ἐνταῦθα περὶ τὴν Μαγνησίαν καθίσαντες Μιχαὴλ τὸν Παλαιολόγον ἀναγορεύουσι βασιλέα οἱ δόξῃ καὶ γένει προὔχοντες.[789] [But thus while these things were coming to an end there, those prominent in honour and ancestry proclaimed Michael Palaiologos emperor, seating him on a shield here near Magnesia.]

Essentially, in the *Rhomaike historia*, 'the battle' is part of an explanation of how Michael came to rule in Nikaia, not how Constantinople was 'reconquered'.

Modern historians regularly deploy 'the *Chronicle of Morea*' as a 'source' for 'the battle', although this generally means just the HT-Greek 'version' of the text.[790] 'The battle' is signposted as 'important' in the text, but within an entirely different narrative framework to that of the Nikaian texts. The *Chronicle of Morea* is primarily concerned with telling a story about the polity known as the principality of Achaia, in the Morea. In this narrative landscape the Nikaian polity and its 'government' with which the *Chronike syngraphe*, *Syngraphikai historiai*, and *Rhomaike historia* are so concerned, is peripheral. Nikaian matters are important only in so much as they impact on the Morea. Consequently, the *Chronicle of Morea* is not primarily concerned with Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, who was not even present at 'the battle', but rather with Moreot characters, particularly Geoffroy de Briel/Bruyères, baron of Karytaina, and Guillaume de Villehardouin, the prince of Achaia. In the narrative of the confrontation itself, to which the HT-Greek *Chronicle of Morea* dedicates a larger proportion of its text than the three narratives discussed above, Geoffroy de Briel/Bruyères dominates the action.[791] Geoffroy's presentation is so central and the language so epic that Michael Jeffreys has even hypothesised that the narrative of 'the battle' depends on an unknown epic about Geoffroy.[792] While the feats of Geoffroy dominate 'the battle' in the HT-Greek 'version', the fate of Guillaume gives this passage its principal meaning and

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[789] Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 78.1-6 (§3).
[790] Here, I focus on the HT-Greek 'version', following modern historiographical constructions of 'the battle', which tend to remove the other complicating 'versions' of the text to the footnotes, if they are referenced at all. For an example of common practice see Geanakoplos, 'Pelagonia', 111, n. 56, 114-5, n. 75, 123. See above 1.6.
[791] Schmitt, *Morea*, 262.3950-270.4091.
[792] M. Jeffreys, '*The Chronicle of Morea*: Priority of the Greek Version', *BZ* 68 (1975), 335-6. See also Shawcross, *Morea*, 73-4.

significance within the text. This dual focus on Geoffroy and Guillaume is also present in the old French 'version', although here Guillaume is more central to the confrontation as well as the generation of meaning and significance.[793] However, the wider preoccupation of the text with Guillaume is explicitly signposted in the *Chronicle of Morea* immediately before the passage narrating 'the battle':

> Ἐν τούτῳ θέλω ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν νὰ πάψω καὶ νὰ λέγω / περὶ τοῦ ρῆγα τῆς Φραγκίας, τῆς Ἀθηνοῦ τοῦ Δοῦκα, / καὶ θέλω νὰ σὲ ἀφηγηθῶ καὶ νὰ σὲ καταλέξω / τὸ πῶς ὁ πρίγκιπας Μορέως, ἐκεῖνος ὁ Γυλιάμος, / ἐπιάστη στὴν Πελαγονίαν ἐκεῖνος κι ὁ λαός του.[794] [Now from this point on I will stop talking about the king of the Franks and the duke of Athens, and I will tell you and recount to you how the prince of Morea, the famous Guillaume, was taken at Pelagonia, he and his men.][795]

The narrative of the campaign builds towards the teleological conclusion that Guillaume would be captured. However, it is not the capture of Guillaume itself, but rather the result of his captivity that is primarily attributed 'significance' within the narrative of the *CoM*. After three years of captivity Villehardouin ceded the princely castles/urban settlements of Maina, Monemvasia, and Mystras, as ransom for himself and the other elite prisoners.[796] The *Chronicle of Morea* signposts the significance of this decision by repeatedly and explicitly commenting on the foolishness of giving up such important castles. For this purpose, the mouthpiece of the chronicler is the duke of Athens, Guy de la Roche, who thrice, at considerable length, warns of the danger of giving up the castles. On first hearing of the plan from Geoffrey de Karytaina, Guy's reaction is reported indirectly:

> Κι ἀφότου τὸν ἐρώτησε κ' ἐπληροφόρησέ τον / τὸ πῶς ἐσυμβιβάστηκεν ὁ πρίγκιπα Γυλιάμος / νὰ ἐξέβῃ ἀπὸ τὴν φυλακὴν τοῦ βασιλέως, νὰ δώσῃ / τὸ κάστρον τῆς Μονοβασίας καὶ τῆς μεγάλης Μάϊνης, / ὡσαύτως καὶ τοῦ Μηζηθρᾶ νὰ τὰ ἔχῃ ὁ βασιλέας, / μεγάλως τὸ ἐβλαστήμησεν, εἰς σφόδρα τὸ ἐλυπήθη. / Στριγγὴν φωνὴν ἐλάλησεν καὶ φανερὰ τὸν εἶπεν, / ὅτι διὰ τρόπον τίποτε ἐτοῦτο οὐδὲν τοῦ ἀρέσει, / νὰ παραλάβῃ ὁ βασιλέας ἐκεῖνα τὰ τρία κάστρη· / διατὶ εἶχεν γὰρ ὁ βασιλέας τότε μεγάλον κράτος / καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ στερέας εἶχεν

[793] Longnon, *Livre*, 107-11 (§293-305); Jeffreys, 'Priority', 335-6; Arsdall and Moody, *Morea*, 15.
[794] Schmitt, *Morea*, 230.3464-8.
[795] Lurier, *Conquerors*, 174. Slightly adapted.
[796] Schmitt, *Morea*, 286.4324-35; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 197-8. Note that in the Aragonese version of the *Chronicle of Morea* there are four castles, because Corinth is also included: Morel-Fatio and Heredia, *Morea*, 67 (§297). See also A. Bon, *La Morée franque* (Paris, 1969), 123. On the castles see J. Wagstaff, 'Further Observations on the Location of Grand Magne', *DOP* 45 (1991), 141-8; Longnon, *Livre*, 118, n. 1.

> στείλει φουσσᾶτα / κ' ἐβγάλει μας ἐκ τὸν Μορέαν κ' ἐπάρει τον ἐκεῖνος.[797] [And when he had asked and had been informed by him that prince Guillaume, to get out of the prison of the *basileus*, had agreed to surrender the castle of Monemvasia, that of Grande Maine, and also that of Mystras to the *basileus* to hold, he disapproved of it greatly and was exceedingly grieved. He spoke in a loud voice and told him plainly that in no wise at all did it please him that the *basileus* would then have great power and would send armies by land and sea and would put us out of the Morea and would take it for himself.][798]

After this summation of the argument against surrendering the castles, the *Chronicle of Morea* sets up a debate on the topic at the so-called parliament of women, so named because the wives of the captured knights represented their captured husbands at the meeting.[799] Notably at this 'parliament of women', it is actually two men, Geoffrey de Karytaina and Guy de la Roche, who participate in an agonistic debate.[800] In traditional agonistic form the implicitly weaker argument of Geoffrey de Karytaina is placed first, briefly and in reported speech.[801] In response Guy de la Roche sets out the dangers of the surrender of the castles in the form of direct speech.[802] Geoffrey de Karytaina then speaks in reply.[803] However, his speech is then immediately followed by another speech by Guy de la Roche:[804]

> Καὶ πάλιν λέγω πρὸς ἐσέν, καὶ κράτει το, ὡς τὸ θέλεις, / ὅτι, ἂν ἐσκόπα ὁ πρίγκιπας τὸ τί ἠμπορεῖ νὰ ἔλθῃ, / κάλλιον ἦτον νὰ ἀπόθανεν ἐκεῖνος μοναχός του / παρὰ νὰ χάσουν οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ Φράγκοι τοῦ Μορέως / τὰ ἰγονικὰ ποῦ ἐκέρδισαν μὲ κόπον οἱ γονεῖς τους, / ὡσὰν τὸ ἔποικεν ὁ Χριστός, τὸν θάνατον ἐγεύτη / διὰ νὰ λυτρώσῃ τὰς ψυχὰς τοῦ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων / ἐκ τῆς αἰωνίου κολάσεως, ὅπου ὑπαγαίναν ὅλοι. / Ἕνας κάλλιον ν' ἀπόθανε παρὰ χίλιοι διὰ ἐκεῖνον.[805] [And furthermore I say to you, take it as you will, that if the prince considered what could follow, it were better that he should die by himself, as one man, than that the rest of the Franks of Morea should lose the estates that their parents won with such labour, as did Christ, who tasted death to redeem the souls of

[797] Schmitt, *Morea*, 290.4373-84.
[798] Lurier, *Conquerors*, 198-9. Slightly adapted.
[799] Shawcross, *Morea*, 315-7; B. Hendrickx, 'Le 'Parlement de Dames' à Nikli en 1261-une réévaluation', *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 93 (2011), 205-12; A. Ilieva, *Frankish Morea, 1205-1262: Socio-cultural Interaction between the Franks and the Local Population* (Athens, 1991), 152.
[800] See also M. Guérin, 'Trouver la paix dans la principauté de Morée au XIIIe siècle: quel rôle des femmes?', *Questes* 26 (2013), 43-56, esp. 49-52.
[801] Schmitt, *Morea*, 292.4413-28; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 200.
[802] Schmitt, *Morea*, 292-4.4429-52; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 200-1.
[803] Schmitt, *Morea*, 294-6.4455-75; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 201.
[804] Schmitt, *Morea*, 296.4478-93; Lurier, *Conquerors*, 201-2.
[805] Schmitt, *Morea*, 296.4483-91.

> the race of men from eternal damnation whither all were going. Better that one should die, than a thousand for his sake.][806]

Thus, the argument of Geoffrey de Karytaina is sandwiched by the argument against the surrender and the ominous threat of giving up the castles. The *Chronicle of Morea* is followed by most modern historians in arguing that after the loss of these castles the principality went into a long and protracted decline for the rest of its survival.[807] The foundation and early years of the principality are the golden age of a polity, which was never again to control the entirety of the Morea. The 'veracity' of such a compellingly simplistic narrative of protracted and inevitable decline is one that has already started to be challenged, although, as with the metanarratives of late Byzantine decline and Nikaian expansionism, such constructs are defiantly persistent.[808]

In modern historiography different narratives, which feature a confrontation in Makedonia, have been synthesised into a single event, the so-called 'battle of Pelagonia'. This 'battle' has been presented in slightly different manners, depending on the predisposition and specialisation of modern historians for either Byzantine or Latin historiography. Its significance is drawn either through its postulated link with the fall of Constantinople in 1261 or with the decline of the Morea (which can be incorporated into that of Nikaian/Palaiologan growth). However, they are fundamentally incompatible traditions, as is demonstrated by their narrative contexts. This incompatibility is most strikingly apparent from what Lurier described as "a mistake" in the Greek version of the *Chronicle of Morea*. The chronicler places the capture of Constantinople by the Nikaians before the battle of Pelagonia, thus demonstrating that the *Chronicle of Morea* cannot be co-opted into a narrative that postulates a causative link between 1259 and 1261.[809] The *Chronicle of Morea* tells a completely different story to that of the *Chronike syngraphe*. The defeat at Pelagonia is the outcome of the campaign and is dramatically foreshadowed, yes. However, it is given significance, not as the modern historical narrative has given it, by association with the fall

[806] Lurier, *Conquerors*, 201-2.
[807] For the archetypical form of this narrative see Runciman, *Mistra*, esp. 35-7, especially the chapter entitled "The Return of the Greeks"; Miller, *Latins*, 82-160, especially the chapter entitled "The Greek Revival (1262-1278)".
[808] See above 1.6.
[809] Lurier, *Conquerors*, 163; 194.

of Constantinople in 1261, but by the capture of Guillaume and the surrender of the castles of Mystras, Monemvasia, and Maina. Although the additional information supplied by the *Chronicle of Morea* has been visibly co-opted into the narrative constructed out of the dominant narrative of the *Chronike syngraphe*, the two episodes serve completely different functions, within their own narratives. Significance can be seen here to be visibly constructed and one story to be reified, whilst others are subordinated to a single linear narrative thread.

2.7 – Preliminary conclusions

In this chapter, I have sought to illustrate the more theoretical claims of the first by demonstrating how medieval textual descriptions of action have been read, interpreted, and redeployed in modern historiography. These processes have led to them being alienated from the textual contexts, which originally gave them meaning. In modern historiography, meaning (and significance) have instead been constructed by modern historians, who have more often emplotted action within a framework provided by the Nikaian narrative, in accordance with the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative (or, less often, the frameworks provided by other disciplines), than the texts themselves. The interpretation and redeployment of textual descriptions of action has involved the construction, formalisation, and simplification of action into events, which can function more usefully in larger narratives. The importance of military action within key texts has led to confrontations, formalised as battle-events, being used as key nodal points within modern narratives. This process of formalisation can be seen clearly in the compulsion of modern historians to name these confrontations, pinning them down with geographical markers. Even when the texts they deploy as 'sources' are ambiguous about locations or present sequences of action that could not be described as 'a battle', still modern historians have felt compelled to formalise and simplify.

These five battle-events are the most important structuring elements in the thirteenth-century Byzantine past, as it has been emplotted and constructed in the modern Nikaian narrative. They are not, however, the only ones. This chapter, thus, complements the fourth chapter of this thesis, where I demonstrate the ways in which events that have not been singled out as particularly 'important' or 'significant' have also been subordinated to the

logic of the Nikaian metanarrative. Significantly, this chapter also serves to introduce the importance of characters within both the relevant medieval and modern texts. In the five case studies discussed in this chapter, the 'importance' of each battle is consistently associated with the death or capture of the ruler of a polity that opposed Nikaia. In the so-called battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander, all military action is subordinated to a duel between rulers, while in the so-called battles of Klokotnitsa and Pelagonia, the characterisation of specific individuals supersedes descriptions of martial action. The story of a battle thus often constitutes either a *psogos* or panegyric, literally in the case of some of the orations from which historians have sought to extract factual information.[810] It is not possible to fully extricate the presentation of individual characters from the presentation of the battles in which they are depicted, nor (*vice versa*) to extricate such battles from the individual characters which dominate their presentation, less still to extricate 'real' confrontations and humans from formalised narrative constructs. Nevertheless, this constitutes established modern historiographical practice.

I have sought to problematise the way in which modern historians have sought to reconstruct real confrontations from highly rhetorical and ruler-centric narratives, as well as the ways in which they have incorporated elements from less extensive texts into often contradictory narrative frameworks, derived principally from longer historiographical texts, most notably the *Chronike syngraphe*. I have neither proposed that confrontations did not happen, nor that they had no (political, military, social, economic, or any other kind of) consequences. Similarly, I have not argued that the death or capture of a ruler (so prominent in the presentation of these battles and the meaning they have been allocated in both medieval and modern historiography) had no consequences for medieval people or polities. Instead, having distinguished between real confrontations and textually constructed battle-events, I have demonstrated that presentations of these battles depend on a formula of key narrative elements. Further and most importantly, I have argued that the consequences, significances, or meanings attributed to the 'real' confrontations (assumed to stand behind these presentations of battle-events) are inextricable from this formula of key narrative elements. In other words, these battle-events and the fate of rulers have monopolised

[810] For example, the orations of Manuel Holobolos on Pelagonia or of Niketas Choniates on Antioch-on-the-Maeander.

meaning (to the exclusion of a host of other potential narrative elements that could equally be endowed with meaning) to such a degree, because of their explanatory capacity within the framework provided by the Nikaian narrative and the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative. In the next and third chapter, I develop a number of problems that this chapter has already framed, by considering the relationship between individual rulers, the polities they rule, and the wider narratives in which they have been embedded in greater depth.

3 – Characters

> Character is intuitively the most crucial category of narrative, and also most subject to projection and fallacies.[811]

3.1 – Introduction: Characters, actors, and agency

The Nikaian narrative depends on military 'reconquest', and in particular the kinds of battle-events discussed in chapter two, for structural coherence.[812] I have illustrated some disjunctures between textual presentations of these battle-events and the 'real' confrontations that they claim to reconstruct but which instead they construct. An important point of divergence has proved to be the way in which specific characters monopolise both the narration of action and the meaning that action has been ascribed. The five battle-events, discussed above, have each been singled out as 'important' by modern historians, at least in part, because they involve the capture or death of 'important' characters, that is to say rulers who threatened Nikaian hegemony. In my analysis of the so-called battles of Klokotnitsa and Pelagonia, I have shown that the characterisation of specific rulers not only supersedes, but even subordinates the military action that has been framed as 'what happened' in the past.[813] In this chapter, I push these observations further and rethink the basic assumptions that underpin the presentation of the characters that are allocated the agency to act in both Byzantine and modern historiography.

My starting point is once again an element of the disconnect between the past and historiography, namely that between *actors*, the 'real' things (normally humans) which did stuff in the past, and *characters*, the non-mimetic text-grammatical compositional units, used to present actors in historiography.[814] I use this disconnect and its consequences to rethink

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[811] Bal, *Narratology*, 113.
[812] See above 1.2 and 2.1.
[813] See above 2.5 and 2.6.
[814] See above 0.2. R. Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* (trans.) A. Lavers and C. Smith (London, [1964] 1967); R. Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (trans.) R. Howard (New York, 1986); A. Munslow, 'The Historian as Author', *Spiel* 30 (2011), 73-88; U. Margolin, 'Character', in D. Herman, *et al.* (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* (London, 2005), 52-7; A. Fokkema, *Postmodern Characters: A Study of Characterization in British and American Postmodern Fiction* (Amsterdam, 1991), esp. 13-79.

one of the basic mechanisms by which historiography presents the past, namely the characters it constructs and endows with *agency*. By agency, I mean not only the capacity to act (as in the 'standard' sociological and philosophical, albeit vague, definition of agency), but also the legitimisation and authority to do so. In this I follow John Meyer and Ronald Jepperson in seeking to emphasise the cultural construction of social agency as a specific time-bounded phenomenon, created according to specific contextual logics and assumptions.[815] In Byzantine historiography and thus all constructions of the Byzantine past, agency is the preserve of texts and their readers (or interpreters), rather than the characters they construct.[816] In this chapter I explore this disconnect and its consequences in the context of thirteenth-century historiography.

I argue that both the majority of and the most dominant characters, employed in modern historiography of the period (including the Nikaian narrative) to present actors in the thirteenth-century Byzantine past, fall into two different categories. Which type of character is deployed for the presentation of any event principally depends on the scale (both temporal and spatial) of that which is being presented. For short-term military-political affairs, *elite male characters* are normally deployed, while for long-term military-political affairs *anthropomorphic unitary 'states'* are usually utilised. Although these two types of character are heuristically useful for the purpose of describing and analysing the presentation of political action, they fundamentally overlap. Both types of characters are not only narrative and linguistic constructs, but also shorthands, which utilise analogic language to present more complex actors and agency. However, this analogic shorthand simplifies the objects of description and creates a space in which the analogies are left undefined and unspecific. Consequently, the readers of modern descriptions and explanations of political action are left to interpret these passages and to guess at authorial intent. For example, describing a battle as a duel between two rulers implies the presence of armies, but submerges details and creates a space for the reader to import their own preconceptions about military-political action, that is about how armies, battles, and leaders function.[817]

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[815] J. Meyer and R. Jepperson, 'The "Actors" of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency', *Sociological Theory*, 18 (2000), 100-20.
[816] I explore this idea below, see 3.4.
[817] See above 2.3 and 2.6, and below 4.12.

Since such tensions exist not only in modern historiography, but also in the thirteenth-century texts which historians have used as the 'source material' for their work, there is a double tension in the dual processes of mediation, construction, invention, and narrativisation, that constitute repeated, if covert, exercises of power by both author and reader.[818]

The creation of these two semi-distinct types of characters in the narratives of political action in the thirteenth century (that is elite male characters and anthropomorphic unitary 'states') and the relationship between them, have a number of wide ranging implications for the presentation and understanding of political action and agency in the period. It submerges much of the complexity of the political landscapes and serves to reinforce the dominant Nikaian narrative, which modern historians have been using to describe and explain the period between 1204 and 1261.

In this chapter, I extend the analysis of the previous two chapters from the macro- and meso-levels of narrative and event to the micro-level of character. In so doing I raise another related set of problems for the 'common-sense' assumptions which have guided modern historiographical constructions of the thirteenth-century Byzantine past. By considering the indeterminacy caused by the linguistic, narrative, and ideological construction of characters, as well as what they are presented as doing, I deconstruct another foundation of the Nikaian narrative and its metanarrative logic. Having introduced the basic concepts at play in this chapter, my analysis proceeds in four parts. First (3.2), I consider the construction of elite male characters, (3.3) before focusing on rulers as an important sub-set of such elite male characters. (3.4) I then explore the disjuncture between medieval (especially Byzantine) and modern conceptions of agency, (3.5) move on to the second dominant type of characters used to tell the Nikaian narrative, namely anthropomorphic unitary 'states', (3.6) before considering the combined effect of these two central types of characters and the fluidity between the two.

[818] See above 0.2.

3.2 – Elite male characters

Elite men (most often rulers, as I discuss below in 3.3) are the principal type of character used to depict military-political action, such as battles, negotiations, and sieges, in both Byzantine and modern historiography. Stating the male and elite status of these characters is not to deny agency to women, eunuchs, or non-elites, but rather to emphasise the marginality of these characters in narratives of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography.[819] Examples are easy to find, in both older Narrative Histories and more recent non-Narrative studies:

> In 1214 Theodore Lascaris annexed all his [David Komnenos'] possessions west of Sinope, together with Heraclea and Amastris, thus establishing himself on the south coast of the Black Sea.[820]
>
> La puissance de Lascaris reposait donc dans un premier temps sur l'aristocratie de la région de Nicée, grâce à laquelle il put repousser et éliminer son rival Maggaphas, battre Sabbas Asidènos et Manuel Maurôzomès soutenu par son gendre, le sultan d'Iconium, Kaykhusraw.[821] [The power of Laskaris was therefore based initially on the aristocracy of the region of Nicaea, through which he was able to repulse and eliminate his rival Mangaphas, defeat Sabbas Asidenos and Manuel Maurozomes supported by his son-in-law, the sultan of Iconium, Kaykhusraw.]
>
> Meanwhile, having secured himself in Epirus, Theodore pressed into Macedonia and quickly overran most of it.[822]
>
> When Emperor Baldwin marched on Thessalonica in the summer of 1204 and began to seize territory beyond the crusader lands by Mosynopolis, Boniface of Montferrat responded by attacking Adrianople, where, in the absence of any Venetian garrison, the emperor had established his own men.[823]
>
> Theodore I's son-in-law and successor, the emperor John III Vatatzes (1221-54), reconquered large territories in the Balkans, including the important city of Thessaloniki in 1246.[824]

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[819] See above 0.2 and below 4.10.
[820] Ostrogorsky, *State*, 383.
[821] Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 469. Cheynet systematises his use of elite (generally male) characters by making the "principal (principaux) protagonist(s)" the primary category in his documentation of "les révoltes". See also Kinloch, *Anatolian*, esp. 82-3.
[822] Fine, *Late*, 113.
[823] F. Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge, 2006), 374.
[824] Angelov, *Ideology*, 3.

As can be seen from these excerpts, this phenomenon is widespread throughout modern historiography.[825] A useful case study of the presentation of military-political action, for the purpose of this chapter, can be made from descriptions of the early expansion of the Laskarid polity in western Anatolia in the early thirteenth century (*c*. 1204-10). Here, I use as examples passages from Gardner's 1912 monograph and an article by Vincent Puech published in 2011, ninety-nine years later.[826] Together these passages present more than a century of modern historiographical endeavour, since Gardner summarises and incorporates much of the work of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Even in their 'form' the works from which these two case studies are taken illustrate important changes in modern historiographical practice. Gardner's monographic and explicitly Narrative History, the last such monograph to be written about the Nikaian polity, is witness to the general abandonment of that form, while Puech's article-length piece in an edited volume embodies the rise of that form of publication as a dominant mode of historiographical output.[827] However just as with the superficial transformation from narrative monograph to narrative-dependent article, superficial change in 'content' has also been met by underlying continuity in modes of describing short-term military-political action. Take, for example, the following passages:

> Meantime Theodore had had leisure to put down finally two of his lesser rivals in Asia and to restrain the powers of a third. Morotheodorus was driven from Philadelphia and another Greek governor, Sabbas, from the city of Sampson (the old Amisos) where he had assumed authority. David Comnenus of Heraclea, a more formidable opponent, was trying to extend his power, and even had designs on the city of Nikomedia, whence he may have hoped to reach Nicaea itself. But his forces, under the command of a young man named Synademus [sic], were surprised and put to flight by Theodore. Probably about this time Mavrozomen, the Sultan's son-in-law, also suffered a defeat at Theodore's hands.[828]

> Between the summer of 1205 and the spring of 1206, Theodore Mankaphas was overcome by the Nikaian troops in the region of Philadelphia. According to Niketas Choniates, Theodore Laskaris then secured the allegiance of Smyrna and Ephesos. The elimination of Mankaphas allowed him to reach the upper valley of the

[825] It is of course not restricted to the historiography of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world.
[826] V. Puech, 'The Aristocracy of the Empire of Nicaea', in J. Herrin and G. Saint-Guillain (eds.), *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (trans.) T. Papacostas (Farnham, 2011), 70.
[827] See above 1.3.
[828] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 75.

> Meander, where the *kaisar* Manuel Maurozomes was established. Maurozomes secured Turkish troops from his father-in-law, the Seljuk sultan, but was also subdued in late 1205 by Laskaris, who then negotiated a compromise: Maurozomes was to maintain his rule over Chonai and Laodikeia. At the end of 1205 Sabbas Asidenos, ruler in the region of Priene, was defeated in the lower Meander valley. Among the three vanquished dynasts he is the one who best preserved his power, for he is attested in 1214 as *sebastokrator*, allied to the imperial family.[829]

The most immediately apparent observation, arising from these two excerpts, is that very little has changed in the writing of political action. Of course, debate has continued, concerning the establishment of a firm chronology of events.[830] Puech's narrative is littered with approximate dates, unlike the plainer story of Gardner. Puech also superficially distances himself from the texts he utilised, inserting elements which signpost (although without evidence) his detachment and scientific method. Note for example his identification of a source text, through the invocation of its author, Niketas Choniates. While Gardner only transliterated the names of characters from the thirteenth-century texts, Puech formalises them according to recent prosopographical data.[831] Puech thus adds details, but details that are superfluous to the central narrative presentation. What has not fundamentally changed is the presentation of military-political action or the allocation of agency in modern historiography, which in both texts is told in terms of elite male characters doing things. In short, Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris is the protagonist in a story about his dealings with other elite male characters.

The actions described could not, of course, literally have been carried out by the individual characters, to whom they are ascribed. Gardner's statement that "Mavrozomen, the Sultan's son-in-law, also suffered a defeat at Theodore's hands", literally describes the defeat of one individual by another. However, both Gardner and the audience of her text, understand that analogy is being employed, although both Gardner's employment and the audience's understanding may vary in deliberativeness and consciousness. This analogic usage falls between metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche, because the usage is so unspecific.[832] Thus

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[829] Puech, 'Aristocracy', 71.

[830] As with much else, Ruth Macrides's commentary on the *Chronike syngraphe* includes exhaustive discussion of almost all such debate: Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 120-3. See also Kinloch, *Anatolian*, esp. 81-98.

[831] On titles, see above 1.4.

[832] This is particularly the case because these expressions are employed in their linguistic roles, that is as a figure of speech that is part and parcel of everyday speech, as opposed to the rhetorical role, in

the audience is left uncertain as to which elements are being compared: is it synecdochic, and Theodore Mavrozomes is representative of a greater thing of which he is a part, such as the Nikaian polity or an army; is it metonymy and Theodore is representative of a greater thing from which he is himself distinct, such as the Nikaian polity or an army; or is it a metaphor, in which Theodore literally is the anthropomorphic polity or army?[833] For the audience it is simultaneously all and none of these functionally facile definitions. This analogic discourse is a narratival shorthand, which allows modern historians to simultaneously construct and present different facets of complex action and agency in simple describable terms for the purpose of narrative dissemination. However, when interrogated intensely for specific meaning, such analogy is opaque and obfuscatory. Consequently, it is essential to consider a further level of the fracture between historiography and the past, beyond the level of simple linguistic indeterminacy, but before the macro- or even meso-narrative levels of event and story.[834] The very characters who act in such meso- and macro-level action have already been constructed and reified by analogic discourse, the interpretation of which does as much to construct the thirteenth-century Byzantine past, as do the other elements discussed in this thesis.

From this brief analysis of modern scholarship, it has become apparent that the basic narrative, presented by modern historians and illustrated by Puech and Gardner, constructs military-political action through narrative shorthand. However, this process is not confined to modern scholarship. A similar process can also be identified in the thirteenth-century texts, which Gardner and Puech claim as 'sources', principally Akropolites' *Chronike*

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which analogy would be deployed for deliberative effect. P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language* (trans.) R. Czerny, *et al.* (London, [1975] 2003); U. Eco, 'Metaphor, Dictionary, and Encyclopedia', *New Literary History* 15 (1984), 255-71; K.-U. Panther and G. Radde (eds.), *Metonymy in Language and Thought* (Amsterdam, 1999); A. Burkhardt and B. Nerlich (eds.), *Tropical Truth(s): The Epistemology of Metaphor and Other Tropes* (Berlin, 2010). Especially see B. Nerlich, 'Synecdoche: A Trope a Whole Trope, and Nothing but a Trope?', in A. Burkhardt and B. Nerlich (eds.), *Tropical Truth(s): The Epistemology of Metaphor and Other Tropes* (Berlin, 2010), 297-321. See also C. Lorenz, 'Can Histories be True? Narrativism, Positivism, and the "Metaphorical Turn"', *HT* 37 (1998), 309-29.

[833] Note that I am not using metaphor, metonomy, and synecdoche as styles of troping, as set out by Northrop Frye (alongside irony) and used by Hayden White, but as more mundane articulations of linguistic indeterminacy. See N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, 1957); H. White, 'Frye's Place in Contemporary Cultural Studies', in A. Lee and R. Denham (eds.), *The Legacy of Northrop Frye* (Toronto, 1994), 28-39; White, *Metahistory*, esp. 281-426.

[834] For an example of such analysis, see below 4.

syngraphe and Choniates' *Chronike diegesis*. The *Chronike syngraphe*, for example, describes the political and military struggle for control of western Anatolia as a story about the interactions of a handful of elite male characters, described as "ἡγεμόνες [commanders/leaders]":

> ἐν γὰρ τῇ συγχύσει τῆς Κωνσταντίνου ἁλώσεως ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος ἡγεμόνες εἶναι τυχόντες ἢ καὶ οἱ τῶν ἄλλων προύχοντες ὡς οἰκείαν ἀρχὴν τὴν ὑφ' ἑαυτοὺς ἐποιοῦντο χώραν, ἢ ἐξ αὐτῶν εἰς τοῦτο ὁρμήσαντες ἢ καὶ παρὰ τῶν οἰκητόρων μετακληθέντες εἰς τὴν τῆς χώρας δεφένδευσιν. αὐτίκα Θεόδωρός τε, ὃν Μωροθεόδωρον ἀπεκάλουν, ἄρχων ἦν τῆς Φιλαδέλφου πόλεως· ἕτερος δὲ ἀπεκάλουν, ἄρχων ἦν τῆς Φιλαδέλφου πόλεως· ἕτερος δὲ Σάββας τοὐπίκλην τοῦ ἄστεος ἐδέσποζε τοῦ Σαμψὼν μετὰ καὶ τῶν πλησίον τυγχανόντων αὐτῷ· Παφλαγονίας δὲ πάσης ἐγκρατὴς ἦν Δαυίδ, ἀδελφὸς ὢν Ἀλεξίου τοῦ τῆς Τραπεζοῦντος κρατήσαντος, ὃς καὶ Μέγας ὠνομάζετο Κομνηνός· οἳ τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀνδρονίκου ὑπῆρχον ἔγγονοι, Μανουὴλ τῷ τούτου τεχθέντες υἱῷ. διὰ ταῦτα ἐν πολλῇ στενοχωρίᾳ τὰ πράγματα ὑπῆρξε τῷ βασιλεῖ Θεοδώρῳ. ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν Μωροθεόδωρον καὶ τὸν Σάββαν εὐχερῶς μετῆλθε κἀντεῦθεν ἐδέσποζεν ἀδεῶς Κελβιανοῦ τε παντός, Μαιάνδρου Φιλαδελφείας καὶ Νεοκάστρων.[835] [For in the confusion of the conquest of the city of Constantine, commanders appeared one from one place, another from another; those who were prominent over the others made the land they had under their control their personal realm, having set out to do this either by their own initiative or because they had been summoned to the defence of the land by its inhabitants. Suddenly, Theodore, whom they called Morotheodoros, was ruler of the city of Philadelphia; another man, Sabbas by name, was master of the town of Sampson, along with the places neighbouring it. David was in control of all Paphlagonia. He was brother of the Alexios who ruled over Trebizond, and he was called Megas Komnenos: they were grandchildren of the emperor Andronikos, born to his son Manuel. Because of this the emperor Theodore found himself in straitened circumstances. However, he skilfully pursued Morotheodoros and Sabbas, and henceforth confidently gained control over Kelbianon, all of the Maeander, Philadelphia, and Neokastra.][836]

Theodore, Morotheodoros, Sabbas, David, and Alexios are the main characters in a narrative that describes and explains how the forces of one polity "ἐδέσποζεν [gained control]" of extensive territories and numerous settlements across vast swathes of western Anatolia. This is done by the simple narration of how Theodore "μετῆλθε [pursued]" Sabbas and Morotheodoros. Although framed as the interactions of a few elite men, the modern (and presumably also the medieval) reader of the *Chronike syngraphe* understands that a more complex set of actions, involving numerous other actors is implied. What Theodore achieves

[835] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 12.5-21 (§7).
[836] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 120.

when he defeats these men in the *Chronike syngraphe* seems to have been achieved literally by an army, or at least the threat of an army (since military engagement is not explicitly mentioned) and analogically by the polity he ruled. Although readers are clearly supposed to assume that Theodore is presentative of some larger group of individuals, this group is difficult to identify with any degree of specificity. What or who is the character called Theodore in this passage? Is he the Romans/Nikaians, the army, a sub-group of this army, the whole new polity, or something else? The reader is left to construct their own actors and endow them with agency.

The same process can be seen in the other key 'source' for Gardner and Puech's narratives, the *Chronike diegesis*, which similarly subordinates a complex jumble of actions and interactions to those of just a few elite male rulers:

> Ὁ δὲ Λάσκαρις Θεόδωρος, ὡς γένει διαπρεπέστατος καὶ κήδει βασιλείῳ περίδοξος, ἀποκρουσάμενος ἐκεῖνον τὸ ἐξέρυθρον πέδιλον ὑποδύεται καὶ βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων ὑφ' ὅλων τῶν ἑῴων ἀναγορεύεται πόλεων. / Ὁ δ' ἐκ Κομνηνῶν Δαυὶδ στρατολογήσας Παφλαγόνας καὶ οἳ τὴν Ποντικὴν οἰκοῦσιν Ἡράκλειαν καὶ μοῖραν μισθωσάμενος Ἰβήρων τῶν πινόντων τοῦ Φάσιδος κώμας καὶ πόλεις ὑπεποιεῖτο καὶ τὸν οἰκεῖον μεγαλύνων κασίγνητον, ᾧ ἡ κλῆσις Ἀλέξιος, πρόδρομος ἐκείνου καὶ προκῆρυξ ἐγίνετο. ὁ δὲ ἔμελλεν ἀεὶ χρονίζων ἐν τοῖς τῆς Τραπεζοῦντος μέρεσι καὶ παροιμιακὸς ἐδείκνυτο Ὕλας, φωνούμενος καὶ μὴ ὀπτανόμενος. / Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τῇ Νικομήδους ὁ Δαυὶδ οὗτος προσεπέλασε διά τινος αὐτῷ στρατηγοῦντος μείρακος, Συναδηνοῦ τὴν ἐπίκλησιν, στράτευμα ξυναγείρας ὁ Λάσκαρις κατ' αὐτοῦ ἔπεισι, διὰ μὲν τῆς τετριμμένης καὶ λείας ἔμφασιν δοὺς πορεύεσθαι, ἐκπεριελθὼν δὲ τραχεῖαν ἄλλην καὶ δύσβατον καὶ προσπεσὼν ἀφώρατος τῷ Συναδηνῷ. ὅθεν καταστρατηγήσας οὕτω τὸν νεανίαν αὐτόν τε συνείληφε καὶ τὸ ἐκείνου στράτευμα διεσκέδασε καὶ τὸν Δαυὶδ μὴ περαιτέρω προϊέναι τῆς Ποντικῆς Ἡρακλείας παρέπεισε. / Μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ καὶ τῷ Μαυροζώμῃ συμπλακεὶς φυγάδα δείκνυσι τοῦτον. καὶ τοὺς Τούρκους κατὰ κράτος τρεψάμενος οὓς μὲν διέφθειρεν, οὓς δὲ ἐζώγρησε, καὶ τούτων μάλιστα οἳ τῆς στρατιᾶς προετάττοντο καὶ τὸ γένος ἦσαν ἐπίσημοι.[837] [Theodore Laskaris, the scion of a most distinguished family and prominent because he was connected by marriage with the imperial family, overthrew Mavrozomes, put on the red buskins, and was proclaimed emperor of the Romans by all the eastern cities. / David Komnenos enlisted Paphlagonians and the inhabitants of Pontic Herakleia and hired as mercenaries a division of Iberians who lived on the banks of the Phasis River. With these he subjugated towns and cities, and exalting his own brother whose name was Alexios, he became his forerunner and herald. He was to spend his time in the regions of Trebizond, and, like the proverbial Hylas, his name was invoked but he was never seen. / When this David approached Nikomedia by dispatching a force

[837] Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 626.53-75.

> under the command of a mere lad, Synadenos by name, Laskaris collected his troops and marched out against him. Giving the impression that he was taking the beaten and level path but circumventing it instead, he took another which was rough and scarcely passable and fell upon Synadenos undetected. Having outgeneraled the youth in this manner, he took him captive, scattered his troops, and prevailed on David to proceed no farther than Pontic Herakleia. / Not long afterwards, he engaged Mavrozomes in battle and put him to flight. He inflicted a crushing defeat on the Turks; some he slew, and others he took captive, among whom were the commanders of the army and those of noble birth.][838]

The *Chronike diegesis* presents a slightly different cast of characters. Some appear in both texts (Theodore, David, and Alexios), while others appear in just the *Chronike diegesis* (Mavrozomes and Synadenos) or just the *Chronike syngraphe* (Sabbas and Morotheodoros).[839] However, the process by which action is described (and explained) is similar. It is Theodore himself who defeats Mavrozomes and Synadenos, driving the explanation of major military and political transformation across western Anatolia. Although elite male characters also dominate the *Chronike diegesis*, it is populated by a slightly more diverse range of characters than the *Chronike syngraphe*. Alongside these elite men, some groups such as "οἳ τὴν Ποντικὴν οἰκοῦσιν Ἡράκλειαν [the inhabitants of Pontic Herakleia]" and "τοὺς Τούρκους [the Turks]" also feature as characters.[840] Despite constituting multiple humans, these characters interact with the cast of individual elite male rulers seen in the *Chronike syngraphe*, although they are normally subordinated to one or other of them. For example, the inhabitants of Herakleia are enlisted by David, while the Turks are defeated by Theodore (literally himself).[841]

The dominance of elite male characters is not exclusive to historiographical texts, such as the *Chronike syngraphe* and *Chronike diegesis*. Indeed, the focus on elite male characters is often more intense in other texts that narrate military-political action, such as orations and epistolography. For example, in the two orations (also by Niketas Choniates) that have been used as 'evidence' for the conflict described above, Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris is even

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[838] Magoulias, *Byzantium*, 343. Note that Magoulias' translation is loose, but here this does not affect my argument, so I have left the published translation, rather than supplying my own.
[839] This can partly be explained, because the two texts are arranged differently, so the two passages do not directly correspond. For a more detailed analysis of similar textual transformations see below 4, esp. 4.7-8.
[840] Dieten, *Orationes*, 626.57-8; 73.
[841] This mixing of types of character in the same narrative of action is an important feature, to which I return below 3.5.

more dominant, presented as he is as a second Alexander and another king David, in texts explicitly dedicated to his praise.[842]

In both Byzantine and modern historiography, the military and political transformation of western Anatolia is principally described and explained through the actions of elite male characters, which have almost monopolised agency. Clearly, such a presentation involves the simplification of a host of complex actions and interactions between multiple individuals and groups, in various spaces and with different power dynamics, all of which are left implicit. Because the 'real' actor is not always assumed to be an elite man, the reader of these texts are left to construct their own actors and endow them with agency, which they naturally do according to their own ideological assumptions, particularly about what constitutes military-political action.[843] In the case of modern historiography, this is doubly problematic, since they start with already analogic medieval texts.

3.3 – Rulers

To some extent, the dominance of elite male characters in thirteenth-century texts is unsurprising, since they constituted the principal readers, patrons, and authors of the majority of texts produced in the period. Tellingly, at certain points, Akropolites featured as not only narrator, but also a character within his own narrative, as did many other contemporary authors, such as Niketas Choniates, Nicholas Mesarites, Nikephoros Blemmydes, Geoffrey de Villehardouin, and Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, whose self-depictions have provided much of the 'evidence' for modern historiographical constructions of not only these individuals, but the whole thirteenth-century past.[844] Amongst the elite male characters found in these authors' texts, rulers (especially those sanctioned as imperial)

[842] Dieten, *Orationes*, 120-47 (§13-4). For partial discussion of these texts see Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 53; 134-5. On these kinds of text more generally see Angelov, *Ideology*.
[843] See above 0.2.
[844] Not all of these texts are Narrative Histories. However, this mode of describing political agency defies modern classifications of 'genre'. See below 4.11. For debate on autobiographical texts see M. Angold, 'The Autobiographical Impulse in Byzantium', *DOP* 52 (1998), 225-57; M. Angold, 'Memoirs, Confessions and Apologies: The Last Chapter of Byzantine Autobiography', *BMGS 37* (2013), 208-25; M. Hinterberger, *Autobiographische traditionen in Byzanz* (Vienna, 1999); M. Hinterberger, 'Autobiography and Hagiography in Byzantium', *SO* 75 (2000), 139-64. On Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris see most recently A. Volkoff, *Феодор I Ласкарис (1174-1221): социально-политическое исследование его жизни и правления* (Doctoral Thesis for Moscow State University, 2017).

are especially dominant. Again, given that the majority of these texts were created for dissemination at (imperial) courts, or even written by a ruler in the case of Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, this is unsurprising. However, the socio-cultural dominance of elite, and in particular imperial, men does not (in itself) explain away the habitual practice of describing both short- and long-term military-political events as the products of their actions or even characteristics.

Byzantine texts simultaneously describe and explain the fate of the Byzantine empire, as well as other macro-political, -military, and -economic trends, by reference to the personal characteristics of imperial incumbents. The centrality of imperial character analysis, framed as *Kaiserkritik* (literally emperor-criticism), has probably been most discussed with regard to the *Chronike diegesis* of Niketas Choniates and *Chronographia* (*Χρονογραφία*) of Michael Psellos.[845] However, the focus on the character of imperial incumbents can also be seen clearly in the *prooimion* of the *Chronike syngraphe*, where "τὰ τῶν βασιλέων [emperors' deeds]" are placed first in its list of topics that historians debate.[846] Furthermore, βασιλεύς (-έως, ὁ) constitutes the most common lemma in the *Chronike syngraphe*, with 638 attestations. Importantly, βασιλεύς is the most common word form, with 262 attestations, making the emperor not only present, but most often the subject of action.[847] Not only are

[845] The portrayal of the character of rulers was constantly negotiated and renegotiated in Byzantine texts. Emperors' characteristics were identified by a process of comparison to a series of idealised encomiastic attributes. Following Hans-Georg Beck, Frank Tinnefeld, and more recently Paul Magdalino, Byzantinists have become accustomed to reading texts as permeated by *Kaiserkritik*. Generally see H.-G. Beck, *Res Publica Romana: Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner* (Munich, 1970); F. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich, 1971). On Choniates see P. Magdalino, 'Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*', *Speculum*, 58 (1983), 326-46, esp. 327; J. Harris, 'Distortion, divine providence and genre in Nicetas Choniates's account of the collapse of Byzantium 1180–1204', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2000), 19-31. For analysis and bibliography concerning Psellos, who used the *Bioi paralleloi* of Plutarch as an archetype, see F. Lauritzen, *The Description of Character in the Chronographia of Michael Psellos* (Turnhout, 2013).

[846] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 4.8 (§1); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 105. See above 2.1. For instances of the deaths of the Nikaian rulers Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris and John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, see Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 31.19-32.11 (§18), 103.15-105.17 (§52).

[847] *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, 'Search for βασιλεύς in text of the *Chronike syngraphe*', http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/inst/stat.jsp#srch_type=work&aid=3141&title=Annales&ac_q=Georgius ACROPOLITES&wid=3141002&lemma=Lemma+Search&usr_input=greek. [Accessed 11.09.16]. Statistics from *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* exclude 'minor words', such as articles, conjunctions, *etc.* Furthermore, the names of the Nikaian rulers Ἰωάννης, Μιχαήλ, and Θεόδωρος all come within the

emperors the characters most regularly endowed with agency in descriptions of military-political action, as in the passage quoted above, but their relative importance can be seen from the manner in which the Nikaian rulers are deployed as explanatory tools for political action in the *Chronike syngraphe*. Like many other comparable Byzantine texts, the moment of a ruler's death is used in the *Chronike syngraphe* as a moment of reflection on the impact of their character and actions on the fate of the Romans (read Nikaians).[848] The *Chronike syngraphe*'s reflections on John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes constitute a particularly useful example of how the personality of the emperor, in such texts, is related to the macro-level of political and military events:

> …καρτερικὸς δὲ ἦν ἐν ταῖς μάχαις οὗτος ὁ βασιλεύς. καὶ τοῖς μὲν κατὰ συστάδην πολέμοις οὐκ ἔχαιρε, τὸ ἀλλοπρόσαλλον τοῦ Ἄρεως δειλιῶν καὶ τὸ περὶ ταῦτα ἄδηλον ὑπολογιζόμενος· τῇ καρτερίᾳ δὲ χρώμενος καὶ ἐνεαρίζων μὲν εἰς τὴν τῶν ἐναντίων γῆν καὶ τὴν θέρους ὥραν διαβιβάζων, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν φθίνουσαν ὀπώραν διανύων, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ παραχειμάζων, τὴν νικῶσαν ἐλάμβανεν, ἀποκαμνόντων τῶν ἐναντίων τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐνστάσει τε καὶ ὑπομονῇ.[849] [This emperor was capable of endurance in battle. He did not welcome war fought in close combat for he was afraid of the fickleness of Ares and took into account the uncertainty connected with this. But by exercising patience and by spending the spring in the land of the enemy and passing the summer season and seeing out the late autumn, and even sometimes spending the winter, he took the victory, for the enemy was worn out by the emperor's stubbornness and obstinacy.][850]

The *basileus* (John) is the subject of this entire passage. In the *Chronike syngraphe*, there is no problem whatsoever in describing military campaigns of many years, which mobilised thousands of individuals, in terms of the characteristics and personality of John. The reader is clearly not supposed to imagine John, literally sitting alone in Thrace stubbornly defeating the Bulgarians, Latins, and Epirots by his presence. However, no attention is paid to the soldiers who are assumed to have 'really' done most if not all of the fighting, nor even the generals and advisors who presumably did much of the organisation and planning. All military-political action is subsumed beneath the person and personality of the emperor, to the point where his character traits define a decade of military campaigning. The narrator's

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top twelve lemmata, together numbering 412 attestations. Although they are not all references to the Nikaian rulers since they are common names for other characters, especially Θεόδωρος.

[848] As has been demonstrated by Macrides in her excursus on *Kaiserkritik* in the *Chronike syngraphe*: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 55-65.

[849] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 104.10-8 (§52)

[850] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 271.

backhanded praise of John's "stubbornness and obstinacy" is perhaps the main emphasis of the text. However, this narratorial objective has occluded and submerged numerous other actors by focusing on John's personality.

In many ways then, the *Chronike syngraphe* is strikingly similar to the texts of Puech and Gardner. The dominance of elite male characters, especially rulers, and their obfuscatory analogic presentation is very similar. It is unsurprising that the emperors who are the focus of most Byzantine historiography are over(re)presented in modern historiography too. However, beyond this derivation of 'content', similar processes and 'forms' can be read in both medieval and modern texts.[851] They all simplify their subject matter in order to narrativise complex past action and to tell a story effectively. Constructing manageable (if simplistic or at least simplifying) characters and employing vague analogic expressions is an important consequence of this process. This leaves descriptions of action, in both medieval and modern texts, hanging between metaphor, metonomy, and synecdoche and opens space for confusion in their reading and interpretation. A considerable amount of the overlap, between modern historiographical presentations and their 'sources', is therefore inevitable, given their starting point and the media with which they work. However, modern historiography often exceeds this inevitable overlap, making its principal objective to speak through the 'source texts' to the ultimate 'reality' of past events, as some modern historians have stated explicitly:

> …one does poor justice to the Byzantines if one does not to some extent accept their own view of the causes of their decline and fall.[852]
>
> In this I was only following the great historian Niketas Choniates.[853]

Although in these cases modern historians are being explicit and active in their desire to follow their 'sources', more often such assumptions are implicit and/or passive. It is understandable that modern historians follow the mode of description used by the only available text, especially when that text, like the *Chronike syngraphe*, seems to offer exactly what they are looking for.[854] However, this process has resulted in serious problems in the

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[851] Note that these two problems are intertwined, since (as I have argued above) content and form are inextricable. Emperors are always already textualized and analogic. See above 0.2.
[852] Nicol, *End*, 9.
[853] Angold, *Empire*, 173.
[854] See above 1.5.

interpretation of military-political action, because there is a crucial lack of congruence in perception between medieval author and modern reader, whose conceptions of both agencies and analogies vary even more wildly than that between contemporary authors and audiences.

3.4 – Divergent conceptions of agency

Thirteenth-century and modern conceptions of agency were different. The most striking (although by no means only) example of this is attested by the manner in which divine providence underwrites political action and agency in thirteenth-century texts.[855] Political action is never entirely in the hands of the characters in the narratives created by these texts, because ultimately all action is sanctioned by the divine. For example, as I have argued, in the *Chronike syngraphe* the capture of Constantinople in 1261 occurred "προνοίᾳ θεοῦ [by the providence of god]", a phrase that is repeated twice in the description of the city's conquest.[856] Of course, the divine is invoked at the will of the author, agency is constructed according to the requirements of the narrative, and it is all interpreted by the audience. However, divine providence leaves the agency of the characters, at least partially, incomplete.[857] In contrast, political action as described by modern historians must be seen within a general paradigm shift of action and agency in modernity. This transformed with the modern western/European enlightenment tradition, which in a process lasting many centuries, including a particular post-war liberal project, successfully relocated agency from the divine to the individual and society.[858] Consequently, modern historians and social scientists are now working within an alternative paradigm, in which agentic human actors are the primary unit of measurement. This conception of an actor with agency is often considered to be an unproblematic, atemporal, and natural phenomenon, without sufficient

[855] This is not exclusive to the thirteenth century, although there is an argument to be made that claims of divine providence intensified in similar periods of transformation. See for example N. Matheou, 'Khoniates' Asia Minor: Earthly and Ultimate Causes of Decline', in M. Lau, *et al.* (eds.), *Landscapes of Power* (Oxford, 2014), 215-30.
[856] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 181.10, 183.19 (§85). For a general discussion throughout the *Chronike syngraphe* see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 54-5. See above 2.6.
[857] This is not to say that human agency and free will is entirely occluded, only that it is made contingent.
[858] Meyer and Jepperson, 'Actors', 100-20. For the analogous concept of truth see J. Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages* (Geneva, 1981).

appreciation of the fact that it is the product of a specific time and place. Modern scholars do not necessarily have to use the terminology of action, actor, or agency in order to be working within this paradigm, and indeed such terminology is rare in modern Byzantine historiography. However, implicit assumptions about who has the capacity to act has not escaped contemporary assumptions about agency. In short, the production of humans for narrative presentation is (at the most basic level) ideological, as well as linguistic and narratival.[859]

There is no space in modern historiography for the agentic role of the divine. However, divine agency underwrites the so-called 'evidence' of the texts modern historians have used to construct their narratives. The resulting mismatch in the allocation of agency forces modern historians to remove or reshape elements incompatible with modern assumptions. For example, the "divine providence" that led to the conquest of Constantinople in 1261 in the *Chronike syngraphe*, is silently erased by Alice Gardner, who simply omits mention of it, and actively replaced with de-spiritualised synonyms by Deno Geanakoplos:[860]

> In the light of the evidence and reasoning presented, it would appear, then, that the absence of the Latin naval and military forces at the very moment of Alexios' appearance before the walls of the capital was sheer accident – coincidence – and that it was in fact the "lucky" absence of the fleet which spurred Alexios to attempt the city's capture.[861]

The capacity for nuance to be both intentionally erased or accidentally lost, in the conversation between thirteenth-century text and modern reader, is inherent to all modern historiography, although it is perhaps at its most obvious when modern historians intentionally erase the agency of the divine. Just as the conceptions of absolute agency, which underwrite thirteenth-century and modern texts, differ, so too do the analogic devices employed in the presentation of political action and politically agentic characters. Modern modes of describing, understanding, and theorising political action and actors are constantly imposed upon thirteenth-century texts by modern historians. The groups and political entities which are vaguely assumed to stand behind specific moments of personal elite male

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[859] See above 0.2.
[860] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 256. Note that Gardner otherwise simply paraphrases the *Chronike syngraphe*.
[861] D. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258-1282: A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge MA, 1959), 104.

action are understood very differently, when viewed from these dissimilar traditions. Byzantine texts and modern scholars make different assumptions about the nature of these groups and political entities, which determine how they describe both short- and long-term political action. This disparity cannot be ignored, when rethinking the relationship between historiography and the past.

3.5 – Anthropomorphic unitary 'states'

Elite male characters, presented mimetically as humans, cannot maintain narratives that exceed a certain period, because humans simply do not live long enough. Thus, the story of Nikaian 'reconquest', over a fifty-seven-year period, requires a different type of character, which allows for a narrative with a greater temporal range. The characters in this macro-narrative are polities, which have traditionally been described as 'successor states'.[862] Most International Relations (IR) theorists and many historians of both the modern and pre-modern worlds, would deny 'statehood' (understood as a modern preserve) to pre-modern polities.[863] Debate on the topic has been fierce, yet it has not permeated modern narratives of thirteenth-century political action, in which the terminology of statehood constitutes unproblematised habit, rather than theorised adoption of any specific position regarding the nature of pre-modern polities. The term polity, which I have employed throughout this thesis, is more useful than others as a descriptor, not because it improves by being more precise, but because it introduces ambiguity.[864] Its vagueness serves to constantly caution against importing modern assumptions about the nature of these political entities. It has none of the discourse specific preconceptions of 'despotate' or 'empire', which impose both modern and medieval value judgements about the legitimacy and nature of the polities described, nor most (although certainly not all) of the eurocentric atemporal presentism of the term state. Regardless of what word is used to classify them, the principal characters used to tell the (longer-term) Nikaian narrative are these more complex polities.

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[862] See above 1.2 and 1.4.

[863] For debate and bibliography see S. Reynolds, 'The Historiography of the Medieval State', in M. Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), 117-38; D. Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, 2001); J. Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, 1970).

[864] As with the term confrontation, see above 2.1.

The principal protagonists in the (long-term) Nikaian narrative are generally introduced at the beginning of academic studies. This introduction has become formulaic to the point of cliché. It involves the presentation of a list of polities which formed after the capture of Constantinople in 1204. These polities are separated into different groups. First come the three variously termed Byzantine, Roman, or Greek 'successor states', traditionally, if highly problematically, described as the 'empires' of Nikaia and Trebizond, and the 'despotate' of Epiros.[865] To these, four Latin polities, the so-called 'empire' of Constantinople, 'kingdom' of Thessaloniki, 'principality' of Achaia, and the 'duchy' of Athens and Thebes, are normally added.[866] These seven, which had already been singled out by Meliarakes in 1898, are often, although not consistently, supplemented by the pre-existing Bulgarian, Serbian, and Seljuk polities, as well as the Aegean territories of the Italian 'city-states'.[867] There is only a very limited amount of divergence from this model, which is typified by Angeliki Laiou's introduction to a "political historical survey" in the *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*:

> The weak and short-lived Latin Empire of Constantinople was but one of the successor states. There were three Greek ones: the Empire of Nicaea and the Empire of Trebizond in Asia Minor, and the Despotate of Epiros. The Venetians acquired part of Constantinople, the ports of Modon and Coron, Crete in 1211, and conquered Euboea and a number of other Aegean islands. In the Peloponnese, the Principality of Achaia soon emerged as the strongest of the Frankish possessions. In the Balkans, the separatist tendencies of the Bulgarians led to the coronation of Kalojan, while Serbia had become independent some years earlier, and Stephen the First-Crowned was given the royal title by Pope Honorius III in 1217.[868]

This clichéd introduction is most often governed by the metaphor of 'fragmentation', in which these new polities are presented as 'fragments' of the old Byzantine empire. This metaphor has dominated since as early as Edward Gibbon's narrative of the nineteenth century:

> The loss of Constantinople restored a momentary vigor to the Greeks. From their palaces, the princes and nobles were driven into the field; and the **fragments** of the

[865] See above 1.2 and 1.4.
[866] Stephen Reinert, for example, argues that while there were numerous Latin polities only "[f]our of the new Frankish states deserve mention": Reinert, 'Fragmentation', 250.
[867] For examples of this practice see Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία*, 3; R.-J. Lilie, *Einführung in die byzantinische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 2007), 64-5; Laiou, 'Survey', 280.
[868] Laiou, 'Survey', 280.

> falling monarchy were grasped by the hands of the most vigorous or the most skilful candidates.[869]

This metaphor has subsequently been followed by a host of modern historians:

> …la prise de Constantinople par les Latins (1204) et la **désagrégation** de l'État byzantin.[870] […the capture of Constantinople by the Latins (1204) and the **disintegration/fragmentation** of the Byzantine state.]

> Особенности социально-экономического и политического развития греческих земель в эпоху политической **раздробленности** и латинского владычества[871] [Features of the socio-economic and political development of Greek lands in the era of political **fragmentation** and Latin domination]

> The turning point was the Fourth Crusade, which, under Venetian leadership, resulted in the capture of Constantinople in 1204. The Latin capture of the city and the breakdown of the centralized Byzantine state led to political **fragmentation**. Several small political units were created and replaced Byzantium. The main ones were the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the Principality of Achaia (Peloponnesos), several Venetian colonies established in coastal areas (Coron, Modon, Crete, Euboea, some Aegean Islands, the Ionian Islands), the Despotate of Epiros, the Empire of Nicaea, and the Empire of Trebizond. Constantinople was recaptured by the Greek ruler of Nicaea in 1261 and the Byzantine state was revived.[872]

> George Akropolites is the main Byzantine source for the so-called years of "exile", which are characterized by the **fragmentation** of the Byzantine Empire into three successor-states as well as by the existence, in the Balkans, of the Latin Empire.[873]

> By sacking Constantinople, the crusaders **fragmented** the Byzantine Empire into several polities: two in Asia Minor (the Empire of Nicaea and the Empire of Trebizond) and a third in Greece (the Despotate of Epiros), with the imperial capital of Constantinople standing only as a symbol of former unity. The different polities, or Byzantine empires, resulting from the Fourth Crusade nonetheless sought to expel the crusaders and rebuild a unified empire. Their political and military efforts continued for more than a half of century to before they finally realized their goal in 1261, under the leadership of Michael VIII Paleologus.[874]

Counterintuitively, this language of disorder and complexity, actually allows scholars to order and simplify the entire political landscape of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world.

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[869] Gibbon, *Decline*, vol. 11., 54. Emphasis added. On the relevance of Gibbon see above 1.3.
[870] Ahrweiler, 'Smyrne', 3.
[871] Karpov and Zhavoronkov, 'социально-экономического', 12.
[872] E. Athanassopoulos, 'Landscape Archaeology and the Medieval Countryside: Settlement and Abandonment in the Nemea Region', *IJHA* 14 (2010), 262. For further examples see Reinert, 'Fragmentation', 248; A. Cameron, *The Byzantines* (Oxford, 2006), 194.
[873] L. Simeonova, 'Review of R. Macrides, *The History*, George Akropolites', *Etudes balkaniques* 4 (2010), 233.
[874] Mansouri, 'Crisis', 149.

The 'fragmentation' metaphor allows this landscape, understood somewhat two-dimensionally as a map of the lands around the Aegean, to be more or less divided up and allocated to one 'state' or another.[875] However, the process of selecting these 'states', which are in fact characters, is teleological and dependent on the longevity of the polities described, as well as their 'significance' or 'importance', by which we must understand their relevance to the dominant Nikaian narrative.[876] In other words, the selection and presentation of characters is governed by the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative. 'Fragmentation' and complexity is invoked, but at the same time it is limited, within the terms set up by the metaphor, to those 'fragments' which work in the telling of a story about the Nikaian polity and its 'reconquest'. Although in some ways pejorative, the term 'successor state' has been used as a mark of relevance, since other political actors, as I argue below, are never accepted into this category, because they are deemed (teleologically) to be insufficiently 'important' (according to the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative), to warrant incorporation.

Modern scholars, both within and outside theorised academic discourse, tend to endow groups, such as polities, with anthropomorphic characteristics. In so doing they treat collectives as people, that is signal unitary actors, single organisms which act as one entity. Thus, it is not unusual in common parlance to suggest that states, governments, religious communities, or almost any other kind of group do things, as if they were people. A brief survey of recent news headlines demonstrates this effectively:

> UK and Russia Agree to Work Together in Fight Against Isis[877]
>
> Kenya Kills Three Women Attackers of Mombasa Police Station[878]

In modern academic discourse, the colloquial habit of understanding and describing polities and groups is equally omnipresent. Both the so-called 'Realist' and 'Liberal' schools, which provide the dominant theoretical frameworks in the discipline of IR, single out states as the

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[875] On cartography see above 1.2. See especially Oikonomides, 'Décomposition', 15.
[876] See above 1.4.
[877] P. Wintour, 'UK and Russia Agree to Work Together in Fight Against Isis', *The Guardian* (9 December 2015, London), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/09/uk-and-russia-agree-to-work-together-in-fight-against-isis [Accessed 11.09.16].
[878] Anon., 'Kenya Kills Three Women Attackers of Mombasa Police Station', *BBC News* (11 September 2016, London), http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37332459 [Accessed 11.09.16].

primary actors in international relations, allocating to them attributes, such as rationality, interests, beliefs, and ultimately personhood.[879] Although most IR theorists would only go so far as to say that states are like people, some (most notably the influential 'Constructivist' Alexander Wendt) would even argue that states literally are people, or in his words macro-organisms.[880] What is at stake in the fierce debate in IR, is the theoretical personhood of the modern state, and the way in which it can be understood, described, and explained. Whether or not states should literally be understood to be people (or indeed like people) is, however, largely irrelevant here, since, either way, the allocation of anthropomorphic characteristics to thirteenth-century polities and groups has seemed natural to modern historians. Thus on closer examination both the unit of measurement, the so-called 'successor states', and their personhood can be demonstrated to be untheorised adoptions from common parlance, based loosely, if at all, on the foundations of modern theoretical consensus. That is to say, the manner in which newspapers present polities is probably more relevant to the modern historiography of thirteenth-century Byzantium than debate in the pages of the *Review of International Studies*.

The description of thirteenth-century polities in a language constructed for describing modern states, has predetermined analyses. Thirteenth-century and modern authors and readers described and understood polities differently. There is no stable term that can be translated consistently as 'the state' in thirteenth-century (or for that matter any other) Byzantine texts. There are many different words that may, depending on context, have some of its valences, such as *πολιτεία*, *βασιλεία*, *ἀρχή*, *κρατός*, and *Ῥωμανία*. However, no term can be directly mapped onto the modern term state.[881] Importantly it is difficult to fully

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[879] For an introduction and bibliography see P. Jackson, 'Forum Introduction: Is the State a Person? Why should we Care?', *RIS* 30 (2004), 255-8; W. Wohlforth, 'Realism', in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford, 2008), 131-49.

[880] I. Hurd, 'Constructivism', in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford, 2008), 298-316; A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, 1999), esp. 193-245; A. Wendt, 'The State as Person in International Theory', *RIS* 30 (2004), 289-316; A. Wendt, 'How Not to Argue Against State Personhood: A Reply to Lomas', *RIS* 31 (2005), 357-60; I. Neumann, 'Beware of Organicism: The Narrative Self of the State', *RIS* 30 (2004), 259-67; C. Wight, 'State Agency: Social Action Without Human Activity?', *RIS* 30 (2004), 269-80; P. Jackson, 'Hegel's House, or 'People are States Too'', *RIS* 30 (2004), 281-7; P. Lomas, 'Anthropomorphism, Personification and Ethics: A Reply to Alexander Wendt', *RIS* 31 (2005), 349-55.

[881] N. Matheou, 'City and Sovereignty in East Roman Thought, c.1000-1200: Ioannes Zonaras' Historical Vision of the Roman State', in N. Matheou, *et al.* (eds.), *From Constantinople to the Frontier:*

extract the imperial ruler (*basileus*) from Byzantine conceptions of 'statehood', however constructed.[882] For example, Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris himself emphasised the role of the *basileus* by placing him at the top of the pyramidal hierarchy of relationships between masters and servants.[883] Byzantine conceptions of 'statehood', as far as they can be pinned down, require further exploration. However, it should be noted that the *politeia* rarely appears explicitly in thirteenth-century texts and almost never as the subject of action. Although the Byzantine 'state' may be presented anthropomorphically, it is rarely endowed with agency in Byzantine texts. It can be guided and looked after well or poorly, by, among others, the *basileus*, but it does not act as a unitary anthropomorphic 'modern state'. The metaphor of the *basileus* as *gubernator* (helmsman) of the ship of 'state', is a common one, especially in the thirteenth century, and displays the relationship well, especially since the medieval and modern metaphors blur together.[884] Byzantine texts simply did not construct the 'state' as an anthropomorphic unitary character, endowed with agency, as moderns have. There is a case to be made that these political entities were states, or at least could usefully be described as states. As John Haldon has demonstrated repeatedly, there is value in employing carefully defined modern terms as heuristic devices for the study of pre-modern social structures.[885] However, in this context, the case has yet to be made. Modern historians have not started from the premise that they are applying modern heuristic frameworks onto pre-modern social structures, but rather, have plunged into common-parlance and 'common-sense' modes of describing thirteenth-century polities as anthropomorphic unitary agentic actors.

The City and the Cities (Leiden, 2016), 41-63; A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge MA, 2015), esp. 1-31.

[882] Angold, 'Turning', 23, "In a Byzantine context only claims to imperial authority provided an institutional basis for state building."

[883] L. Tartaglia, 'L'opuscolo De subiectorum in principem officiis di Teodoro II Lascaris', *Δίπτυχα* 2 (1980-1), 196-209.

[884] For examples from historiographical texts, see Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 157.2-11 (§76); Choniates, *Chronike diegesis*, 203.24-5-204.1-2; Gregoras, *Rhomaike historia*, vol. 1, 28.20-3 (§1), 62.19-22 (§3). See also extensive use of the metaphor in the *typikon* for the monastery of the archangel Michael on mount Auxenos. Dmitrievsky, *рукописей*, vol. 1, 769–94. Dennis, '*Auxentios*', 1207-36. For other examples in orations see Angelov, *Ideology*, 85, n. 43.

[885] J. Haldon, 'Res Publica Byzantina? State Formation and Issues of Identity in Medieval East Rome', *BMGS* 40 (2016), 6-7; J. Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode* (London, 1993), esp. 5-10.

It is possible to find thirteenth-century examples of what might be understood as 'the state' being described anthropomorphically in body metaphors. Nikephoros Blemmydes, for example, in his *Basilikos andrias* (Βασιλικὸς ἀνδριάς), employs an anthropomorphic metaphor repeatedly, in which the *basileus* is the head [*κεφαλή*] or mind [*νοῦς*] of his subjects, who are variously the body [*σῶμα*] or the limbs [*μέλη*].[886] However, it is not clear what "the totality [τῆς ὁλότητος]", of which the *basileus* and subjects were parts, actually was. In what is a perfect illustration of the disconnect between thirteenth-century texts and modern interpretations, in their translation of this passage, Herbert Hunger and Ihor Ševčenko have added "the body politic" to their translation in order to make the passage more readable.[887] However, these metaphors do not have the same valence as modern assumptions. Each is deployed by their authors for particular purposes and cannot be read as normative definitions of the 'state'.[888] They do not construct the polity as an anthropomorphic unitary agentic actor. Instead they break the body into parts, presenting, for example, the emperor, patriarch, subjects, army, and senate as separate elements, which can function together. However, as with the vocabulary of anthropomorphic statehood discussed above, the presentation of thirteenth-century polities as unitary agentic actors is not the misconstruction of these body metaphors by modern historians, but rather the imposition of modern conceptions of the state.[889]

Of course, the ambiguity in the conception of 'statehood' in Byzantine texts is mirrored in the work of modern theorists, who have repeatedly disagreed about the nature of the state.[890] However, as I have argued, it is the uncritical common-sense and -parlance version of the modern state, which has dominated modern military-political narratives. This is not to

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[886] H. Hunger and I. Ševčenko, *Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριάς und dessen Metaphrase von Georgios Galesiotes und Georgios Oinaiotes: Ein weiterer Beitrag zum Verständnis der byzantinischen Schrift-Koine* (Vienna, 1986), 4, 24, 36.

[887] Hunger and Ševčenko, *Blemmydes*, 121. Angelov also supplies "body politic" when paraphrasing a text by Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris: Angelov, *Ideology*, 140-1, n. 32. Similarly, Gardner translates "τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ πληρώματος" as "the Roman state": Gardner, *Lascarids*, 70. Some earlier anthropomorphic metaphors are more specific. For a summary and examples see Kaldellis, *Republic*, 17-8.

[888] Kaldellis, *Republic*, 18.

[889] See above 3.5.

[890] For a useful summary and bibliography, from the perspective of a pre-modern historian, see W. Scheidel, 'Studying the State', in P. Bang and W. Scheidel (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean* (Oxford, 2013), esp. 5-9.

say that Byzantinists have not been interested in the nature of political institutions. On the contrary, studies of the Nikaian government as an institution, such as that of Michael Angold, have interrogated the Nikaian polity in a sophisticated fashion.[891] However, there is a disparity between how the conception of the polity is utilised in, for want of better terms, the 'domestic' and 'international' spheres. At the 'domestic' level modern scholars have, to an extent, nuanced their understanding of political action. At this level, attention has been paid to the relationship between networked actors and institutional structures, although rarely in these terms. However, this nuance has largely dissolved when polities have been placed in the confrontational 'international' sphere. The 'international' sphere in modern politics has been considered to be the domain of states and, although this assumption has been theoretically challenged in more recent scholarship, this has still been projected onto the thirteenth-century Byzantine world.[892] It serves a useful function, because it allows modern historians to explain, relatively concisely, an incredibly complex military-political landscape. However, this mode of description has important consequences. Political actors, which do not fit the label of 'successor state', have been placed on an entirely different level of political action, beneath the major long-term narrative of the competing 'successor states'. These actors are made illegitimate, ephemeral, domestic, and peripheral to the 'real' long-term narrative. For example, the elite men defeated by Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris, discussed in the passages of Puech and Gardner above, are never associated with polities understood as 'successor' or indeed any other kind of 'state', despite their being associated with specific lands and settlements, just as explicitly as Theodore is in the thirteenth-century texts. Puech, for example, makes the expansion of the early Nikaian polity a domestic and internal affair, while simultaneously reducing opposition to the level of the first type of character discussed in this thesis:

> As far as internal affairs are concerned, the main difficulty faced by Theodore Laskaris was the disloyalty of three of the magnates of the theme of Thrakesion.[893]

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[891] Angold, *Government*.
[892] D. Lake, 'The State and International Relations', in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* (Oxford, 2010), 41-61; M. Keck and K. Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, 1998).
[893] Puech, 'Aristocracy', 71.

As mere elite men, they are limited to the short-term narratives of military-political action and although they can interact with fully fledged 'successor states', they do so on unequal terms.[894] The conflict between ephemeral peripheral rebels and an imperial state, explicitly placed within a narrative of the expansion of that imperial state, has a clearly constructed and inevitable telos, which has prefigured analysis in modern historiography. This phenomenon is not just the case with description of opposition to the Nikaian polity and its rulers. For example, Anthony Kaldellis, discussing Leon Sgouros, generalises about the relationship between 'successor states' and 'rebels' explicitly:

> Most of these rebels, it seems, returned to the fold when the successor states became powerful again[895]

Kaldellis' use of the word "again" is particularly problematic, since it implies, falsely, that the so-called 'successor states' had existed prior to 1204. Only within the teleological logic of the Nikaian metanarrative can such a statement be made.[896]

Although clearly a wider phenomenon, the tendency to prioritise certain actors and subordinate others is strongest in descriptions of the Nikaian polity and its 'opponents'. Indeed, not just 'rebels', but other polities understood to be 'successor states' are often, to a greater or lesser extent, also subordinated to and made rebels against the Nikaian polity. Even scholars self-consciously writing (counter-)histories of the so-called 'competitors' of the Nikaian polity, such as the Trapezuntine and Epirot polities, have under-emphasised the importance of their object relative to the Nikaian polity.[897] The story that historians have been trying to tell constructs the characters it needs. The Nikaian polity is the principal protagonist in that story and all other characters are subordinated to it. Even when absent, it casts its shadow over action. Like Achilles skulking by the ships while fighting occurs before

[894] See above 1.4.
[895] Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 365. The rest of Kaldellis' argument is more nuanced than this abstracted quotation suggests and he importantly points out that the dominant thing defining these actors is that they "left no account of themselves".
[896] See above 1.4.
[897] See for example Alexander Vasiliev's over-emphasis of the remoteness of Trebizond. Vasiliev, 'Foundation', 3-4. See above 1.4 and 1.6.

Troy, the Nikaian polity is not only omnipresent, but also the yardstick by which other characters are constantly judged.[898]

3.6 – Preliminary conclusions

In this chapter, I have emphasised the modern nature of the anthropomorphic unitary characters (both elite men and 'successor states') that have been constructed in modern historiography to describe and explain the thirteenth-century Byzantine past. For heuristic utility, I have separated two types of character, and with them two different political/military levels in modern historiography. However, as has become apparent throughout this chapter, it is impossible to fully extricate one from the other, since modern historians regularly switch between these two levels of description. The different types of character bleed together. Indeed, they are two sides of the same coin: the group presented as a person, and the person presented as a group. Just as a modern newspaper might glide between different analogies, so too, if somewhat less obviously, do scholars of thirteenth-century Byzantium:

> Putin May Be Turkey's New Buddy after the Failed Coup: Erdoğan is set to turn to Russia[899]
>
> When John III. (Vatatzes) succeeded his father-in-law, Theodore Lascaris, as Emperor ruling from Nicaea (in 1222), it was evident that the times and the situation required a strong man. The Nicene was now one of four great powers that strove for sovereignty of the East.[900]

Modern historians often mix the analogies that they use to present characters in the action they construct. In an elite male character, such as Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris, there is often a shadow of an anthropomorphic unitary polity, such as the Nikaian polity, that is inextricable from the former's presentation. Modern historiography thus creates hybrid characters that can never be pinned down, but have utility in the telling of stories about the period and have allowed such stories to be expressed compactly so that other questions can be asked of thirteenth-century texts. Creating these anthropomorphic characters allows a

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[898] A. Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton, 2003), 1-11.
[899] N. Gvosdev, 'Putin May Be Turkey's New Buddy after the Failed Coup: Erdoğan is set to turn to Russia', *The National Interest* (19 July 2016, Washington DC), http://nationalinterest.org/feature/putin-may-be-turkeys-new-buddy-after-the-failed-coup-17037 [Accessed 11.09.16].
[900] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 116.

process of narrativisation to occur. It is much easier to create a linear narrative with manageable characters of this sort. A state, described as a person, can be utilised in a narrative in a way that a polity understood to constitute a multitude of networked actors with their own agencies, whose relationships are structured in certain ways by a number of factors, simply cannot. In many ways this has been a successful strategy for interrogating texts. However, it can only take the study of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world so far and then only in one (rather empiricist) direction. When the thirteenth century is constructed as a political landscape, populated by unitary anthropomorphic agentic actors, there are many problematic consequences. Much of the complexity of military-political action is occluded and submerged, because the crucial lack of congruence in perception of analogic language, between medieval and modern authors and audiences, has not been acknowledged by modern historians. Consequently, common-sense assumptions have been imposed on texts and characters or political entities within those texts, with which they are incompatible.

In short, upon close examination, the way in which characters have been constructed to present actors from the thirteenth-century past suffers from the same set of problems outlined in my introduction and demonstrated by the analysis of (macro-)narrative structures and the construction of events. It should be fairly unsurprising by now to the reader that we again find an epistemological break between the characters in historiographical texts and the 'real' actors they present. However, I have sought to demonstrate more than that this epistemological break can be found at this level too, but exactly what effect it has had on the specific texts and interpretations of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world.

Stories will obviously concentrate on elite men, when other actors are submerged beneath them for descriptive and explanatory purposes. It may not be possible to escape the dominance of elite male characters, since they were prioritised by the texts which have survived. However, at certain points these texts do allow the modern historian to build up a better understanding of this kind of narratologically submerged agency. In particular, an analysis of the texts suggests two things. First, the power wielded by the privileged characters of the Nikaian narrative is understood to be contingent on the support of the

ruled and is constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Second, these groups often acted as political actors in their own right, without the mediation of or submergence under elites or rulers. That is to say they are presented as making military-political decisions, such as to fight or submit. The passage of Akropolites' *Chronike syngraphe* already cited above is a simple example of this phenomenon. When the *Chronike syngraphe* describes how the various ἡγεμόνες [leaders] came to power, it states that some seized power "by their own initiative", while others "had been summoned to the defence of the land by its inhabitants".[901] Not only do we catch a glimpse of some of the individuals upon whose support the agency of a character, such as Theodore's, is founded, but we also see them being presented as exercising their own agency. It is "the inhabitants [τῶν οἰκητόρων]" just as much as the elite men, who have the capacity and authority to act, at least according to the logic of medieval texts.

The moments in which action takes place can and must be rethought. However, there is no single solution, but rather many different ways in which this might be done.[902] I have implied that contemporary modes of presenting political action submerge agencies and simplify action. By arguing this, I do not suggest that there is a 'truer', 'more real', or 'more accurate' military-political history waiting to be discovered and written. Rather, I highlight the ways in which current practice has erased certain actors and agencies from a thirteenth-century textual record, which despite privileging rulers and 'successor states', in particular those of Nikaia, is not nearly so essentialist as the modern historiographical narrative.

When read parallel to each other, it may seem that the *Chronike syngraphe* and Gardner's *The Lascarids of Nicaea* differ very little in the manner in which they construct actors (as characters) and for that matter action (as events). However, their presentations are built on fundamentally different assumptions. The Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris in Gardner's work is simultaneously a metonym for a geographically bounded 'successor state', a metaphor for the army of that state, an expression of a highly centralised 'household government' forming 'in exile', an untheorised anthropomorphic unitary agentic actor, and many other things beside. This Theodore is a construction and an invention, but so too is the

[901] Akropolites, *Chronike Syngraphe*, 12.8-10 (§7).
[902] William Reddy offers a useful starting point, although much remains untheorised: W. Reddy, 'The Logic of Action: Indeterminacy, Emotion, and Historical Narrative', *HT* 40 (2001), 10-33.

Theodore of the *Chronike syngraphe*, who simultaneously performs, personifies, and presents the political entity he ruled and the army he led, while 'personally' annexing vast swathes of territory and defeating his opponents, as well as much more beside. In constructing these characters and placing so much emphasis and explanatory power in their personhood, not only do we lose the complexity of political action and agency, but we paradoxically also lose them as individuals, since it is never clear where the person ends and the analogy begins. Although these characters appear to have monopolised action and agency, their agency is in fact taken up, first, by medieval and modern authors and, then, by their audiences. Consequently characters, such as Theodore, are constantly subordinated to the story that is being told, its telos, and its goals and constructed according to the assumptions of the audiences of those texts.

4 – Text, Hypertext, and Historiography

Λεγιὼν ὄνομά μοι, ὅτι πολλοί ἐσμεν. [My name is Legion, for we are many.][903]

4.1 – Introduction: *Hypertextuality*

So far, in this thesis, I have considered three overlapping problems, which impinge on the study of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography, namely narrative and metanarrative structures, in both Byzantine and modern texts (1), the simplification and reification of events (2), and the construction of characters and action (3). In this fourth and final chapter, I simultaneously combine and illustrate the structural, thematic, and theoretical analyses of the first three. I do so through the textual and transtextual analysis of an extended case study, taken from the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (§66-72) of George Akropolites, and corresponding passages from three closely related texts: the anonymous *Synopsis chronike* (*Σύνοψις χρονική*) (β), the *Chronike historia (Χρονικὴ ἱστορία)* (γ), attributed to Ephraim of Ainos, and the anonymous *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (*Ποίημα χρονικόν ἡμιτελές*) (δ).[904] From sustained critical engagement with a complex web of texts and textual relations, I argue that even very closely related texts construct multiple facts, meanings, and narratives. Consequently, they ultimately construct multiple thirteenth-century Byzantiums, which refuse synthesis into a single past. In this chapter, I present not a single narrative of past action that is superior to previous constructs, but a collection of textual and transtextual readings, offering multiple narratives.

Although the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) has been understood as the most important 'source' for the 'history' of the period, until now the analysis of the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) has primarily been couched in terms of either *Textkritik* (text criticism) or *Quellenforschung*/*Quellenkritik* (source research/criticism). Through the

[903] Mrk. 5:9. Following R. Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *The Rustle of Language* (trans.) R. Howard (New York, [1984] 1986), 60.

[904] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*; Anon., *Synopsis chronike*; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*. See below 1.6. For the purposes of this chapter, I have allocated these four core texts letters, for clarity, as their similar names become confusing and I prefer not to identify them principally by their authors, but rather as texts.

lenses of these sub-disciplines, all three texts have been conceived of as derivatives of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and almost exclusively defined by that status.[905] In the following sub-chapters (4.2-4), I introduce each of these texts in greater detail, as well as their relationship to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). However, before I do so it is essential to free my description of those relationships from the shackles of the sub-disciplinary terminology and taxonomies, which have imposed hierarchies on them. *Quellenkritik* and *Textkritik* prioritise the oldest/fullest/most-real text, even if it can only ever be hypothetical, since their primary stated objective is to get as close as possible to the *Quellentext* or *Urtext* (source or original text). However, after the referential capacity of narrative texts to past action has been problematised, the project of isolating and utilising the oldest/purest/most-original information from historiographical texts becomes problematic. Instead I prefer to deal with the texts that we have access to as texts. I seek to understand how they construct narratives and story worlds in their own right and how those narratives and worlds relate to each other, without subordinating those texts, narratives, and relationships to a single hypothetical past or terminological and taxonomic hierarchies derived from *Quellenkritik* or *Textkritik*.

To challenge the hierarchical analysis of these methodologies, I employ alternative terminology and taxonomies to describe the relationships between these texts, without the imposition of those hierarchies. For this purpose, I have borrowed from Gerard Genette's theories of *transtextuality*, which he defines as "…tout ce qui le met en relation, manifeste ou secrète, avec d'autres textes.[906] […all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts.]"[907] Ingela Nilsson has recently demonstrated the utility of Genette's approach for approaching aspects of Byzantine literature, although not specifically Byzantine historiography.[908] Genette subdivided transtextuality into five types. His first

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[905] Even from a more traditional empiricist perspective, traditional text-critical practice often proves problematic in the editing of Byzantine texts, see C. Mango, 'Review of J. Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum*', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 95 (1975), 304-5.

[906] G. Genette, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (Paris, 1982), 1.

[907] G. Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (trans.) C. Newman and C. Doubinsky (London, 1997), 1.

[908] I. Nilsson, 'The Same Story, but Another: A Reappraisal of Literary Imitation in Byzantium', in A. Rhoby and E. Schiffer (eds.), *Imitatio – Aemulatio – Variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur (Wien, 22.-25. Oktober 2008)* (Vienna, 2010), 195-208, esp. 202-3. For a different use of other Genettian approaches see Shawcross, *Morea*, esp. 115-84.

type, *intertextuality*, relates to the presence of one text within another, either through quotation or allusion.[909] The second, *paratextuality*, refers to the presence of or allusion to another text (or texts) in the *paratextual* apparatus of another, for example in titles, marginalia, or subtitles of a text.[910] The third, *metatextuality*, more strictly relates to the explicit or implicit commentary of one text on another.[911] The fifth and most abstract, *architextuality*, relates to generic relationships between texts.[912] However, of most importance for this chapter is the fourth of Genette's types of transtextuality, *hypertextuality*, although it cannot be entirely extricated from the other four:[913]

> J'entends par là toute relation unissant un texte B (que j'appellerai *hypertexte*) à un texte antérieur A (que j'appellerai, bien sûr, *hypotexte*) sur lequel il se greffe d'une manière qui n'est pas celle du commentaire.[914] [[By hypertextuality] I mean any relationship uniting text B (which I call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary.][915]

Genette defines the process by which two texts are *hypertextually* related as *transformation*, which he subdivides into *direct transformation* and *indirect transformation*.[916] Genette employs the relationship between Homer's *Odyssey* (the *hypotext*) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (a *hypertext* derived by *direct transformation*) and Virgil's *Aeneid* (a *hypertext* derived by *indirect transformation*), as an example. While in *Ulysses* the same story is told differently, that is the

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[909] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 2-3. Genette's intertextuality must not be confused with intertextuality as used by thinkers, such as Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, who use it as a catchall term to refer to the idea that no text is entirely original and that there are always other texts in another. Although compelling, this type of amorphous intertextuality provides a basic theoretical assumption for this chapter, but no useful methodological tools, for which I turn to Genette, following Nilsson. See J. Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York, 1980), esp. 36-63; G. Allen, *Intertextuality* (Abingdon, [2000] 2011), esp. 1-132. In contrast see W. Irwin, 'What Is an Allusion?', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001), 287-97; W. Irwin, 'Against Intertextuality', *Philosophy and Literature* 28 (2004), 227-42; Nilsson, 'Same', 202.

[910] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 3-4; G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (trans.) J. Lewin (Cambridge, 1997). For a related approach in Byzantine studies see A. Miltenova, 'Paratextual Literature in Action: Historical Apocalypses with the Names of Daniel and Isaiah in Byzantine and Old Bulgarian Tradition (11th–13th Centuries)', in P. Alexander, A. Lange, and R. Pillinger (eds.), *In the Second Degree: Paratextual Literature in Ancient Near Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean Culture and its Reflections in Medieval Literature* (Leiden, 2010), 267-84.

[911] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 4.

[912] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 4-5; G. Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction* (trans.) J. Lewin (Berkley, 1992).

[913] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 7-8.

[914] Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 5.

[915] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 5.

[916] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 7.

action of the *Odyssey* is *transposed* to early-twentieth-century Dublin, in the *Aeneid* a different story is told similarly, using formal, thematic, and generic models partly derived from the *Odyssey*.[917] In the following case study, I deal with three directly transformed (albeit less dramatically than *Ulysses*) hypertexts of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).

Beyond these two basic subtypes (direct and indirect transformation), Genette created a broad taxonomy for describing the types of transformation and the relationship between hypertexts and hypotexts. These types are particularly useful for this case study, because they provide a mechanism for describing relationships between texts (whether similarities or differences), which do not impose hierarchies on those relationships, unlike those relationships constructed by *Quellenkritik* or *Textkritik* between source texts and (variously termed) derivative texts. Genette's typologies, instead, allow for the specific description and analysis of textual relations. I freely adapt Genette's model, so that it is suitable for both macro- and micro-analyses, although it was designed principally for broad brush structuralist and holistic characterisation of transformation, and not for the study of late Byzantine literature, a category unsurprisingly ignored by Genette.

Translation, denoting the transformation of a text from one language into another, is one of the most important sub-types of transformation for this study.[918] My basic argument is that any translation is always transformative, in ways that cannot be limited to 'form'.[919] Genette's *translation* requires subdivision into three sub-types: *interlingual translation* (between different languages), *intralingual translation* (between different registers of the same language), and *intersemiotic translation/transmutation* (between verbal and nonverbal sign systems).[920] Intralingual translation, which occurs in all three hypertexts, is the only type relevant here. Such translation, between different registers of Greek, played an important role within the Byzantine education system, from the teaching of basic Greek to more sophisticated rhetorical techniques. Intralingual translation, can be seen clearly in various types of pedagogic and literary texts of varing levels of sophistication, most notably

[917] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 5-7; 213.
[918] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 214-8.
[919] I. Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London, 1994), 4, "…to translate is always to transform. It always involves a necessary travesty of any metaphysics of authenticity or origins."
[920] R. Jakobson, *Essais de linguistique générale* (Paris, 1963), 139. Note that Genette only considered *interlingual translation*.

(epimerismic) schedography and interlinear glosses of classical texts (especially the ancient tragedians and Homer), as well as *progymnasmata* and rhetorical and grammatical handbooks.[921] Debate regarding the various registers or levels of Byzantine Greek is considerable.[922] Variously termed types, registers, and styles of Byzantine Greek have been categorised into both bipartite (learned and non-learned/vernacular) and tripartite systems (archaising/classicising/Atticising, literary Koine, and popular Koine; or high, middle, and low register).[923] However, even these systems fail to fully demarcate the potential range of register use within Byzantine literature. This has led scholars to either invent further sub-categories (such as lower-middle or super-high) or increasingly to argue for alternatives to rigid systematisation.[924] I understand intralingual translation here to refer to transformation of stylistic register, particularly through the *substitution* (κατὰ τὸ ποσὸν) of vocabulary and grammatical constructions (whether individual words or phrases, such as metaphors).[925]

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[921] For recent bibliography see A. Giannouli, 'Education and Literary Language in Byzantium', in M. Hinterberger (ed.), *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature* (Turnhout, 2014), 52-71, esp. 61-2; F. Nousia, *Byzantine Textbooks of the Palaeologan Period* (Vatican City, 2016), esp. 49-140; A. Rhoby, 'Bildung und Ausbildung – Wissensvermittlung in Byzanz', in F. Daim (ed.), Byzanz. Historisch-kulturwissenschaftliches Handbuch (Stuttgart, 2016), 1008-12, 1014-6; P. Agapitos, 'Anna Komnene and the Politics of Schedographic Training and Colloquial Discourse', *Νέα Ῥώμη* 10 (2013), 89-107; P. Agapitos, 'Grammar, Genre and Patronage in the Twelfth Century: A Scientific Paradigm and its Implications', *JÖB* 64 (2014), 1-22; P. Agapitos, 'Learning to Read and Write a *Schedos*: The Verse Dictionary of Par. gr. 400', in S. Efthymiadis, *et al.* (eds.), *Pour une poétique de Byzance: Hommage à Vassilis Katsaros* (Paris, 2015), 11-24. For a relevant example of *progymnasmata* see W. Hörandner, 'Die Progymnasmata des Theodoros Hexapterygos', in O. Kresten, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantios: Festschrift H. Hunger* (Vienna, 1984), 147-62, esp. 150-8.

[922] For seminal papers see I. Ševčenko, 'Levels of Style in Byzantine Literature', *JÖB* 31 (1981), 289-312; I. Ševčenko, 'Additional Remarks to the Report on Levels of Style', *JÖB* 32 (1982), 220-38; R. Browning, 'The Language of Byzantine Literature', in S. Vryonis (ed.), *The Past in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture, Byzantina kai Metabyzantina* 1 (1978, Malibu), 103-33. For a recent overview of learned language in Byzantine Greek see M. Hinterberger, 'Introduction', in M. Hinterberger (ed.), *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature* (Turnhout, 2014), 1-12. See also the papers in A. Cuomo and E. Trapp (eds.), *Toward a Historical Sociolinguistic Poetics of Medieval Greek* (Turnhout, 2017). Especially relevant for this thesis is G. Horrocks, 'Georgios Akropolitis: Theory and Practice in the Language of Later Byzantine Historiography' in A. Cuomo and E. Trapp (eds.), *Toward a Historical Sociolinguistic Poetics of Medieval Greek* (Turnhout, 2017), 109-18.

[923] Hinterberger, 'Introduction', 4.

[924] Ševčenko, 'Levels', 291; 302; M. Karyolemou, 'What Can Sociolinguistics Tell us about Learned Literary Languages?', in M. Hinterberger (ed.), *The Language of Byzantine Learned Literature* (2014, Turnhout), 34-51; N. Toufexis, 'Diglossia and Register Variation in Medieval Greek', *BMGS* 32 (2008), 203-17.

[925] C. Walz (ed.), *Rhetores Graeci* (Stuttgart, 1835), vol. 8, 812-3.

Intralingual translation constitutes some of the elements of what Byzantines described (more or less synonymously) as *paraphrasis* (παράφρασις) or *metaphrasis* (μετάφρασις).[926]

Paraphrasis/metaphrasis also incorporates what the first-century grammarian Aelios Theon called *syntactical paraphrasis*, that is the rearrangement or *transposition* of word order, to create alternative effects.[927] However, of more significance for this case study is another sub-type of *paraphrasis/metaphrasis*, which I refer to as *quantitative transformation*, more specifically the *reduction* and *augmentation* of texts.[928] This is often the only type of transformation considered to have historiographical implications, because it has been understood as a transformation of 'content', while other types have been sidelined as mere 'formal' transformations.[929] Both reduction and augmentation can be achieved in different ways and can therefore be subdivided into sub-types. In its simplest form, quantitative transformation constitutes the *excision* (deletion) and *extension* (addition) of text. Such quantitative transformation is simple, because text adjacent to that which is excised or extended is not also transformed. At a more complex level, reduction and augmentation can be achieved by *concision* (abridgement) and *expansion* (elongation).[930] Genette understands these types of complex quantitative transformation as the reduction or augmentation of a text "sans en supprimer aucune partie thématiquement significative [without the suppression of any of its significant thematic parts]".[931] However, I prefer to understand it more simply as a quantitative transformation, which involves the transformation of surrounding text, since Genette's holistic and structuralist conception of thematic

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[926] M. Patillon, with G. Bolognesi (eds.), *Aelius Théon: Progymnasmata* (Paris, 1997), 107-8; M. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres: Texts and Contexts* (Vienna, in progress), vol. 2, ch. 19, "Rewriting is called both παράφρασις and μετάφρασις in Greek; there is no distinction between the two terms"; D. Resh, 'Toward a Byzantine Definition of Metaphrasis', *GRBS* 55 (2015), 758; K. Lehrs, *Die Pindarscholien. Eine kritische Untersuchung zur philologischen Quellenkunde. Nebst einem Anhange uber den falschen Hesychius Milesius und den falschen Philemon* (Leipzig, 1873), 49-50; M. Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool, 1985), 25-6.

[927] Patillon, with Bolognesi, *Théon*, 107-8. On the relevance of Theon see M. Heath, 'Theon and the History of the Progymnasmata', *GRBS* 43 (2002), 129-60.

[928] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 228-9. These are referred to as addition (πλειόνων and աոդպրութիւն (aṙdrutʻiwn)) and subtraction (ἐλαττόνων and բացահանութիւն (bacʻahanutʻiwn)) in an interpolated passage in Choiroboskos and the Armenian *translation* of Aelios Theon respectively: Walz, *Rhetores*, vol. 8, 812-3; Patillon, with Bolognesi, *Théon*, 107-8.

[929] See below 4.2 and 4.6.

[930] Genette further subdivides these into types ranging from massive *amputation* to *trimming*.

[931] Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 271; Genette, *Palimpsests*, 235. Note the free translation of *partie* as plural.

significance is unhelpful for historiographical micro-analysis. Importantly, simple and complex quantitative transformation often blur together, especially at the micro-level, so I use these terms as a guide, rather than as absolute categories.

Closely related to intralingual translation and also inevitably with quantitative transformation is *versification* (the opposite of *prosification*), that is the transformation of a text from prose to meter. Versification is often considered an element or type of *paraphrasis/metaphrasis*.[932] However, once again, I argue that it is important to parse out the elements of transformation, rather than just telescoping all transformation into *paraphrasis/metaphrasis*. Another important type seen in this case study is *transvocalisation*, which refers to the transformation of the perspective from which a narrative is told, broadly defined.[933] In the context of this case study *transvocalisation* refers principally to the change of narrator and person. Finally, *thematic transformation* refers to the ideological reversal of aspects of a text, for example, the transformation of a pro-Palaiologan into a pro-Laskarid position.[934] This is dissimilar to the other types discussed above, because it is a product of other types of transformation.

My use of Genette's taxonomies aims to describe the specifics of textual relationships without subordinating all types of transformation to *paraphrasis/metaphrasis* or imposing the hierarchies of *Quellenkritik* or *Textkritik* onto them. I understand the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) to be hypertexts of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and I use Genette's types of transformation to describe the relationships between those texts.[935] However, I want to be clear that a hypertext is not defined exclusively by its relationship to its hypotext, nor is hypertextuality the only (transtextual) way in which hypertextually related texts might be related. I use Genette's taxonomies as flexible heuristic tools for approaching and describing a number of intersecting textual relations, rather than as rigid labels, which inscribe texts or textual relations in a single group or position. Furthermore, although hypertextuality is fundamentally mono-directional, since it is related

[932] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 218-9. On *paraphrasis/metaphrasis* in Byzantine verse see Lauxtermann, *Poetry*, vol. 2, ch. 19.
[933] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 213; 292.
[934] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 213-4.
[935] That is to say there may be intermediaries.

to the age of a text, I do not seek to impose specific assumptions about how texts were created, but simply to specify the relationship between two extant texts. If I say text A is a reduction of text B, I am not claiming that someone took text A, transformed it and thus made text B, but am only describing the relationship between texts A and B, as we now have them. In the following three sub-chapters I introduce each of the hypertexts under discussion.

4.2 – *Synopsis chronike* (β)

The *Synopsis chronike* (β), is a prose history, ranging from the creation of the world to the capture of Constantinople in 1261.[936] The composition of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) has been dated to the mid-thirteenth century and is closely related to debate regarding both the manuscript tradition and the authorship of various texts. The manuscript tradition of this text is complex and the subject of considerable debate.[937] The oldest manuscript (*Marc. gr. 407*), dating to the fourteenth century, contains what has been considered to be the whole text. Three younger manuscripts (*Taur. 189*, *Scor. Y I 4*, and *Athon. 3758*), dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, transmit large parts of the text found in its entirety in *Marc. gr. 407*.[938] Another manuscript (*Ambr. gr. 820*), dating to the sixteenth century, contains the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) of Akropolites, with a number of passages incorporated into the text, which also appear in the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[939] A further manuscript (*Vat. gr. 1889*), dating to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, bears witness to the text entitled simply *Χρονικά* (*Chronika*).[940] This manuscript contains a narrative text, which narrates from the creation of the world to the death of Alexios I Komnenos, which although similar is not identical with the corresponding early passages of the *Synopsis chronike* (β). Consequently, it has been assumed to be an earlier draft version of the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[941] From marginal notes it has been observed that Theodore Skoutariotes owned one manuscript (*Marc. gr. 407*)

[936] K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Paris, 1894), vol. 7. The text is also referred to as the *Synopsis Sathas*, after its editor.
[937] On the manuscript tradition see Zafeiris, *Synopsis*, 22-4.
[938] They also transmit some of the texts which also circulated with the *Synopsis chronike* (β) in the *Marc. gr. 407*.
[939] See below 4.2.
[940] R. Tocci (ed.), *Theodori Scutariotae Chronica* (Berlin, 2015).
[941] K. Zafeiris, 'A Reappraisal of the Chronicle of Theodore of Kyzikos', *BZ* 103 (2010), 773-90.

and a certain Theodore of Kyzikos was the scribe for another (*Athon. 3758*).[942] From this evidence, Heisenberg argued that Theodore Skoutariotes, the metropolitan of Kyzikos (1277-82) was the author of the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[943] This view has generally been accepted by scholars and incorporated into historiographical analyses of both the value of the text and the passages in which the narrator of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) speaks in their own voice.[944] However, recently Konstantinos Zafeiris has challenged this attribution, on the grounds that the text does not match the biography of Skoutariotes and that the relationship between the *Chronika* and *Synopsis chronike* (β) is not as simple as has been assumed.[945] I accept Zafeiris' conclusion that there is insufficient evidence for an attribution to Skoutariotes. I therefore refer to and treat the text as anonymous. Beyond the contested attribution, the state of research remains patchy. Scholars still depend primarily on the 1894 edition of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) (based exclusively on *Marc. gr. 407*) and Heisenberg's edition of what he called the *additamenta* to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (based on the hybrid text of *Ambr. gr. 820*, with reference to *Marc. gr. 407* and *Taur. 189*), even though the *Chronika* was edited in 2015.[946]

This long and structurally complex text, running to 610 pages (*c.* 18,300 lines) in Sathas' edition, has yet to receive sustained analysis as a whole narrative. This is in part because of the practical constraints of studying such a long text, but also because its value as a historical source has been considered limited, because of the close relationship between the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and three other texts, which have been understood to constitute its main sources. Approximately the first third of the text (*c.* 33%), narrates the period from the creation of the world to the death of Alexios I Komnenos (*r.* 1081-1118).[947] This part of the text has been allocated no single source, although Zonaras' *Epitome historion* or another closely related

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[942] A. Kazhdan, 'Эксцерпты Скилицы', *Новини от Историческия институт* 14-5 (1964), 529-44.
[943] A. Heisenberg, *Analecta: Mitteilungen aus italienischen Handschriften byzantinischer Chronographen*, (Munich, 1901), 5-16; A. Heisenberg, 'Review of K. Sathas, *Σύνοψις χρονική und Ἔκθεσις χρονική*', *BZ* 5 (1896), 182-5.
[944] K. Zafeiris, 'The Issue of the Authorship of the Synopsis Chronike and Theodore Skoutariotes', *RÉB* 69 (2011), 253. For Zafeiris' useful example of historiographical misuse see Ostrogorsky, *State*, 362. See also A. Kazhdan, 'Skoutariotes, Theodore', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), 1912-3; Kazhdan, 'Скилицы', 529. Note that Macrides questions the attribution, although she refers to the text throughout her work as belonging to Theodore Skoutariotes and uses Skoutariotes' biography to analyse the text: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 65-71; 'Blum', 276.
[945] Zafeiris, 'authorship', 253-63; Zafeiris, *Synopsis*, 24-31.
[946] Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 275-302; Tocci, *Scutariotae*.
[947] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 3.1-187.10.

text, has been highlighted as particularly important.[948] Unlike this first part, for which Zafeiris' *Quellenkritik* claimed many sources, the subsequent two parts have both been closely associated with one single source. For the second part (*c.* 48%), which narrates the period from Alexios' death to 1204, the *Chronike diegesis* of Niketas Choniates has been suggested as the source.[949] For the third (and last) part of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) (*c.* 20%), which narrates the period between 1204 and 1261, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) of George Akropolites has been considered its main source.[950] The relationship between the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and its sources, has generally superseded the study of the text as an independent and coherent historiographical narrative.[951] Only in a few passages, where the *Synopsis chronike* (β) 'adds' to its sources has it been considered as a historiographical source for past action in its own right. However, even then it has been assumed that the differences between the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Synopsis chronike* (β) should be attributed to other as yet unknown sources.[952]

Some of these 'additions' have been found in the first and second parts of the text. For example, passages narrating the initiation of the first crusade, describing Cappadocia, and explaining a Russian/Galician-Byzantine alliance immediately before 1204, 'add' to or contradict the corresponding passages in the *Epitome historion* and *Chronike diegesis*.[953]

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[948] Zafeiris, *Synopsis*, esp. 267-74; E. Patzig, 'Über einige Quellen des Zonaras', *BZ* 5 (1896), 24-53; E. Patzig, 'Über einige Quellen des Zonaras', *BZ* 6 (1897), 322-56; Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ*, vol. 7, σν΄; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 477; K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des oströmischen Reiches, 527-1453* (Munich, 1897), 388-9.

[949] Simpson, *Choniates*, 115; Dieten, *Historia*, lxxxviii-lxxxix. The *Synopsis chronike* (β) follows the b-text of the *Chronike diegeis*: Kazhdan, 'Skoutariotes', 1913; K. Zafeiris, 'Narrating the Past: Elements of *Littérarité* in the *Synopsis Chronike*', in P. Odorico, *et al.* (eds.), *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie* (Paris, 2008), 33-47; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 477; Krumbacher, *Litteratur*, 389.

[950] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 13; Madgearu, *Asanids*, 3, "The universal chronicle compiled by Theodore Skutariotes (in prose) … [was] profusely inspired by Niketas Choniates and George Akropolites."

[951] This can be seen clearly from entries on the *Synopsis chronike* (β) or Theodore Skoutariotes in reference works: Kazhdan, 'Skoutariotes', 1913; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 477; Krumbacher, *Litteratur*, 388-9. There is inadequate space here to fill the void of study on this text. Similar problems have been faced by a colleague working on Zonaras: T. Kampianaki, *John Zonaras' Epitome of Histories (12th Cent.): A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History and Its Readers* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Oxford, 2017). Scholars have primarily considered the *Synopsis chronike* (β) either as part of a study of the manuscript tradition of one of these three texts or as the study of its sources.

[952] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 13, "…Skoutariotes enriched the account of Akropolites with some unknown sources."

[953] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 205.20-206.4; Krumbacher, *Litteratur*, 389; Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 184.29-185.19; P. Charanis, 'Greek Source on the Origin of the First Crusade', *Speculum* 24 (1949), 93-4. For the

However, considerably more 'additions' have been singled out in the third part, where the *Synopsis chronike* (β) diverges regularly from the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[954] Some of the divergences, were observed at least as early as the sixteenth century, when elements from the *Synopsis chronike* (β) were inserted into the Milanese manuscript of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (*Ambr. gr. 820*), with a *paratextual* marginal note, observing that this was not part of the text attributed to Akropolites:

> ὅτι τὸ ὑπὸ ἀστερίσκου ἀρχόμενον καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν καταλῆγον, οὐκ ἔστι τοῦ ἀκροπολίτου γεωργίου τοῦ συγγραφέως τῆς ἱστορίας[955] [That which begins under the asterisk up to the end, is not from the history of the writer George Akropolites]

These fifty-seven interpolations have been formalised as *the* (rather than just some of the) information 'added' to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) by the *Synopsis chronike* (β), by their publication by Heisenberg under the title *Theodori Scutariotae, Additamenta ad Georgii Acropolitae Historiam* at the back of his 1903 edition of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[956] Heisenberg's edition demonstrated the importance of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) as an 'independent source'. However, it simultaneously restricted the attention of modern historians of the thirteenth century to these fifty-seven well-edited pieces of text and structurally reinforced the atomistic approach to their comparative analysis.

Ruth Macrides has argued that some of the 'additions' and 'omissions' to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) from the *Synopsis chronike* (β) (many of which were not acknowledged or edited by Heisenberg) construct an anti-Palaiologan and pro-Laskarid discourse, which

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contemporary context of this argument see J. Harris, 'Byzantium and the First Crusade: Three Avenues of Approach', *Estudios bizantinos* 2 (2014), 125-41; P. Frankopan, *The First Crusade: The Call from the East* (London, 2012); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 428.4-12; A. Maiorov, 'Малоизвестные источники по истории русско-византийских отношений, начала XIII века: текст, перевод, комментарий', *Український історичний збірник* 12 (2009), 294-5; A. Maiorov, 'The Alliance between Byzantium and Rus' Before the Conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204', *Russian History* 42 (2015), 288-90.

[954] Kazhdan, 'Skoutariotes', 1913, "the additions to the latter are of special value"; Ostrogorsky, *State*, 371, "give the chronicle its real value as a source"; Zefeiris, *Synopsis*, 1, "For this last part, the text follows closely the histories of Niketas Choniates and George Akropolites, with only a few modifications or additions, particularly in the text of the latter."

[955] Marginal note in f. 12r. Zafeiris, *Synopsis*, 23.

[956] Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 275-302. Blum includes these *additamenta* under the title "Auszüge aus den Zusätzen des Theodoros Skutariotes [Excerpts from the Additions of Theodoros Skoutariotes]", without any discussion of authorship: Blum, *Chronik*, 197-210. For a critique of Blum's treatment see Macrides, 'Blum', 276.

contrasts with the pro-Palaiologan *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and aligns it more with the often anti-Palaiologan *Syngraphikai historiai* of George Pachymeres.[957] In passages relating to less ideologically charged themes, Macrides observes that the *Synopsis chronike* (β) offers more detail than the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[958] Other scholars have also studied the 'additions' in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) to mine for 'facts'. For example, a passage from the eulogistic report of John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes' death has generated some attention amongst Marxist Russian historians and has been used to analyse the control of the means of production in late Byzantine urban society.[959] However, all these studies, including that of Macrides, are fundamentally collections of atomistic comparative analyses with the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), rather than a reading of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) as a coherent narrative.[960]

Up until this point I have used the terminology of 'additions' and 'omissions', employed by modern scholars to describe the relationship between the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Synopsis chronike* (β), in order to demonstrate contemporary scholarly assumptions. However, this terminology prioritises the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and predisposes historians to atomistic analysis. In contrast, looking at the text through a lens shaped by Genette's terminology and taxonomies allows more precision and promotes a more holistic analysis. In Genettian terms, the third part of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) constitutes a hypertext of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which it considerably and systematically reduces by both concision and excision (on average it is more than one third shorter) and occasionally augments, principally by extension. This quantitative transformation of the hypotext occurs alongside the wholesale (although not total) intralingual translation of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), from a higher to a lower register of learned Byzantine Greek (in traditional terminology from

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[957] Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 65-71. Both the longest and most frequently analysed *additamenta* relate to the presentation of Nikaian rulers, especially around the deaths of the Laskarid rulers. See above 1.6.

[958] Note that only where the text appears to be ideologically charged does Macrides comment on reduction.

[959] V. Zavrazhin, 'К вопросу о толковании одного фрагмента из «Приложений» Феодора Скутариота', *VV* 41 (1980), 252-5; V. Smetanin, 'О некоторых аспектах социально-экономической структуры поздневизантийско-го города', *Античная древность и средние века* 8 (1972), 110; 119, n. 207.

[960] This is reinforced by the form of Macrides' principal work, which as a commentary, divided into sections, also often promotes a historicising and atomistic reading of the text as a historical source first and narrative second. See above 1.5.

variously termed archaising, classical, or high register to literary Koine or middle register).[961] The *Synopsis chronike* (β) is *metaphrastic/paraphrastic*, although it has not been incorporated into studies of historiographical *metaphrastic/paraphrastic* texts.[962] The register of the text is signposted in the *prooimion* of the *Synopsis chronike* (β), which claimed that the text was "κοινῇ καὶ συνήθει φράσει συντεθεικότες [put together with common and ordinary expression]".[963] In addition, the *Synopsis chronike* (β) transforms the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), by transvocalisation. Akropolites, who narrates parts of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) in the first person, is removed and replaced by third-person narration, although often this is unnecessary, because those passages in which Akropolites appears both in and as a commentator on action are among the most heavily redacted and are often entirely excised.[964] Occasionally an unnamed narrator is inserted, where the text is extended, who narrates action in the first person.[965]

The third part of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) has been acknowledged to contain independent historiographical 'evidence' more often than the other texts introduced below, even if only in passages where it augmented the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). Furthermore, a few ideologically charged reductions have been marshalled, alongside those augmentations, to demonstrate thematic transformation (i.e. transformation from pro- to anti-Laskarid). However, the most consistent transformations of intralingual translation and various types of reduction have generally been ignored, because historians have primarily been interested in adding to knowledge about the past.[966] However, all the transformations of the text contribute towards an alternative narrative, which constructs a different thirteenth-century Byzantine world. Although neither reduction nor augmentation have prompted historians to challenge the fundamental historicity and referential capacity of either hypertext or hypotext, in the following case study I demonstrate that when the *Synopsis chronike* (β) is read and analysed

[961] See above 4.1.
[962] See above 4.1.
[963] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 4.14. See also Zafeiris, 'Narrating', 34-5; 42-3. Note that such signposting is not always adhered to in Byzantine historiography.
[964] See below 4.9.
[965] On the author and narrator see Zafeiris, *Synopsis*, 24-31; Zafeiris, 'authorship', 253-63.
[966] See below 4.7.

as a coherent narrative, not just as a collection of 'additions', the referential potential of both texts is fundamentally challenged.

4.3 – *Chronike historia* (γ)

The *Chronike historia* (γ) is a narrative historical text of 9,588 dodecasyllable verses.[967] It survives in one fourteenth-century (*Vat. gr. 1003*) and one seventeenth-century manuscript (*Vat. Bar. 146*, a direct copy of *Vat. gr. 1003*).[968] The text's authorship has been attributed to Ephraim of Ainos, although only on the basis of a sixteenth-century note in a Vatican catalogue.[969] A list of patriarchs, written in the same hand immediately after the *Chronike historia* (γ) in both manuscripts, is also attributed to Ephraim.[970] This list starts with the foundation of the see of Byzantium (*c.* 38) by the apostle Andrew and finishes with Isaias (*r.* 1323-32). From the latter, both texts have been dated to the early-fourteenth century.[971] The text is structured by the reigns of Roman emperors (amongst whom the rulers of Nikaia are included). In the surviving manuscripts, paratextual subtitles note the name and length of rule of each emperor in the margins at the end of their reign, although these were probably later additions, since they do not always correspond accurately with the main body of the text.[972] The *Chronike historia* (γ) ranges from the reign of Caligula to the conquest of Constantinople in 1261.[973]

From at least as early as, 1828, when Angelo Mai edited the text, scholars have categorised the *Chronike historia* (γ), according to its sources (*fontes*):[974]

> Iam ego fontes ephraemicae chronologiae comperi, Zonaram quidem usque ad Alexii I. comneni obitum; Nicetam choniatam usque ad Balduinum I. imperatorem; deinde

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[967] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*. See also I. Bekker, *Ephraemius* (Bonn, 1840), 7-382.
[968] O. Lampsides, (ed.), Ephraem Aenii, Historia Chronica (Athens, 1990), xi-xv; *Beiträge zum byzantinischen Chronisten Ephraem und seiner Chronik* (Athens, 1972), 30-4.
[969] Lampsides, *Ephraem*, x; xvi; Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 42-55. See Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 478.
[970] Bekker, *Ephraemius*, 383-417, esp. 416.10387-417.10392.
[971] Lampsides, *Ephraem*, x; Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 27-30, 106-8. Krumbacher gives the incorrect date of 1313: Krumbacher, *Litteratur*, 390. Such a date offers a best guess, rather than a particularly meaningful claim. It should be noted that such a date would place the composition of the *Chronike historia* (γ) at a similar time to the historiographical *paraphrases/metaphrases* discussed below. See below 4.4.
[972] Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 41-2.
[973] The strange start date of Caligula has been put down to two missing leaves in *Vat. gr. 1003*: Lampsides, *Ephraem*, xii.
[974] Lampsides, *Ephraem*, xl; Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 42.

> vero Georgium acropolitam.[975] [Now, I have found that the sources of Ephraim's *Chronike historia* are Zonaras up to the death of Alexios I Komnenos, Niketas Choniates as far as the emperor Baldwin I, and after that George Akropolites.]

Thus, the *Chronike historia* (γ) has also traditionally been divided into three parts.[976] The first part bears a particularly strong relationship to Zonaras' *Epitome historion*, up until the death of Alexios I Komnenos, although again, as in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), some elements differ considerably.[977] The second and third parts are closely related to the *Chronike diegesis* and *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[978] However, the *Chronike historia* (γ) differs from the *Synopsis chronike* (β) in the intersection between the second and third parts, that is its treatment of the period between 1204 and 1206, where the narratives of the *Chronike diegesis* and *Chronike syngraphe* (α) overlap. The *Chronike historia* (γ) draws primarily on the *Chronike diegesis* up until the coronation of Henry of Hainault as emperor in late 1206, while the *Synopsis chronike* (β) changes source immediately after 1204.[979]

Odysseus Lampsides, in carrying out an almost exhaustive *Quellenkritik* of the *Chronike historia* (γ), has most carefully examined the relationships between the *Chronike historia* (γ) and its sources, arguing that its "*Abhängigkeit* [dependence]" on them can be seen in both the general historical content and the use of specific words and phrases:[980]

> Die Abhängigkeit von diesen Texten zeigt sich deutlich, wenn Ephraem an vielen Stellen nicht nur die Details der Geschichte, sondern selbst Worte und Sätze aus den Quellen übernimmt.[981] [The dependence on these texts is clear, when in many places

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[975] A. Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio* (Rome, 1828), vol. 3, viii.
[976] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 1-3708, 3709-7432, 7433-9588; Lampsides, *Ephraem*, xl-xlvii; Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 42-55; R. Macrides, 'Ephraim', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), 708, "The chronicle's sources are Zonaras, Niketas Choniates, and George Akropolites, and it is most detailed for the period 1204-61."
[977] For a *Quellennachweis* see Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 110-59; Kampianaki, *Zonaras*, 197-200, "Ephraem owes much to Zonaras, with the *Epitome* being his principal authority until the regime of Alexios Komnenos." For an important difference that has been studied, see the case of the characterisation of Constantine the Great: Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 43; I. Nilsson, 'The Past as Poetry: Two Byzantine World Chronicles in Verse', in A. Rhoby, *et al.* (eds.), *The Brill Companion to Byzantine Poetry* (Leiden, in progress); Madgearu, *Asanids*, 3, "The universal chronicle compiled by…Ephrem the Monk (in verse) [was]…profusely inspired by Niketas Choniates and George Akropolites."
[978] On Choniates see Simpson, *Chroniates*, 117-9. As with the *Synopsis chronike* (β) the *Chronike historia* (γ) is most closely associated with the b-text of the *Chronike diegesis*, although the later elements (after 614.7-10) come from the a-text.
[979] Lampsides, *Ephraem*, xl-xlvii; Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 42-55.
[980] Lampsides, *Beiträge*, esp. 109-238.
[981] Lampsides, *Beiträge*, 42.

Ephraim takes not only the details from the history, but also words and sentences from the sources.]

The following case study, examines the strength of Lampsides' claims in more detail. However first, Genette's terminology and taxonomies allow for a more precise general description of the relationship between the *Chronike historia* (γ) and the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). The relationship is one of direct transformation, although it is impossible to rule out intermediary texts. The most obvious transformation is versification, since the *Chronike historia* (γ) is written in dodecasyllables, rather than prose.[982] As I show below focus on versification has disregarded and subordinated other types of transformation. However, other types of transformation go hand in hand with versification, such as the intralingual translation, which transforms the text in both vocabulary and style, with the introduction of archaizing poetic elements.[983] Nilsson has argued that even Ephraim's use of dodecasyllables was part of the project of presenting the *Chronike historia* (γ) in an archaizing form.[984] These transformations are also inextricable from the massive quantitative transformation of the text, most often reductive, but also (and less often acknowledged by historians) augmentative.[985] In addition, the text also undergoes transvocalisation, with the authorial first-person narration of Akropolites being transformed into consistent third-person narration. The most notable thematic transformation that occurs as a consequence of these transformations is the dissipation of the pro-Palaiologan and anti-Laskarid discourse, which dominates the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), but is not present in the *Chronike historia* (γ).

Although Lampsides has carefully analysed the *Chronike historia* (γ), including its relationship to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), he considered the text 'literary', rather than 'historical'.[986] Only a few scholars have sought to use the *Chronike historia* (γ) as an independent historical text.[987] However, even these readings are marginal, positivistic, and

[982] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 218-9.
[983] See below 4.4.
[984] Nilsson, 'Poetry'.
[985] See below 4.7-12.
[986] See above 1.3 and below 4.3.
[987] They include a Serbian article noting an attestation of the Triballian (that is Serbian) people in the *Chronike historia* (γ) not found in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α): N. Maja and R. Radivoj, 'Подаци Ефрема из Еноса о Српској Историји XIII века', *ZRVI* 46 (2009), 231-8. This Serbo-centric article is problematic in several ways, but nevertheless demonstrates that if read carefully and closely, the

atomistic and the *Chronike historia* (γ) has never been accorded serious value as a historical source, even as a supplement to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), let alone as a coherent historiographical narrative.[988] Its treatment has been similar to, if even more dismissive than, that of the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[989] Paul Gautier's review of Lampsides' monograph remains illustrative of modern historiographical perceptions of the *Chronike historia*'s (γ) value as a 'source':

> …le lecteur se prend parfois à regretter que tant de labeur ait été consacré à une œuvre presque dépourvue de toute valeur historique. […the reader sometimes regrets that so much work has been devoted to a work almost devoid of any historical value.][990]

Even Lampsides himself explicitly dismissed the *Chronike historia* (γ) as historiography, as (more recently) has Alicia Simpson, in her monograph on Choniates' *Chronike diegesis*:

> Δέν άποσκοποῦσε λοιπόν ό συγγραφέας 'Εφραίμ νά γράψει ενα εργο Ιστορίας, άλλά περισσότερο νά συνθέσει εργο λογοτεχνικό μὲ ὕλη τήν άφήγηση μιᾶς ίστορικῆς περιόδου.[991] [Thus, the writer Ephraim did not aim to write a work of history, but rather to compose a work of literature with material for the narrative from a period of history.]
>
> Ephraim himself did not intend to write proper history but rather a literary work that contained a historical narrative…[992]

This treatment of the *Chronike historia* (γ) is primarily the result of the dismissal of verse as an appropriate form for historiography. The overtly literary form of verse (which depends on the misconstrued assumption that historiography could potentially be unliterary) has been deemed incompatible with nineteenth-century aspirations to make historiography scientific and objective.[993] The hangover of this assumption remains in the study of the *Chronike historia* (γ) and Byzantine historiography generally, despite growing awareness that

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Chronike historia (γ) contains non-derivative content. See also Maiorov, 'русско-византийских', 294-5; Maiorov, 'Alliance', 288-90.

[988] Macrides almost entirely ignores the *Chronike historia* (γ) in her study of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), only mentioning it in passing in her treatment of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and occasionally in footnotes in her commentary: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 65-6.

[989] Simpson, *Choniates*, 117, Simpson called it "less informative that the *Synopsis*."

[990] P. Gautier, 'Review of O. Lampsides, *Beiträge zum byzantinischen Chronisten Ephraem und zu seiner Chronik*', *RÉB* 34 (1976), 342.

[991] Lampsides, *Ephraem*, xlix.

[992] Simpson, *Choniates*, 119.

[993] Note that even Hayden White has problematically limited his conception of historiography to "discursive prose" and elided verse with poetry. See White, 'Artefact', 81-100; White, 'Tropology', 3.

historiography cannot be divorced from literature and that poetry and verse are not identical.[994] Consequently, despite this wide array of transformations, the demands of versification have been used to explain almost all difference between the *Chronike syngraphe* and the *Chronike historia* (γ):

> Ephraim is true to his sources; variations and departures from them are minor and can be ascribed more to the needs of meter than to independent knowledge.[995]

Rather than treating the *Chronike historia* (γ) as an independent historiographical narrative, it has been dismissed as verse in 'form' and (in part as a consequence of this 'form') derivative in 'content', without those two elements of 'form' and 'content' being placed in conversation. Even when 'form' has been isolated and the *Chronike historia* (γ) has been compared (as literature) to other verse historiographical texts, the *Chronike historia* (γ) has been deemed inferior.[996]

In this case study I read the *Chronike historia* (γ), as a work of historiography, which constructs a narrative about the past, just like prose historiography. I assume that the text of the *Chronike historia* (γ) is as carefully constructed and meaningful as that in prose. Although it is very rarely cited as a source for thirteenth-century historiography, I read it both as an independent narrative and in relation to other texts, to see how it constructs the past. In particular, I seek to uncouple the text of the *Chronike historia* (γ) from the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), demonstrating that this text constructs its own past, separate from (if related to) it.

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[994] This tradition goes back to Aristotle. See Kassel, *Aristotelis*, 1451b; Nilsson, 'Literariness', 17; I. Nilsson, 'Narrating Images in Byzantine Literature: the Ekphraseis of Konstantinos Manasses', *JÖB* 55 (2005), 121-46, esp. 131, n. 31; M. Lauxtermann, 'Byzantine Didactic Poetry and the Question of Poeticality', in P. Odorico, *et al.* (eds.), «*Doux remède …»: poésie et poétique à Byzance* (Paris, 2009), 37-46; J. Codoñer, 'Poesía clasicista bizantina en los siglos X-XII: entre tradición e innovación', in V. Martínez and C. González (eds.), *Poesía Medieval. Historia literaria y transmisión de textos* (Burgos, 2005), 19-66; E. Bourbouhakis, 'Political Personae: The Poem from Prison of Michael Glykas', *BMGS* 30 (2006), 53-75.

[995] Macrides, 'Ephraim', 708. Note that Macrides carefully formulated the argument that historiography cannot be separated from literature in Byzantine studies: Macrides, 'Preface'. See above 0.3 and 1.5.

[996] It has been deemed inferior to the verse chronicle in *politichos stichos* of Constantine Manasses, also called the *Synopsis chronike* and edited by Lampsides: Lampsides, *Μανασσῆ*. However, the comparison remains useful, since Nilsson's revisionist approach to Manasses' *Synopsis chronike* has demonstrated that the use of verse does not prevent a text from being historical: Nilsson, 'Poetry'.

4.4. – *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)

The third text circulated under the title *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) (*Unfinished verse chronicle*) and later in Latin as both the *Chronicon compendiarium* (*Short chronicle*) and *Historia in brevius redacta* (*Abridged history*).[997] It has survived in three manuscripts (*Vat. gr. 981*, *Marc. gr. VII 38*, and *Lips. gr. I 22*) dating from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.[998] Only Heisenberg has analysed the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) in any detail, and even he did so only as part of his textual criticism of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), for which he concluded it was worthless:[999]

> Diese Bearbeitung ist in jeder Beziehung wertlos; inhaltlich lehrt sie nichts Neues und für die Gestaltung des Textes ist sie auch in den konservativ behandelten Abschnitten nicht zu verwerten, zumal da sie zu der geringwertigsten FH die nächsten Beziehungen hat.[1000] [This work is worthless in every respect. In terms of content it teaches nothing new and for the structure of the text it cannot be used even in the conservatively treated sections, especially since it has the closest relations to the least valuable FH.]

Having dismissed the text as worthless, because of its lack of new content, it has not subsequently received historiographical treatment. More surprisingly, it has not received treatment as a *paraphrasis*/*metaphrasis*, alongside the other fourteenth-century *paraphrases*/*metaphrases*, such as those of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, Niketas Choniates's *Chronike diegesis*, George Pachymeres' *Syngraphikai historiai*, and Nikephoros Blemmydes' *Basilikes andrias*.[1001] Consequently, it has not been actively categorised, but described

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[997] Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 193-274.

[998] However, both *Marc. gr. VII 38* and *Lips. gr. I 22* are dependent on *Vat. gr. 981*, which formed the basis for Heisenberg's edition: Heisenberg, 'Studien', 544-57; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, esp. xix-xxii; 192. Note that in Heisenberg's earlier paper he had yet to discover the third manuscript (*Lips. gr. I 22*), used by Dousa: Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 35-47. On this discovery see Heisenberg, 'Handschriften', 117-9.

[999] Heisenberg, 'Studien', 553.

[1000] Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 47. This paragraph concludes his thesis. Note that "the text" and "FH" respectively refer to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and a branch of its manuscript tradition, named by Heisenberg.

[1001] J. Davis (ed.), *Η Μετάφραση της Χρονικής Διηγήσεως του Νικήτα Χωνιάτη* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Ioannina, 2004), 2 vols; H. Hunger (ed.), Anonyme Metaphrase zu Anna Komnene, Alexias XI-XIII. Ein Beitrag zur Erschließung der byzantinischen Umgangssprache, Wiener Byzantinistische Studien 15 (Vienna, 1981); A. Failler (ed.), *La version brève des relations historiques de Georges Pachymérès* (Paris, 2001-4), 3 vols; Hunger and Ševčenko, *Blemmydes*. On historiography see J. Davis, 'A Passage of the 'Barbarograeca' Metaphrase of Niketas Choniates' *Chronike Diegesis:* Retranslated or Revised?', *Symmeikta* 10 (1996), 127-42; J. Davis, 'The History Metaphrased: Changing

variously as a short version (*la version brève* and *Die verkürzte Bearbeitung*), an abridgement, and a *paraphrasis* of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), although not as a *metaphrasis*.[1002] Heisenberg described the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) as anonymous, although it is so rarely considered in its own right that it has garnered a sort of passive attribution to Akropolites himself, who it maintains as narrator, since the text is not transvocalised like the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ).[1003] The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*'s (δ) obscurity is a product of nineteenth-century 'scientific' approaches to both textual criticism and historiography. Previously, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) had been *the* historical narrative text attributed to George Akropolites, since it was this text, not the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), that was first edited and published by Theodore Dousa in Geneva in 1614.[1004] The same text was almost immediately reprinted, with minor reformatting, immediately afterwards in 1615 alongside (although interestingly at the end of) the *Rhomaike historia* of Nikephroros Gregoras and the *Apodeixis historion* of Laonikos Chalkokondyles.[1005] It was not until 1651, when Leon Allatios published his edition, that much of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) became available in print, although even this edition had the *proimion* of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), probably copied from Dousa's edition, and like the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), ended with §85.[1006] The most recent edition, which I utilise in this study, is that of Heisenberg, with corrections

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Readership in the Fourteenth Century', in A. Simpson and S. Efthymiadis (eds.), *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer* (Geneva, 2009), 145-64; J. Davis, 'Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates 'Translated': The Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Metaphrases', in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2010), 55-70.

[1002] Failler, 'manuscrite', 177-8; Hunger, *Literatur*, vol. 1, 446, "Das Geschichtswerk des Georgios Akropolites liegt in einer ursprünglichen Fassung und in einer verkürzten Paraphrase vor"; Heisenberg, 'Studien', 544-5; Heisenberg, 'Textgeschichte', 35-6.

[1003] Note its absence from a list of Akropolites' works compiled by Macrides: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 76-8. In the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is attributed to George Akropolites http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/inst/csearch.jsp#doc=tlg&aid=3141&q=Georgius%20ACROPOLITES&dt=list&st=author_text&per=50 [Accessed 25.07.17]. However, this seems very unlikely, since those elements most about Akropolites are amongst the most heavily reduced.

[1004] T. Dousa (ed.), *Georgii Logothetae Acropolitae: Chronicon Constantinopolitanum* (Geneva, 1614); G. Candal, *Historica*, 141-3; 340.

[1005] T. Dousa, *Historiæ Byzantinæ: Scriptores Tres* (Geneva, 1615), vol. 2, 382-435; Candal, *Historica*, 141-3; 276-8.

[1006] L. Allatios, *Georgii Acropolitæ Magni Logothetæ et Ducæ Michaelis Ducæ Nepotis Historia Byzantina* (Paris, 1651), 105-48; Heisenberg, 'Studien', 546. Only in Bekker's edition in the Bonn corpus were the §86-9 included in a printed text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α): Bekker, *Acropolitae*, 190-8.

by Wirth, which is printed at the back of his edition of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) alongside the *additamenta* from the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1007]

The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), which as a whole runs to less than half the length (*c.* 40%) of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), is (in Genettian terms) its hypertext, transformed primarily by reduction.[1008] It is reduced principally by excision and, less often, by concision. Generally, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) maintains the vocabulary, word order, and register of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), even when words and clauses are excised from a sentence. However, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*' (δ) relationship with the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) differs in the two halves of the text (see figures 4α and 4β).[1009] The first half of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) (§1-35) is much closer to the Greek of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which it primarily redacts through small sections of excision.[1010] This first half of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) (*c.* 50%) corresponds to a smaller part of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (only *c.* 27%).[1011] In contrast, the second half (§36-89) redacts the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) much more dramatically and has a higher tendency to concision, as well as simple excision.[1012] Consequently, this second half of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) (*c.* 50%) corresponds to a much greater part of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (*c.* 73%).[1013]

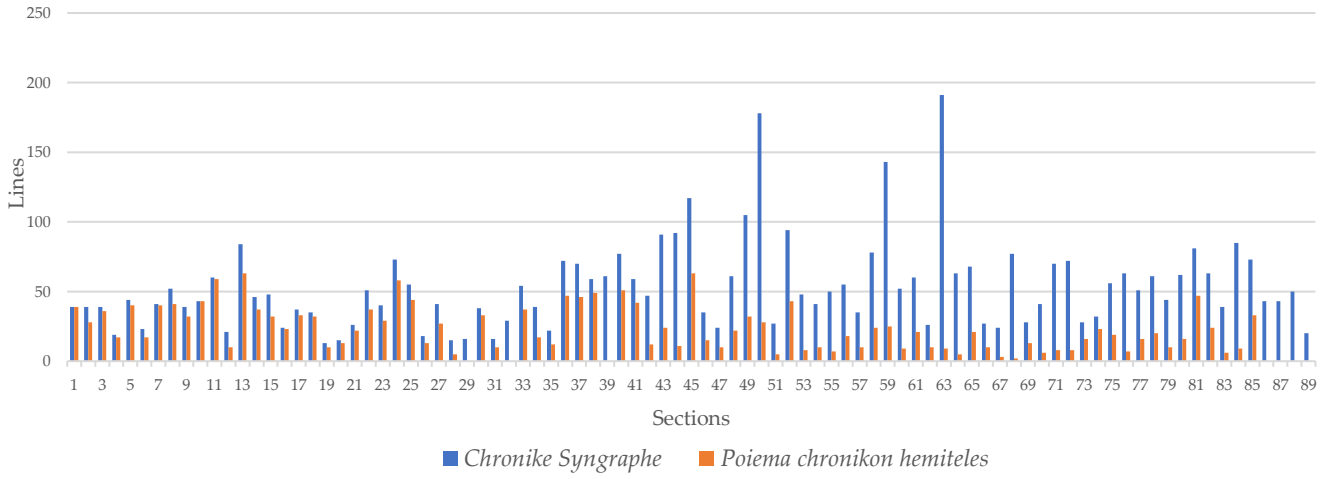
Figure 4α – Statistical relationship between the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)

	***Chronike syngraphe* (α)**		***Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)**	
Sections	Number of lines	Percentage of total (%)	Number of lines	Percentage of total (%)
§1-89	4706	100	1962	100
§1-35	1294	27.50	989	50.41
§36-89	3412	72.50	973	49.59

[1007] Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 193-274.
[1008] Genette, *Palimpsests*, 228-45. Note that it is not as Albert Failler claimed a third of the length.
[1009] For a breakdown of how this quantitative data is compiled here and throughout this chapter, see below 4.5, figure 4δ.
[1010] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 193.1-235.9 (§1-35).
[1011] In this half, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is *c.* 76% of the length of the corresponding passages in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).
[1012] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 235.10-274.4 (§36-89).
[1013] In this half, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is *c.* 29% of the length of the corresponding passages in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). Note also that if the sections, which are entirely omitted from the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) (§29, 32, 39, and 86-9) are removed from a statistical analysis, the difference between the two parts/halves becomes even starker.

Where passages are heavily transformed, particularly in the second half of the text, new words and phrases that were not present in the hypotext are more regularly introduced, to the point where transformation moves beyond concision into augmentation. Where this occurs the register of the Greek is often lowered, although it still maintains a reasonably learned form.[1014] Therefore the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), which is transformed by intralingual translation, is *paraphrastic/metaphrastic*. Although the change in register is roughly analogous to that in the other late Byzantine *paraphrases/metaphrases*, scholarship has largely ignored it.[1015] The most extensive 'recent' analysis of the *paraphrastic/metaphrastic* quality of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is a page-long comparison made by Albert Failler, in which he problematically noted that it "est abrégée plutôt que transformée [is abbreviated rather than transformed]", in contrast to the 'true' *paraphrasis/metaphrasis* of Pachymeres' *Syngraphikai historiai*.[1016] Given that the majority of surviving *paraphrases/metaphrases* were written at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) should be added to the Palaiologan *paraphrastic/metaphrastic* project envisaged by John Davis.[1017]

Figure 4β - Section lengths in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)



[1014] See below 4.6.
[1015] See above 4.4.
[1016] Failler, 'manuscrite', 177-8.
[1017] Davis, 'Barbarograeca'; Davis, 'Metaphrased'; Davis, 'Anna', esp. 68-70.

The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) most heavily reduces those passages about Akropolites.[1018] Several entire sections, in which the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) narrates the education and feelings of Akropolites, are entirely excised.[1019] This is also true for the passage analysed in the case study, in which Akropolites' personal asides are mostly removed, although his presence and voice are maintained where his character impinges too closely on narrative action to be removed. This suggests some sensitivity to the action of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). To a lesser extent John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, and Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos are also transformed by the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), which is both less critical and polemical than the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). Importantly, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) omits the last four sections of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). The narrative thus finishes with the entrance of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos into Constantinople and his arrival at the Great Palace, rather than abruptly mid-sentence, as in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1020] It is ironic that a work entitled *hemiteles* [unfinished] should be more complete as a narrative than the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1021]

The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is the least well-studied of the four texts under discussion. Historians' lack of interest is unsurprising, given that, like the *Chronike historia* (γ), it has been considered to be entirely derivative in content and, like the *Synopsis chronike* (β), its modern publication has made it an appendix to the 'full' *Chronike syngraphe* (α) alongside the so-called *additamenta*. However, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) constructs an alternative historiographical narrative of the period and with it an alternative thirteenth-century Byzantine past. Its analysis as an equally legitimate 'source', alongside the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), *Synopsis chronike* (β), and *Chronike historia* (γ), further fragments modern certainties about 'what happened' in the thirteenth-century, as even the apparently most

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[1018] For example, see discussion of the various types of reduction of passages corresponding to §63 and §68/§72 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) below, 4.11.
[1019] §29, §32, and §39 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which focus almost exclusively on Akropolites, have no corresponding passage in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ).
[1020] *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 274 (§85). Heisenberg noted that these sections were excised, in the context of the removal of Akropolites from the text elsewhere. However, such a dramatic excision would be an exception in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), since so little of the material excised at the end of the text relates to Akropolites.
[1021] Note that the ends of both the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ) are similarly rounded off slightly better. See above 4.2-3. Note also that this suggests that readers of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) might have felt that the text lacked sufficient narrative closure.

'derivative' text fails to be incorporated unproblematically into a single narrative of past reality.

4.5 – The case study (§66-72)

The relationship between the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) has provided a useful starting point for this case study, because the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is not only already familiar to the reader, but generally longer and better studied. However, although the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is their hypotext, these three (hyper)texts must be understood as more than just different 'versions' of the same narrative.[1022] For this case study, Genette's taxonomies provide alternative tools to those of *Quellenkritik* with which to approach textual relations. Each text generates different narratives and story worlds, which are more than just the sum of the transformations of the hypotext. Their textual relations, whilst the object of study here and a gateway to reading meaning into them, must not be allowed to subordinate them. In other words, they cannot be used to supplement the *Chronike syngraphe*, nor to verify (or falsify) its depiction of the past. My aim is not to generate the biggest and best possible past, but to demonstrate how the palimpsestic (or in Genettian terms the palimpsestuous) quality of Byzantine historiographical narrative texts affect modern historiographical projects.

My analysis focuses on a short case study, drawn from §66-72 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and corresponding passages in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ). I am interested in the relationship between the texts themselves, rather than between arbitrary internal sections, some of which I have created myself (since the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ) do not have any in the modern textual tradition).[1023] I do not necessarily use the sections to denote sense-units within the narrative, although sometimes they are useful for this. However, I find the sections a useful measure for comparing correspondence between texts, even if they are fundamentally arbitrary units. Since any way in which I might subdivide the text would prove arbitrary, I felt Allatios' sections (discussed above) were as good as any other.[1024] I intentionally (and not a little

[1022] Regarding the 'versions' of the *Chronicle of Morea*, see above 1.6
[1023] See above 1.5.
[1024] See above 1.5.

ironically) employ a sort of synecdochal method, analysing in detail a case study with the intention that it should stand for the whole, which of course it cannot.[1025] §66-72 come at the start of the final third of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and principally narrate military conflict between Laskarid and Epirot/Serbian forces in Makedonia, dated by modern historians to the years 1256-7.[1026] The narrative is chronologically consecutive and spatially confined to Makedonia, except in §69 where action briefly moves to the East (figure 4γ). Action in §66 begins immediately after a description of the flight of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos to the Seljuk court and the defeat of the Seljuk armies by the Mongols (§64-5), which together prompted Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris to return to Anatolia (§66).[1027] On his departure, Theodore allocated various territories and settlements in Makedonia to commanders (§66). The chief of these commanders (who happens to be the narrator, Akropolites) then tours those territories under his control (§67). However, the people of Albanon (one of these territories) rebel after their Nikaian commander was seduced by an Epirot woman (§68). In alliance with the rebels and the Serbians, the Epirots invade Nikaia's Makedonian territories (§68). After making gains, these Epirot forces, under Michael Komnenos-Doukas, fail to capture Prilep, to which Akropolites had retreated (§68). The narrative then switches from West to East and relates negotiations in Anatolia between Theodore and an unnamed Seljuk sultan (§69). These negotiations result in the transfer of territory, gift-exchanges, and the return of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos to Theodore's service (§69).[1028] The narrative then follows Michael, who is sent by Theodore to the West, with an inadequate force to relieve Nikaian Makedonia. However, the military situation continues to deteriorate with the defeat of several of the Nikaian generals left as commanders by Theodore (§70). After more defeats

[1025] P. Hoffer, *Clio Among the Muses: Essays on History and the Humanities* (New York, 2014), 8.
[1026] For the limited scholarly work specifically on this passage see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 319-33; Nicol, *Despotate*, 160-5; Miller, 'Recovery', 504-5; Fine, *Late*, 160-1; Angold, *Exile*, 289-92; Bartusis, *Army*, 35-6; V. Kravari, *Villes et villages de Macédoine occidentale* (Paris, 1989), 47-8; T. Venning (ed.), *Chronology of the Byzantine Empire* (Houndmills, 2006), 590-1; A. Ducellier, 'Balkan Powers: Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria (1200-1300)', in J. Shepard (ed.) *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500-1492* (Cambridge, 2008), 794; K. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant* (Philadelphia, 1976), vol. 1, 74; Miller, *Latins*, 109. Very briefly see Demintsev, 'травмы', 29. I am critical of this modern scholarship, where relevant, but I principally focus on the four Byzantine texts.
[1027] See below 4.7.
[1028] On West and East see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 52-3, n. 326; D. Angelov, 'Asia and Europe Commonly Called East and West: Constantinople and Geographical Imagination in Byzantium', in S. Bazzaz, *et al.* (eds.), *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space* (Cambridge MA, 2013), 43-68.

that are blamed on various other Nikaian commanders, Michael and a few men win 'a battle' in which Michael himself defeats the Epirot leader in single combat. Despite this victory, Michael has insufficient forces and is forced to withdraw (§71). Consequently, Akropolites is left alone in Prilep, where the inhabitants of the city betray him and the city to the Epirots and he is captured and led into captivity (§72).

Figure 4γ – Summary of case study in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (§66-72)[1029]		
Section (§)	**Location**	**Principal action**
66	West	Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris' departure for the East and assignation of settlements and territories to commanders
67	West	Akropolites' tour of western territories
68	West	Epirot invasion of Nikaian territories in Makedonia Commanders and Akropolites' responses
69	East	Theodore's negotiations with the Seljuk sultan in the east
70	West	Warfare in Makedonia (return of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos)
71	West	Warfare in Makedonia (confrontation near Vodena)
72	West	Warfare in Makedonia (fall of Prilep)

This case study illustrates in detail the three major 'biases' associated with the *Chronike syngraphe* (α): (1) pro-Nikaian/anti-Epirot *etc.*, (2) pro-Palaiologan/anti-Laskarid, and (3) pro-Akropolites.[1030] The first provides a basic set of working assumptions about the legitimacy of the Nikaian polity, but does not really drive the narrative. The second and third, in contrast, dominate the action presented in this case study. Given that George Akropolites is appointed as the commander of the Nikaian forces in Makedonia and that I have selected his capture as the endpoint of this case study, it is unsurprising that the action described in this part of the text is fundamentally bound up in his exoneration for the military failings of the Nikaian forces. Blame is shifted in all directions, but mostly towards the other commanders and the lack of forces available to him. Here the second and third 'biases' intersect, because Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, whose antagonistic relationship with Akropolites and Akropolites' patron and the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) protagonist Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, is blamed for both the selection of bad commanders and the failure to supply more troops. In contrast, Michael is presented as a heroic saviour of the empire in direct contrast with Theodore's presentation as a miserly and incompetent ruler. This case study is embedded within a narrative leading inexorably to Theodore's death and Michael's

[1029] Note that this schematic summary is highly simplistic.
[1030] See above 1.5.

acclamation and anointment as *basileus*.[1031] Although within the text discussed, each of these narratives generate their own logics, none are self-contained, but rather are meaningful within the narrative context of the rest of the text. Indeed historians have isolated the Laskarid-Palaiologan conflict that followed Michael's so-called usurpation of imperial power as the principal context for the composition of the text.[1032] Importantly, the passage under discussion comes after the famous trial of Michael (§50-1), which is one of the best known and commented upon sections of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), since it is the most detailed description of a Byzantine trial.[1033] The case study also comes immediately before the death of the *basileus* Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, in many ways the villain of the text, and the murder of the regent George Mouzalon, which paved the way for the so-called usurpation of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos and the removal of Theodore's son, John Komnenos-Laskaris (§73-8).[1034] The relationship between Akropolites and Theodore is likewise troubled, not least because of the former's relationship with Michael. The person of Akropolites is foregrounded in this section and his presence in Makedonia is attributed directly to his earlier beating on the orders of Theodore (§63), which is explicitly referred to in Akropolites' own voice (§66).

Both the action and meaning of the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is transformed in the hypertextual *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), and *Chronike historia* (γ). Each of these narratives devote dramatically different proportions of their texts to the various actions presented (figure δ).[1035] I regularly deploy quantitative data, since the

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[1031] See above 2.6.

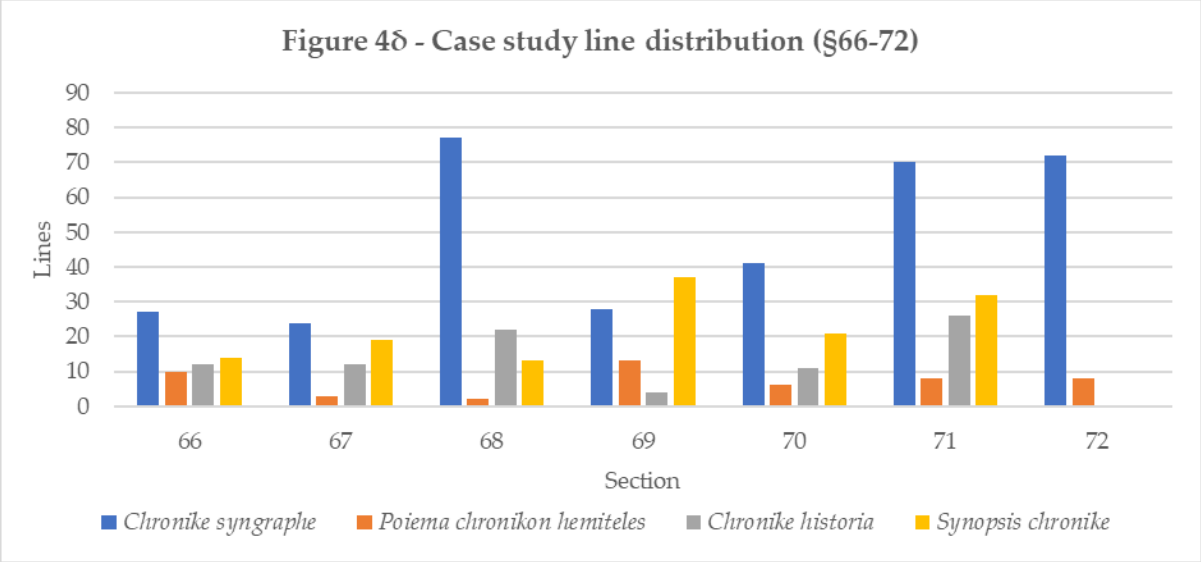
[1032] Macrides, *Akropolites*; T. Shawcross, 'In the Name of the True Emperor: Politics of Resistance after the Palaiologan Usurpation', *BS* 66 (2008), 203-27.

[1033] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 259-68; R. Macrides, 'Trial by Ordeal in Byzantium: On Whose Authority?', in P. Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium* (Farnham, 2013), 31-46; D. Angelov, 'Theodore Laskaris, Hellenic Philosophy, and Ordeal by Fire', in A. Simpson and P. Papadopoulou (eds.), *The Empire of Nicaea Revisited* (Turnhout, in progress).

[1034] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 152.1-163.17 (§73-8). These six sections offer an integrated account of the transition of power.

[1035] For all statistics used in this case study, I refer to lines in the modern editions of each text. They are a rough, but useful measure of the relative interest of each text in specific action. The editions of Heisenberg (i.e. the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)) and Sathas (i.e. the *Synopsis chronike* (β)) are comparable, since they are similar in length, averaging at 8.47 and 8.55 words per line respectively. Lampsides' edition of the *Chronike historia* (γ) averages at 4.95 words per line. The shorter lines of the *Chronike historia* (γ) are roughly comparable to the longer lines of the prose texts, because the verse text is generally more compact. I consistently code the four texts by

clearest marker of the importance of a topic is the amount of text dedicated to it, both in relative and absolute terms.[1036] However, quantitative data cannot be separated from either what each text presents or how it is depicted. The comparative analysis of these four texts demonstrates that all of these elements are in transformative flux, with important implications for modern historiographical projects.



The passages focused on in this case study constitute only a small part of each text and even within the case study I do not offer an equally detailed analysis of each passage as such a flat analysis would be both repetitious and impractically extensive, since most types of transformation recur frequently. Instead I focus on various types of transformation in my analysis of different passages, generally (although not prescriptively) building in scale and progressing in the order in which passages are presented in each text. I start at the most basic linguistic level, analysing the transformative impact of intralingual translation (4.6). Expanding the scope slightly, I then demonstrate that even very small quantitative transformations can dramatically transform the meaning of texts (4.7). In the following two sub-chapters (4.8-9), I show that even the most basic 'facts' upon which modern historians have built their analyses, from the (names of) characters (4.8) to space (4.9) and time (4.9), are radically destabilised by the irreconcilability of the the four presentations of the past found in these four related texts. In three final sub-chapters (4.10-3), I proceed to more

colour, blue for the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), yellow for the *Synopsis chronike* (β), grey for the *Chronike historia* (γ), and orange for the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ).

[1036] For example, see below 4.7.

complex phenomena, from the pervasive gendering of past happenings (4.10), to the primacy of narrative structures (4.11) and characterisation (4.12) over the 'accurate' presentation of 'what happened' in the past in these texts. From this collection of analyses I destabilise the relationship that has been assumed between historiography and the past, bringing the analysis of this thesis back to the point at which I started, by differentiating the two. However, at the same time (through Genette) I offer an alternative mode of describing the relationship between historiographical texts as just that, the relationships between texts, without distorting those relationships by subordinating the entirety of these text and all their textual relations to a single hypothetical past.

4.6 – Intralingual translation (§66)

Only occasionally is the exact text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) present in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), or *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ).[1037] Even when the hypertexts are barely transformed, they are still mostly intralingually translated into different registers of Greek.[1038] Consequently, each text is transformed throughout at the most basic level. Until now these transformations have simply been accepted (and ignored) as 'formal', while scholarly attention has been reserved for the more 'meaningful' transformations of 'content', such as Heisenberg's *additamenta*. However, whether they are meaningful or not within contemporary historiographical paradigms, transformations of 'form' are always also transformations of 'content'. For Byzantinists, just as other modern scholars, the past can never be anything but linguistic, so linguistic transformation must be recognised as 'content-full'/historiographical.[1039]

The first sentence of the case study offers a typical example of the kind of basic transformations, which occur throughout these texts. In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris left Thessaloniki to go to 'the East' and appointed several

[1037] That is (Genettian) intertextuality.
[1038] This translation occurs in inextricable symbiosis with other *metaphrastic/paraphrastic* transformations (such as quantitative transformation, transvocalisation, versification, *etc.*). For example, alongside the intralingual translation of the *Chronike historia* (γ), the text is simultaneously undergoing a transversification, which demands the creation of both structurally sound and pleasingly-stressed dodecasyllabic verses.
[1039] See above 0.2-3.

commanders.[1040] The three intralingual translations of the verb used in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) to describe Theodore's appointment of those commanders illustrate the type of transformations, which occur throughout these texts, but which are normally ignored by historians. The *Chronike syngraphe* (α) employs the archaising pluperfect indicative of καταλείπω, "καταλελοίπει [he had left]" (i.e. left to guard).[1041] However, the *Synopsis chronike* (β) uses the aorist participle "καταλείψας [having left]" and the sentence becomes a subordinate clause.[1042] Similarly, in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) an aorist participle is used, along with a subordinate clause, although "καταλελοίπει" is translated with the aorist participle of another word, ἀφίημι: "ἀφεὶς [having set up]" (i.e. as commanders).[1043] In the *Chronike historia* (γ) the aorist participle is also used, but the prefix κατά is separated from the participle, "λιπὼν στρατηγοὺς κατὰ Θεσσαλονίκην [having left as generals over Thessaloniki]".[1044]

Perhaps dramatic conclusions (historiographical or otherwise) can not and should not be drawn from the substitution of an aorist participle for a pluperfect.[1045] However, when studying more conceptual or contested subjects, such as identity and ethnicity, (micro-)linguistic transformations have been intensely scrutinised and invested with meaning, especially regarding ethnic markers or titles.[1046] However, if the linguistic quality of historiography is fully acknowledged then the impact of transformations to the basic

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[1040] Note that despite my stated aim not to prioritise the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) over the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) generally provides the most practical starting point for comparative analysis, because it is most often the longest text and is always the most extensively studied.

[1041] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.2-3.

[1042] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.1. Note an example of vocabulary change seemingly unrelated to register, "Δυτικῇ" replaces "Θεσσαλονίκῃ".

[1043] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.12-3 (§66).

[1044] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9157.

[1045] Steiner, *Babel*.

[1046] Regarding identity an interesting observation can be made regarding two of our texts. In the *Chronike historia* (γ), the often poetic form Αὐσόνιος (*Ausonian*) is used instead of Ῥωμαῖος (*Roman*), which does not appear in the text. 123 attestations of Ῥωμαῖος, -α, -ον in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) versus 0 in the *Chronike historia* (γ). 45 attestations of Αὐσόνιος, -α, -ον in the (later section of the (7482-*end*)) *Chronike historia* (γ) versus 0 in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). Gill Page, in her study of identity in late Byzantine historiography, which revolves around an analysis of the deployment of specific terms in historiographical texts, considers only the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (of our four texts) and never the term Ausonian: Page, *Being*. For a more detailed analysis of the term, see N. Matheou, *Aristakes of Lastiver's History in Context: New Rome and Caucasia in the Era of the Turkish Invasions* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Oxford, in progress).

(linguistic) building blocks of modern historiographical constructions must be extended beyond the confines of 'important' terminology. In short, a text that has been intralingually translated constructs a different past, built from different (semantically undetermined) linguistic elements.

4.7 – Quantitative transformation (§66)

When reading the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), modern historians have been most interested in the quantitative transformation of these texts in comparison to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). In particular, they have prioritised examples of extension (understood as 'extra evidence') and, more recently, massive excision, although the focus for both has been the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1047] However, concision and more minor excision (from which it is often indistinguishable) are more common features of all three hypertexts. As with intralingual translation, even seemingly minor quantitative transformations dramatically transform the past that is constructed by each text. In examples from §66, I demonstrate that quantitative transformations can not only affect the meaning of the passages in which the text is either augmented or reduced, but also untransformed text in the wider textual context of the transformation.

The *Chronike syngraphe* (α) reports that upon hearing of the flight of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos to the Seljuk court and the Seljuk defeat by the Mongols, Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris decided to return to the East:[1048]

> **(α)** Ὁ μὲν οὖν βασιλεὺς Θεόδωρος ἐπεὶ περὶ τῶν γεγενημένων ἐν τῇ τῶν Μουσουλμάνων ἐπύθετο χώρᾳ, οὐ περὶ τούτων μᾶλλον ἔχων φροντίδα ἢ περὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ —κίνδυνον γὰρ οὐ σμικρὸν τοῖς Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἐπισυμβαίνειν ὑπετόπασε χώροις—ἔσπευσε πρὸς τὴν ἕω παλινοστῆσαι· καὶ δὴ πᾶσαν τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν στρατιὰν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ προσλαβὼν τῆς πρὸς τὴν ἕω φερούσης ἐφήπτετο.[1049] [When the *basileus* Theodore learned about the things that had happened in the land of the Muslims, he made haste to return to the east, concerned not so much for the Muslims as for his own affairs, for he suspected that no small danger would befall the Roman

[1047] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 65-71. See above 4.2.
[1048] D. Korobeinikov, 'Михаил VIII Палеолог в Румском султанате', *VV* 64 (2005), 77-98; D. Korobeinikov, 'Михаил VIII Палеолог в Румском султанате: свидетельства поздних источников', *Византийские очерки* (2011), 116-38; D. Korobeinikov, 'The Royal Traveller Against his Own Will: Michael VIII Palaiologos in the Rum Sultanate', *BBBS* 26 (2000), 62-3.
[1049] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 138.21-5-139.2 (§66).

lands also. Having taken the entire Roman army with him, he started on the road to the East.][1050]

The *Synopsis chronike* (β) is the closest in length to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). As well as being intralingually translated, it is significantly reduced, primarily by concision, although also by excision. However, the text is also slightly augmented by expansion, since the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), does not locate Theodore in Thessaloniki:[1051]

> **(β)** Ταῦτα ὁ βασιλεὺς Θεόδωρος ὡς ἐπύθετο, ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ ἔτι διάγων, οὐ περὶ τούτων μᾶλλον ἔχων φροντίδα, ἢ περὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ, (κίνδυνον γὰρ οὐ μικρὸν τῇ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπισυμβαίνειν), ἔσπευσε πρὸς τὰ τῆς Ἕω παλινοστῆσαι…[1052] [The *basileus* Theodore when he learnt these things, [while] still delaying in Thessaloniki, having not so much concern about these things, as about his possessions, (for he suspected that no little danger would befall the [land] of the Romans), hastened to return to the things of the East…]

The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is reduced more dramatically (primarily by excision):[1053]

> **(δ)** Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Θεόδωρος ἐπεὶ περὶ τῶν γεγενημένων ἐπύθετο, ἔσπευσε πρὸς τὴν ἕω παλινοστῆσαι…[1054] [The *basileus* Theodore, when he learnt about the things that had happened, hurried to return to the East…]

The *Chronike historia* (γ) appears very differently, because of its versification. However, it is also quantitatively reduced (primarily by excision) and intralingually translated:[1055]

> **(γ)** Πλὴν διαθεὶς εὖ τὰ καθ' ἑσπέραν ἄναξ / μετὰ στρατιᾶς ἐκτρέχει πρὸς τὴν ἕω[1056] [Thus having arranged well things in the West, the *anax* / departed with an army to the East]

Modern historians have simply collapsed these four different passages together as either 'full' or 'abridged' 'versions' of the same action. However, each text presents not a different version of the same past, but a tangibly different past, as becomes clear from a more detailed analysis.[1057] For example, in the four texts, there are three alternatives for who exactly departed for the East: in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), Theodore departed with (1) "the entire

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[1050] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 319. Slightly adapted.
[1051] This extension is not noted by either Heisenberg or Macrides. On the importance of Thessaloniki for chronology, see below 4.9.
[1052] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 528.28-31.
[1053] The only exception is "δὲ", which is replaced by "μὲν".
[1054] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.11-2 (§62).
[1055] Note, for example, the *substitution* of ἄναξ for βασιλεὺς.
[1056] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9155-6.
[1057] Although, the quantitative transformation is mostly reductive, except for a clause in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), each text reduces different elements.

Roman army", in the *Chronike historia* (γ) simply (2) "with an army", since the intensifying adjective πᾶσαν (entire/whole) and the definite article are excised, while in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) (3) no army is mentioned and Theodore is depicted as departing alone. Each individual text opens a range of potential readings, into which modern historians have poured their own assumptions.[1058] However, with four different texts, the aporias and uncertainties left by these linguistic constructions of the past are compounded. No specific 'version' can be verified, since they are all of the same epistemological quality.

As I have demonstrated, each of the four texts constructs a different past, because their constituent linguistic signs are different (or differently ordered). However, even the same set of linguistic signs can construct a different past, if the linguistic signs around them are transformed. For example, throughout the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (particularly the sections covered in this case study) emphasis is placed on the lack of manpower made available by Theodore for the defence of Makedonia, as part of a wider anti-Laskarid critique not present in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), or *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ).[1059] Consequently, although both the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Chronike historia* (γ) mention an army, that mention has a different meaning in each text, either critical or ambivalent.

A similar transformation of meaning is illustrated by the contextual relationship between the passages cited above and the passages that precede them in each text. All four texts construct a causal and temporal link between Theodore's departure for the East and preceding action there, although only the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) explicitly locates this prior action in "the land of the Muslims".[1060] The preceding action in the East in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is split across two approximately equal sections, which depict the flight of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos to the Seljuks (§64) and the Seljuk defeat by the Ταχάροι

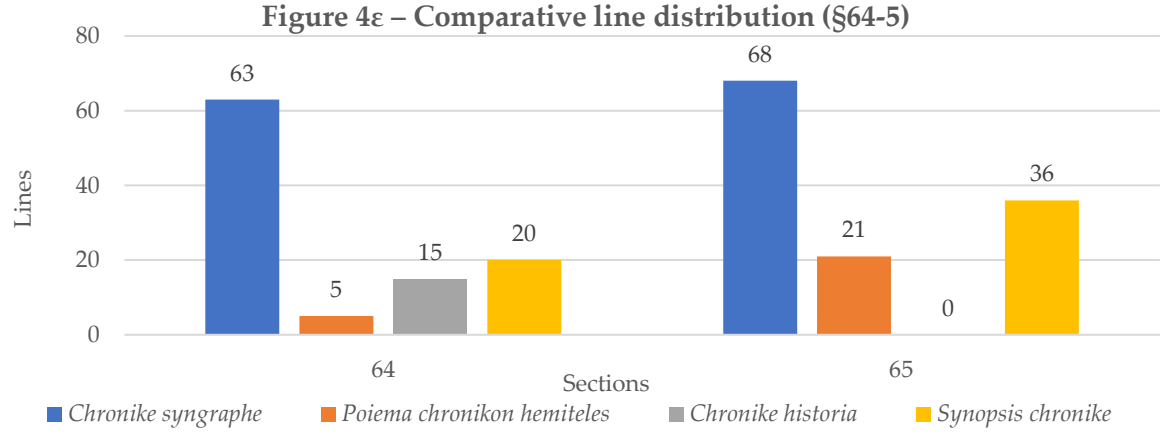
[1058] See above 0.3.

[1059] For examples, see the corresponding passages of a later example. Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.4-5 (§70); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 531.17-9 (§70); Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 263.13-4 (§62); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9205. See below 4.12.

[1060] In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), *Synopsis chronike* (β), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) this link comprises the explicit reference to ("things that had happened" or "these things"), while in the *Chronike historia* (γ) it is implicit in the flow of the narrative and the conjunction "πλὴν".

(*Tacharioi*, Mongols) (§65).[1061] However, both the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) place considerably more emphasis on the victory of the Mongols, than the flight of Michael.[1062] In direct contrast, the *Chronike historia* (γ) entirely excises the victory of the Mongols from its narrative.[1063] Consequently, each text uses the same causal link to produce contrasting meanings, as made even more obvious by the sheer quantity of text allocated to each action in each text (figure 4ε).[1064] Unsurprisingly, after the analysis of chapter three, each alternative meaning revolves around (an elite male character) Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[1065] While the *Synopsis chronike* (β) minimises Michael's personal role in favour of the threat to Theodore's own possessions, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) prioritises the military threat to Laskarid territory generally, and the *Chronike historia* (γ) entirely ignores this military threat, instead focusing exclusively on Michael's flight and potential treachery, which it makes a sufficiently dramatic event for Theodore to go East. Thus, each causal link produces a different set of meanings, not because of the text itself, but its wider textual context.

Figure 4ε – Comparative line distribution (§64-5)



[1061] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 134.3-138.20 (§64-5). Here the sections represent a meaningful change of topic, although the Greek is a continuous narrative in all the texts. Sathas, for example, included no paragraph break between the passages corresponding to §64 and §65 in his edition, see Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 527.

[1062] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 527.8-528.27. Note that the Mongols are rendered as Ἄταροι (*Ataroi*) not Ταχάριοι (*Tacharioi*) in the *Synopsis chronike* (β). On Ἄταροι see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 77; Anon. *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 261.10-262.10. This is partly explained by the high presence of direct speech in §64, which is always highly prone to excision in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ). Note also that the first two lines of §64 are not even about Michael.

[1063] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9140-54.

[1064] See above 4.5, figure 4δ.

[1065] See above 3.2-3.

From this analysis it has become clear that just as transformations affect their immediate context they also affect how the rest of the text might be read. However, this type of effect is often overlooked by modern scholars, because of their atomistic approach to historiographical meaning, in which a few isolated 'significant' transformations have been selected and the rest of these texts ignored.

4.8 – Unstable 'facts' (§66)

In the previous sub-chapter, I demonstrated that the meaning of all four texts is (often fairly subtly) changed by quantitative transformation (either textual or contextual). However, the divergences between these texts are not limited to meaning, but penetrate the most basic 'facts', upon which historiographical analysis is founded. Basic 'facts', like the names and titles which might be found in reference works, such as prosopographies or dictionaries, are transformed by each text. For example, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) lists the names, titles, territories, and forces of five commanders, appointed by Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris to defend the Makedonian territories he left behind, when he departed for the East in §66 (figure 4ζ).[1066] The contradictions in the corresponding lists in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) demonstrate the instability of even the most basic 'facts':

> **(α)** καταλελοίπει δὲ ἔν τε τῇ Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ τοῖς κατὰ δυσμὴν μέρεσιν ὡς πρὸς φύλαξιν δῆθεν τῆς χώρας τὸν πρὸς πάππου θεῖον αὐτοῦ τὸν Λάσκαριν Μιχαήλ, μικρόν τι καὶ εὐσύνοπτον ἐκ Παφλαγόνων στράτευμα ἐπιδοὺς αὐτῷ κἀκ τοῦ Σκυθικοῦ ὅσον εἰς τριακοσίους ἠριθμημένον, τοῦ δὲ Πριλάπου καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν στρατευμάτων τὸν ὃν εἶχε σκουτέριον Ξυλέαν ὠνομασμένον, φερωνύμως τὴν κλῆσιν νὴ τὴν Θέμιν ἔχοντα, εἰς δὲ τὸν Βελεσὸν καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Καλαμπάκην Θεόδωρον, ὃν καὶ τατᾶν τῆς αὐλῆς κατωνόμαζον, τὸν δὲ Χαβάρωνα Κωνσταντῖνον εἰς ἡγεμονίαν τοῦ Ἀλβάνου κατέστησεν, ἐμὲ δὲ πραίτορα χειροτονήσας πάντων αὐτῶν ἀφῆκε προϊστασθαι.[1067] [In Thessalonike and in the regions in the west, he left his uncle from his grandfather's side, Michael Laskaris, supposedly to guard the territory, giving him a small, compact army of Paphlagonians and, from the Scyths, an army numbering as many as 300. In charge of Prilep and the armies stationed around it, he left Xyleas, the man he had as *skouterios* (he was well named, by Themis); at Veles and the area around it, Theodore

[1066] Bartusis mistakenly states that it was John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes who appointed Akropolites. Bartusis, *Army*, 35.
[1067] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.2-14 (§66).

Kalampakes, whom they called *tatas* of the court. Constantine Chabaron he put in command of Albanon, while appointing me *praitor*.][1068]

Figure 4ζ – List of commanders according to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (§66)					
Commander	Michael Laskaris	Xyleas	Theodore Kalampakes	Constantine Chabaron	George Akropolites
Title/ description	Uncle of the *basileus*	*Skouterios* (well-named by Themis)	*Tatas* of the court	-	*Praitor*
Territory and settlements allocated	Thessaloniki and the regions in the west	Prilep	Veles and the area around it	Albanon	Command over all the others
Forces allocated	A compact force of Paphlagonians and as many as 300 Scyths	The armies stationed around Prilep	-	-	-

This list introduces both the cast of characters and the spatial context for the action narrated in the following passages of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1069] Similar lists serve the same introductory function in the three hypertexts. However, they present slightly different characters. For example, in the *Chronike historia* (γ) a Constantine, with no surname, is introduced with the different title of "Ἰλλυριῶν…ἐπιστάτην [master of the Illyrians]".[1070] Similarly, in the *Chronike historia* (γ), Xyleas' epithet (well-named by Themis) and Theodore Kalampakes' title (*tatas* of the court) are excised.[1071] However, the information attached to the character called Michael Laskaris in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is most dramatically transformed. First, the army of Paphlagonians and 300 Scythians in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is maintained in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), transformed to just "a small army, numbering in total 300" in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), and entirely *excised* from the *Chronike historia* (γ).[1072] Second, Laskaris' relationship to Theodore is transformed, from the uncle of Theodore on his grandfather's side ("τὸν πρὸς πάππου θεῖον αὐτοῦ τὸν Λάσκαριν Μιχαὴλ"), in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), to simply

[1068] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 319.
[1069] Note that Laskaris and Akropolites appeared earlier in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), while this is Kalampakes' only appearance.
[1070] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9163, 9181.
[1071] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9159-62; Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.7-11 (§66).
[1072] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.4-7 (§66); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.1-3; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.14-5 (§66); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9158. This is made significant by the discourse regarding lack of manpower. See above 4.7 and below 4.12.

Theodore's uncle in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), and no specific relation in the *Chronike historia* (γ) (except as another Laskaris).[1073] Third, and most importantly, the character listed in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) as Michael Laskaris, is called "Μανουὴλ τὸν Λάσκαριν [Manuel Laskaris]" in the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1074] In all four texts, Theodore has two uncles (Michael and Manuel Laskaris). However, the texts attribute 'the same' actions to different uncles (figure 4η). This is most obvious in §66, where the *Synopsis chronike* (β) directly contradicts the other texts. However, there is also uncertainty at multiple other points. For example, in §61 of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) a character is referred to simply as Laskaris. Michael seems like the most plausible attribution, since Manuel appears less frequently in the text. However, such an attribution would contradict the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which reads as Manuel Laskaris.[1075]

Figure 4η – Attestations of Michael and Manuel Laskaris[1076]

Section/Text	*Chronike syngraphe* (α)	*Synopsis chronike* (β)	*Chronike historia* (γ)	*Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)
45	Michael Laskaris	Michael Laskaris	Laskaris	Michael Laskaris
55	Michael and Manuel Laskaris	Michael and Manuel Laskaris	-	Michael and Manuel Laskaris
59	Manuel Laskaris	Manuel Laskaris	-	-
60	Manuel Laskaris	Manuel Laskaris	Manuel Laskaris	-
61	Manuel Laskaris	Laskaris	-	Laskaris
63	Manuel Laskaris	Manuel Laskaris	-	-
66	Michael Laskaris	Manuel Laskaris	Michael Laskaris	Michael Laskaris
68	Michael Laskaris	-	-	-
68	Michael Laskaris	-	-	-
70	Michael Laskaris	Michael Laskaris	Michael Laskaris	Michael Laskaris
71	Michael Laskaris	Michael Laskaris	-	-
71	Michael Laskaris	Laskaris	-	-
71	Michael Laskaris	-	-	-

[1073] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.4-5 (§66); Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.13-4 (§66); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.1-2; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9158. Venning mistranslates, making Michael Laskaris "Theodore's great-uncle": Venning, *Chronology*, 590.

[1074] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.1-2.

[1075] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 260.14-5 (§61); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 8556.

[1076] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 79.25-6 (§45), 109.9-11 (§55), 122.1-3 (§59), 123.3-6 (§60), 126.9-10 (§61), 133.20-1 (§63), 139.5-7 (§66), 141.7-8, 19-20 (§68), 145.9-10 (§70), 146.14-5, 147.22-3, 148.20 (§71); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 495.5, 513.9-10, 520.19-20, 521.14-15, 523.17, 526.10-1, 529.2, 531.21, 532.7-8, 27-8; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 8556, 9074, 9158, 9208; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 247.2-3 (§45), 256.8-10 (§55), 260.14-5 (§61), 262.13-4 (§66), 263.15-6 (§70). Macrides, *Akropolites*, xvii. Note that, for clarity, in the table the four different depictions have been colour-coded as follows, Michael Laskaris (grey), Michael and Manuel Laskaris (pink), Manuel Laskaris (green), and Laskaris (blue).

In short, a comparative reading of these four texts destabilises not just what actions happened or what meaning those actions are endowed with, but who even acted in the first place. Indeed, it serves to undermine any assumption that who specifically acted is important to these texts. Instead, in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the most striking element of this character's description is not his army, his relationship to Theodore, or even his name, but the critique implicit in the statement that he was placed in command "supposedly (δῆθεν) to guard the territory".[1077] This critique of Michael sits within an anti-Laskarid discourse in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which constantly attacks Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, describes Manuel Laskaris as "ἀνθρώπιον ἀφελέστατον καὶ κακῶς εἰδὸς στρατηγεῖν [an utter simpleton who scarcely knew how to command]", and presents Michael Laskaris as always ready to flee.[1078] However, in the hypertexts, where there is no anti-Laskarid discourse, the sarcastic "δῆθεν" is excised and even inverted in the *Chronike historia* (γ), where Michael is praised as "ἄνδρα γεννάδαν [a man of noble birth]".[1079]

The last character in the list, George Akropolites, is also radically transformed in the hypertexts. First, while Akropolites narrates the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) in the first person (ἐμὲ), in the (transvocalised) *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ), Akropolites is dropped in favour of third person narration. Second, his title is transformed from *praitor* (πραίτωρ) in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) to "μέγαν λογοθέτην [*megas logothetes*]" in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and a bare description in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ).[1080] Third, and most importantly, an extended passage in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), relating Akropolites' reasoning for his appointment to this office, is entirely excised from the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ):

> **(α)** τοῦτο δέ, ὡς οἶμαι, πεποίηκεν, ἵνα τῇ ἐξ αὐτοῦ μακροτέρᾳ ἀποδημίᾳ εἰς λήθην ὧν ἐπεπόνθειν γενοίμην. οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶδέ με πώποτε μετὰ τὰς πληγὰς ἐλευθεριάσαντα καὶ λόγοις χαροπωτέροις ὡς εἰώθειν πρὸς αὐτὸν χρήσασθαι. ἵνα γοῦν τῇ χρονίῳ ταύτῃ διατριβῇ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ σκυθρωπότης διαλυθείη μοι, πέπραχε τοῦτο, τάχα δὲ καὶ ὡς δυσχεραίνων ἦν τὴν ξυναυλίαν μου βαρυνόμενος· προσέκρουον γὰρ αὐτῷ πολλάκις ἐφ' οἷς ἤδειν οὐ κατὰ λόγον οὐδὲ

[1077] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.4 (§66); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 320, n. 2.
[1078] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 123.5-6 (§60); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 297.
[1079] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9159.
[1080] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.8; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.20 (§66), "πάντων προϊστασθαι [placed above all of them]"; Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 528.28-529.9; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.11-20 (§62); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9155-66.

> κατὰ δίκαιον διαπράττεσθαι θέλοντα.[1081] [This, I think, he did so that through long absence from him I might forget what I had suffered. For, after the beating, he never saw me speak freely to him and with cheerful words, as I had been accustomed. He did this so that the sullenness of my spirit might be dissolved by the long passing of time but perhaps he was also annoyed, wearying in my company; for I often came into friction with him because I knew that he was not disposed to act either reasonably or justly.][1082]

Akropolites' beating on Theodore's orders, earlier in the text (§63), is presented as the cause of his appointment.[1083] However, this explanation makes no sense in the *Chronike historia* (γ), *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), or *Synopsis chronike* (β), where this earlier passage (§63) is either excised or dramatically deemphasised.[1084] Throughout the hypertexts Akropolites (and his life) are almost entirely excised, despite Akropolites' centrality to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1085] Although Macrides has demonstrated how fundamental Akropolites' self-fashioning is to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), modern historians have not considered the impact of such a radical restructuring of the story of the thirteenth-century past in these hypertexts. In contrast, Akropolites' partial excision from the hypertexts reverberates throughout the texts, most obviously (but not exclusively) when Akropolites features as a character in action (as in this case study (§66-72)).[1086]

In short, the lists found in these four texts demonstrate the instability of modern historians' most basic 'factual' building-blocks. However, it is upon these unstable building-blocks that modern historians have sought to (re)construct the past. In one of the uses to which this passage has been put in modern historiography, this instability intersects with problems generated by ignoring the narrative context in which these 'facts' are embedded. For example, the list of commanders appointed by Theodore constitutes an intratextual allusion to an earlier passage (§46), in which the previous *basileus*, John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes, upon leaving for the East from Thessaloniki, appointed Andronikos Palaiologos and Michael

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[1081] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.14-22 (§66).
[1082] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 319.
[1083] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 127.24-132.29 (§63).
[1084] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 525.6-526.13.
[1085] The three most extensive passages relating to the life of Akropolites, narrated in his voice, are excised in all three hypertexts: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 46.12-47.3 (§29), 49.6-50.8 (§32), 62.17-64.5 (§39).
[1086] See below 4.11.

Komnenos-Palaiologos as commanders in the West.[1087] The negative characterisations of the men appointed by Theodore (§66), which follow, invert the encomiastic descriptions of the Palaiologoi (§46), while the collapse of Laskarid Makedonia (§66) inverts the stable and uneventful command of the Palaiologoi (§46).[1088] However, these two passages have been used to 'reconstruct' the administrative structures of Laskarid Makedonia, without their textual relationship being considered as intrinsic to that 'evidence'.[1089] Angold is sceptical of the capacity for the "narrative" *Chronike syngraphe* (α) to help reconstruct Laskarid administrative structures.[1090] However, he primarily takes issue not with the epistemological value of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) 'evidence', but with its imprecision. Consequently, from these two passages, Angold argues that Akropolites was the viceroy, in the western Laskarid territories.[1091] Reading §66 alongside §46, he suggests that Akropolites held the same position that Andronikos Palaiologos, the *megas domestikos*, and his successor Theodore Philes did during the reign of John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes.[1092] To reconstruct a formal office Angold invents the term viceroy, because Palaiologos, Philes, and Akropolites all held different titles, constructs the so-called viceroy's "very wide powers" from descriptions of what these three characters do in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), and assumes the office was based in Thessaloniki, although the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) explicitly states that Michael Laskaris, not Akropolites was in charge there.[1093] However, alongside these problematic assumptions, he ignores the relationship between the two passages in the text and their context within the pro-Palaiologan and anti-Laskarid discourse of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). The similarities in the two passages cannot be read as evidence of administrative structures, because the meaning with which they are endowed within the text is not related to their

[1087] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 83.15-84.12 (§46).
[1088] This is in keeping with the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) more ambivalent position regarding John.
[1089] Note that only the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and not the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), or *Chronike historia* (γ) are used as 'evidence' by Angold.
[1090] Angold, *Government*, 288-9.
[1091] Angold, *Government*, 289, "No very clear picture of administration in the Empire's European territories emerges. Virtually nothing is known about how Thrace was organized. Didymoteichos rather than Adrianople appears to have been the administrative centre. More is known about Macedonia. It is a confusing picture. This may be because it derives from the narrative of George Akropolites' history; and there are virtually no documentary sources which might have made the picture more precise."
[1092] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 83.15-84.22 (§46).
[1093] Angold, *Government*, 289; Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.2-5 (§66).

official position, but the relationship between the two stories. It should be noted that, although Angold only referenced the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the relationship between these two passages of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is radically transformed in the *Chronike historia* (γ), *Synopsis chronike* (β), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), because both the encomiastic and critical characterisations of these characters are either excised or heavily concised.[1094]

Whether a transformation like that of Michael into Manuel is intentional or the result of some mechanical scribal error, it seems that who exactly performed an action, what their title was, and so on is not so vital to these texts that a degree of uncertainty is intolerable. Certainty is required only by modern historians seeking to reconstruct the 'one true' thirteenth-century past. The textual record, however, is uncertain and multiple, just like Michael/Manuel Laskaris. When instrumentalised by modern historians, even when the textual depth offered by this comparative reading is ignored, these texts refuse to 'reconstruct' that which modern historians desire. The modern historiographical treatment of the 'evidence' from this passage further demonstrates how those foundational multiplicities intersect with narrative context to frustrate the reconstructive attempts of modern historiography.

4.9 – Constructing space and time/chronology (§66-9)

In the preceding sub-chapter, I demonstrated that actions, characters, and their meanings are revealed to be uncertain, when the 'evidence' of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is tested against the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ). In this sub-chapter, I expand my destabilising reading to include more fundamental elements of the narratives presented in both the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and the modern historiography, namely space and time/chronology.

A comparative reading of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) itinerary of Akropolites' travels around the settlements and territories allocated to him by Theodore (§67) offers a useful starting point for the destabilisation of space (figure 4θ).[1095] The *Synopsis chronike* (β)

[1094] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 497.17-28; Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 249.15-250.3 (§46); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 8586-603. On the omission in *Synopsis chronike* (β) see Macrides, *Akropolites*, 242, n. 2.
[1095] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 139.23-140.20 (§67).

Figure 4θ – Comparative chart of Akropolites' itinerary (§67)[1096]				
Text	***Chronike syngraphe* (α)**	***Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)**	***Chronike historia* (γ)**	***Synopsis chronike* (β)**
Itinerary	Thessaloniki	-	-	Thessaloniki
	Berroia	-	Berroia	Berroia
	Servia	-	The fortress of the Servians	Servia
	Kastoria	-	Kastoria	Kastoria
	Ochrid	-	Ochrid	Ochrid
	Albanon	-	Albanon	Albanon
	Dyrrachion	-	Epidamnos	Dyrrachion
	Chounavia	Chounavia	Chounavia	Chounavia (part of Albanon)
	Kake Petra	Kake Petra	-	Kake Petra
	Mati	Mati	Mati	Mati
	Debre	Debre	Kytzavis	Debre
	Kytzavis	Kytzavis	Debre (and little towns)	Kytzavis
	Prilep	Prilep	Prilep	Prilep

maintains the full list of locations, and even slightly extends the geographical information included by clarifying that Chounavia is a part of Albanon, although generally the passage is made concise by the provision of less other detail about Akropolites' actions in each place.[1097] In contrast, the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) excises more than half the locations as well as all of Akropolites' actions, making the text a sentence-long list.[1098] In the *Chronike historia* (γ), two locations are excised (along with most of Akropolites' actions), two others are slightly transformed, by the description of the fortress of the Servians and the use of the classical name of Dyrrachion, and a further two are reordered.[1099] Each of these narratives of Akropolites' itinerary construct an alternative geographical space for action. Even the similar space presented in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) is subtly transformed. Although another useful example of indeterminacy between texts, this itinerary is perhaps more useful for revealing the partiality of all four textual presentations of space. No itinerary can record

[1096] Those locations which differ from the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) have been underlined.
[1097] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.23; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 322-3, n. 6; 8.
[1098] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.21-3 (§67-8). Note that because of the relationship in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) between sections corresponding to §67 and §68, this list partially merges with the list of Epirot conquests corresponding to §68 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).
[1099] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 140.4; 140.7 (§67); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9171, 9174, 9177. These transformations cannot be dismissed as simply the product of versification, since additional verses could have been included.

everything. At some point, a value judgement has to be made about what is worthy of inclusion. Whether the line is drawn at every settlement, every house, or by some other equally arbitrary marker, something must be excluded. The space in which characters act out the thirteenth-century Byzantine past can only ever be the partial product of a textual exercise of power. The itinerary's principal role within the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) appears to be to deflect blame from Akropolites, who is presented as energetic and dutiful, rather than to 'represent' the landscape. However, it is for the latter that modern historians depend upon the text.[1100]

As with the spaces they construct, texts require less 'absolute' temporal and chronological signposting than modern historians. The basic chronological framework of modern historiography is provided by the (often somewhat erratic) ordering of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), that is its relative chronology.[1101] However, several absolute dates appear in passages of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) corresponding to §66 and §67 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which modern historians have sought to 'add' to the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) mostly relative temporal markers.[1102] The *Synopsis chronike* (β) gives an absolute date at the end of §66, noting when Theodore left Thessaloniki for the East and where the papal envoys went after being dismissed by Akropolites, at the start of §67 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α):

> **(β)** Οὕτω μὲν τῆς ὁδοῦ ἥψατο κατὰ τὴν εἰκοστὴν τρίτην τοῦ ὀκτοβρίου μηνός.[1103]
> [Thus he began his journey on the 23rd of the month of October.]
>
> **(β)** …οἵ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα ἦλθον ἔτι ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη ποιοῦντα τὰς διατριβὰς.[1104]
> […who went to the *basileus* [who was] still in Thessaloniki making delays].

In a passage corresponding to §69 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the *Synopsis chronike* (β) also states that Theodore crossed the Hellespont to the east in early December and celebrated

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[1100] See above 0.3.

[1101] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 42-3.

[1102] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 319, n. 1; Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 9-10.

[1103] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.9-10.

[1104] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.14-5. Not included in Heisenberg's *additamenta*. On what he calls the *disputatio* of 1256 and for full bibliography, see J. Brubaker, *Religion and Diplomacy: The Role of the Disputatio in Byzantine-Latin Relations after 1204* (Doctoral Thesis for the University of Birmingham, 2016), 349-53; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 321-2, n. 3. Note that Brubaker, Macrides, and most other scholars working on these church negotiations have thus far only used the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), not the *Synopsis chronike* (β). Nicol cites the *Synopsis chronike* (β), but does not recognise that it differs in that regard. See also Miller, 'Recovery', 505, n. 3.

Christmas after this, opposite Surroia.[1105] All three of these notes augment the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which only has one absolute date in the corresponding passages. This appears at the end of §67 and states that Akropolites' journey around Makedonia took three months, from December to February:[1106]

> **(α)** ταύτην γοῦν τὴν πορείαν τὴν ἐκ Θεσσαλονίκης μέχρι καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Πριλάπου διὰ τριῶν πεποίηκα τῶν μηνῶν χειμῶνος ὥρᾳ· Δεκέβριος γὰρ ἦν ὁπότε τῆς Βερροίας ἐξώρμων, καὶ τὸ Φεβρουαρίου τέλος ἐπὶ τὸν Πρίλαπον εἶχέ με.[1107] [This journey from Thessalonike to Prilep itself I made in three months in the winter season; for it was December when I set out from Berroia and at the end of February I was at Prilep.][1108]

Figure 4ι – Chronological 'information' (§66-8)		
Action	**Date**	**Text**
Theodore leaves for the East	23rd October	*Synopsis chronike* (β)
Theodore crosses the Hellespont	beginning of December	*Synopsis chronike* (β)
Theodore celebrates Christmas opposite Surroia	25th December	*Synopsis chronike* (β)
Akropolites starts tour of Makedonia	end of December	*Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Synopsis chronike* (β)
Papal envoys go to Theodore in Thessaloniki	after start of Akropolites' tour	*Synopsis chronike* (β)
Akropolites finishes tour of Makedonia	end of February	*Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Synopsis chronike* (β)

These three temporal statements have been incorporated into the historical narrative about what happened in this period (figure 4ι).[1109] However, when the temporal statements from the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Synopsis chronike* (β) are elided together the chronology breaks down.[1110] The papal envoys are supposed to have gone to Theodore in Thessaloniki after being dismissed by Akropolites from Berroia. However, since Theodore had both left Thessaloniki and even crossed the Hellespont before Akropolites even started his journey in late December, they cannot have gone to Theodore in Thessaloniki. Although the temporal statements in both the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Synopsis chronike* (β) are internally

[1105] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 530.12-3.
[1106] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.14-5.
[1107] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 140.16-20 (§67).
[1108] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 321.
[1109] Macrides, *Akropolites*, esp. 319, n. 1, 321, n. 1.
[1110] In contrast, neither the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) nor the *Chronike historia* (γ) mention any chronological marker.

consistent, when combined, as they are in modern scholarship, they become inconsistent. This example, demonstrates how problematic the process by which historians stack texts to generate a single past can be. Such text stacking has consequences, since the absolute dates derived from it have been used to date other actions, such as the Mongol invasion (§65) presented as the cause of Theodore's departure for the East (§66).[1111]

Just as the modern historian is left with multiple landscapes, so too she is left with multiple chronologies, which refuse to be mapped either onto each other or the past. However, these problems, like all the uncertainties of these texts, are intertwined. For example, the instability of space and time collide in the comparative reading of §69 (and the corresponding passages) in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), and *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1112] The *Chronike syngraphe* (α) briefly narrates Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris' travel to the East and meeting with the Seljuk sultan. This passage links into various wider discourses in the text, but the principal function within the wider story is the reintroduction of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, who will dominate the subsequent action.[1113] Michael's reintroduction is made even more dominant in the corresponding passage of the *Chronike historia* (γ), by virtue of being the only text not excised.[1114] In contrast to the massive excision of the *Chronike historia* (γ), the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is slightly reduced by fairly even concision (from twenty-eight to thirteen lines) and the *Synopsis chronike* (β) is radically extended (to thirty-seven lines).[1115] Of these transformations, modern historians have been most interested in the 'extra data' offered by the *Synopsis chronike* (β):

> Skout., who accompanied the emperor on his return to the east…gives more precision to the chronology of events (see also §69.1), the movements of the emperor

[1111] Korobeinikov, *Turks*, 197, "We know that this campaign took place during the spring of 1257; thus the Mongol threat should be dated to the same time." Referencing the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and Nicol, *Despotate*, 161-3. Neither reference the *Synopsis chronike* (β).
[1112] Note that this passage is totally excised from the *Chronike historia* (γ).
[1113] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 144.20-3 (§69); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 326. See below 4.12.
[1114] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9201-4. This is consistent with the excision of eastern affairs throughout the text. Note that in the editions of the *Chronike historia* (γ) and *Synopsis chronike* (β), Michael's reintroduction is attached to the narrative corresponding to §70, rather than §69. Note also that Gardner and Meliarakes exclusively follow the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which they essentially paraphrase: Gardner, *Lascarids*, 222-5; Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία*, 463-5.
[1115] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.26-263.12 (§69), esp. 263.11-2 (§69); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 530.12-531.17. Note that this extension is only partly included in Heisenberg's *additamenta*: Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 294.17-295.12 (§47), 295.13-5 (§48).

and army in Asia Minor (see §66.1, §69.4), and the exchange of favours between the sultan and the emperor (see §69.7).[1116]

In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) only three locations are mentioned, while in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) this is increased to ten (figure 4κ). The extended itinerary (within the relative chronology of the texts) functions to slow action down, transforming the hasty and disorganised rush of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) into a steady, controlled, and almost ritualised procession, in which movement is interspersed with the celebration of Christ's birth and then Epiphany.[1117] The transformation of Theodore's movement is paralleled by the inversion of the chaotic arrival of the sultan, depicted in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), into the Sultan's calm arrival, "φιλοφρόνως καὶ ἀσμένως [in a friendly manner and gladly]", in the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1118]

Figure 4κ – Theodore's itinerary (§69)	
***Chronike syngraphe* (α) *and Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ)**	***Synopsis chronike* (β)**
The Hellespont	The Hellespont
The region of Lydia	The region of Lydia
-	A place opposite Surroia
-	Kalamnos
-	Kavallares
-	Tripolis
-	Appolonia
-	Magnesia
Sardis	Sardis
-	The plain of Xleras

The *Synopsis chronike* (β) provides more 'details' than the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), but it does not offer a 'more precise' picture of the same action. Instead, it constructs a different and irreconcilable alternative set of actions, through the transformation of the spatial and temporal pace of the narrative. In short, the multiple landscapes, both physical and temporal, constructed by the various texts that appear to describe 'the same happenings', refuse to collapse into the 'same' (singular) past at the modern historian's bidding.

[1116] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 326.
[1117] Anon., *Synopsis chronike* 530.13-4, 530.21-2; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 294.18-9, 295.3-4 (§47).
[1118] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 143.25-7-144.2 (§69); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 326; Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 530.24-5; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 295.7 (§47).

4.10 – Gendered textualisation (§68)

Having destabilised some of the basic building-blocks of modern historiographical (re)constructions of the past (actions, people, space, time *etc.*), I now demonstrate that these individually uncertain elements are inextricable from their narrative and ideological contexts. In short, there is no viable mechanism for separating *littérarité* from already uncertain 'facts'.[1119] In this sub-chapter, I show that the beginning of §68 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and the corresponding passages of the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ) are not only gendered, but that this gendering cannot be divorced from what is presented as happening.

In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), Akropolites ended his journey (of §67) in Prilep, where he learnt that Constantine Chabaron, the commander of *Albanon*, had defected to Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, the Epirot ruler:

> **(α)** Ἐκεῖσε γοῦν ἀφιγμένου μου φήμη πάμπαν δεινὴ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἐπεισέφρησε. τὰ δὲ τῆς φήμης, ὅτιπερ ὁ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τοῦ Ἀλβάνου πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως λαβὼν ὁ Χαβάρων Κωνσταντῖνος πρὸς τοῦ δεσπότου Μιχαὴλ ἑάλω μηχαναῖς τῆς γυναικαδέλφης αὐτοῦ Μαρίας, ἥτις προεῖχε μὲν ἄνδρα Σφραντζῆν τοὐπίκλην, τότε δὲ ὑπῆρχε χήρα· Δόλοις γὰρ αὕτη τὸν Χαβάρωνα μετελθοῦσα καὶ γράμμασιν ἐρωτικοῖς δελεάσασα τούτου τὸ φρόνημα—κουφότερος γὰρ οὗτος περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τυγχάνων ἦν, εἰ καὶ ἄλλως καλὸς ἐτύγχανε στρατιώτης—ταῖς πάγαις ταύτης ἁλώσιμος ἐγεγόνει. τοὐντεῦθεν εἰς ἀποστασίαν φανερὰν ὁ Μιχαὴλ ἐξωρμήκει.[1120] [When I arrived there an altogether terrible report came to my ears. The report was that Constantine Chabaron, who had received the governorship of Albanon from the emperor, was won over to the side of the despot Michael through the contrivances of Michael's wife's sister, Maria. She had had a husband, Sphrantzes by name, but she was a widow at the time. She pursued Chabaron with wiles and baited his mind with love letters—he was silly in such matters even though otherwise a good soldier—and he was caught in her snares. From that point on, Michael embarked on a course of open rebellion.][1121]

Chabaron's change of allegiance is described and explained through his seduction by Maria and a causal relationship is constructed between the pair's actions and the Epirot (and Serbian) invasion of Makedonia.[1122] The basic story of Chabaron's change of allegiance

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[1119] See above 0.3.

[1120] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 140.21-141.6 (§68).

[1121] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 323.

[1122] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 140.21-141.5-7 (§68). The presence of the Serbians is mentioned here, but only explained later: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 142.4-5 (§68), 145.16-20 (§70).

consists of a highly gendered *topos*, in which a hypersexualised woman seduces a man and tempts him into improper action. It is the product of a normative discourse relating to gender in Byzantium that limited the kinds of roles in which women were portrayed in texts:[1123]

> The narrative sources are replete with *topoi* when they treat the subject of women, thereby obscuring or distorting reality.[1124]
>
> On pourrait attribuer un caractère "phallocratique" à la société byzantine en général, lié à l'opinion publique défavorable à l'égard de la femme[1125] [One could attribute a "phallocratic" character to Byzantine society in general, linked to the unfavourable public opinion towards women]

The passage draws on the biblical story of the fall of man, which contemporary exegetes had constructed from the genesis narrative, constructing Eve as the ultimate sinful temptress.[1126] However, Maria is not just another Eve, but a pastiche of negative portrayals of women, not least because of her widowhood.[1127] The stories of Delilah and Jael in the *Septuagint*, offer relevant if not precisely analogous portrayals of women tricking male military commanders.[1128] Similarly, the story of Clytemnestra's ensnarement of her husband

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[1123] In modern terms, thirteenth-century Byzantine society was a highly patriarchal and structurally misogynist. This has been observed in a Byzantine context from the 1980s: L. Garland, 'The Life and Ideology of Byzantine Women: A Further Note on Conventions of Behaviour and Social Reality as Reflected in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Historical Sources', *Byzantion* 58 (1988), 361-93; C. Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender', *BMGS* 9 (1984-5), 55-94; D. Smythe, 'Women as Outsiders', in L. James (ed.), *Women, Men, and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (London, 1997), 149-67.

[1124] A. Laiou, 'The Role of Women in Byzantine Society', *JÖB* 31 (1981), 233. See also L. James, 'The Role of Women', in E. Jeffreys, *et al.* (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 643-51.

[1125] C. Kyrris, 'Le rôle de la femme dans la société byzantine particulièrement pendant les derniers siècles', *JÖB* 32 (1982), 463.

[1126] Gen. 3:1-24. For competing readings, see J. Higgins, 'The Myth of Eve: The Temptress', *JAAR* 44 (1976), 639-47; J. Abraham, *Eve: Accused or Acquitted? An Analysis of Feminist Readings of the Creation Narrative Texts in Genesis 1-3* (Bletchley, 2002); S. Harvey, 'Women in Early Byzantine Hagiography: Reversing the Story', in L. Coon, *et al.* (eds.), *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity* (Charlottesville, 1990), 36-59; H. Graef, 'The Theme of the Second Eve in Some Byzantine Sermons on the Assumption', in F. Cross (ed.), *Papers Presented to the Fourth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1963* (Berlin, 1966), 224-30.

[1127] I do not claim that it is 'unoriginal', merely that it speaks to a common language of misogynistic portrayals of women. On widowhood see J. Herrin and A. Kazhdan, 'Widows', in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), vol. 3, 2195-6.

[1128] Judg. 5; 13-6. In contrast see the positive depiction of Judith: Jdt. 1-16, esp. 13.

Agamemnon in the bath is illustrative of a range of Classical exempla.[1129] The stories of Haplorrabdes' daughter and the warrior virgin Maximo in the twelfth-century Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akrites*, offer illustrative examples from Byzantine literature of the fate of women who transgress prescribed gender roles and are consequently judged and punished for their non-conformity.[1130] Furthermore, in the thirteenth-century writings of the monks Theognostos and Neophytos the Recluse we see programmatic statements which illustrate near-contemporary late-Byzantine attitudes towards women.[1131] No examples, map directly onto the story of Chabaron's seduction. However, it can be placed within the normative discourse on gender found in Biblical, Classical, and Byzantine literature. Within this context, simply by entering the male domain of politics and exercising a modicum of power over a man, Maria transgresses patriarchally constructed gender roles. In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), this gendered story is presented as both cause and part of large-scale military action.[1132] Such a heavily gendered description cannot be used to 'reconstruct' 'what happened' without coupling naïve credulity with crude empiricism.[1133] There is no point where the gendering stops and military-political 'history' begins. However, this basic problem is compounded by this passage's situation within both the pro-Nikaian and pro-Palaiologan/anti-Laskarid discourses central to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).

[1129] Aeschylus, *Clytemnestra*, 1331-576. More generally see C. Vasillopulos, 'Gendered Justice: Tragedy and the Revision of the Feminine', *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 2 (2009), 73-96.

[1130] E. Jeffreys (ed. and trans.), *Digenis Akritis: the Grottaferrata and Escorial Versions* (Cambridge, 1998), 174.375-200.805 (§6); C. Galatariotou, 'Structural Oppositions in the Grottaferrata *Digenes Akrites*', *BMGS* 11 (1987), 29-68, esp. 59-66; A. Laiou, 'Sex, Consent, and Coercion in Byzantium' in A. Laiou (ed.), *Consent and Coersion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies* (Washington DC, 1993), esp. 198-217.

[1131] J. Munitiz (ed.), *Theognosti Thesaurus* (Turnhout, 1979), 187-96 (§18); J. Munitiz (trans.), *Theognostos Treasury: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Turnhout, 2013), 231-40 (§18); C. Galatariotou, *The Making of a Saint: The Life, Times and Sanctification of Neophytos the Recluse* (Cambridge, 2002); Galatariotou, 'Holy'; J. Munitiz, 'A "Wicked Woman" in the 13th Century', *JÖB* 32 (1982), 529-37, esp. 531, "He [Nikephoros Blemmydes] is reproaching the Marchesina with being not only wicked, but also a woman; automatically her female nature has become an added reason for criticism"; Angelov, *Ideology*, 187.

[1132] Note this military action is presented as temporally subsequent to the story of Chabaron's seduction: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 141.5 (§68), "τοὐντεῦθεν"; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9184, "τηνικαῦτα"; Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 530.4, "ἐντεῦθεν". Note that elsewhere in the text the similar changes of allegiance of Theodore Petraliphas and Goulamos or the inhabitants of Prielp are not gendered: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 90.17-24-91.1-17 (§49), 151.3-13 (§72).

[1133] Despite this, see below 4.10.

Maria appears in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) only in this passage. Her character is consequently both ephemeral and peripheral to the main narrative. Despite exercising too much (hypersexualised) agency for Byzantine sensibilities, she remains fundamentally a foil for other (male) characters, to whom she is subordinated, whether her brother-in-law, her dead husband, or Chabaron. Indeed, her passivity is illustrated by her introduction to the narrative, where her relationship to Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas precedes even her name "τῆς γυναικαδέλφης αὐτοῦ Μαρίας [his sister-in-law Maria]".[1134] Alongside her role in moving the narrative forward, Maria functions as a vector for the characterisation and critique of Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas and (through his anthropomorphic embodiment of the polity and people) of the Epirots in general.[1135] Thus Maria's characterisation extends the anti-Epirot discourse of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which presents the Epirots as underhand, deviant, effeminate, and treacherous, and meshes with the consistent portrayal of Michael as ἀποστάτης (rebel/apostate) and ἀντάρτης (rebel/renegade).[1136] This gendered element of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) anti-Epirot discourse also extends the equation of the Epirots with the barbarous and thus explicitly non-Roman Bulgarians, as discussed above regarding the so-called battle of Klokotnitsa.[1137] The story of the Bulgarian ruler John Asan's excessive love for his wife Eirene, earlier in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) (§38), which draws on an allusion to Anthony and Cleopatra, similarly equates sexual weakness with a lack of *Romanitas*.[1138] Furthermore, the narrative context of this passage almost immediately before a critique of Michael's Serbian allies also extends the barbarous equivalence of the Epirots beyond the Bulgarians to include the treacherous Serbians, with whom they collaborated.[1139]

[1134] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 140.25 (§68). This relationship is maintained and equally prominent in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and the *Chronike historia* (γ), which suggests its importance to the narrative was understood by Akropolites' readers.
[1135] See above 3.
[1136] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 94-7. See above 1.4.
[1137] See above 2.5.
[1138] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 61.9-14 (§38); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 209, n. 10.
[1139] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.16-20 (§70).

The story of seduction also reflects negatively on Chabaron, who is presented as foolish and gullible, although he escapes charges of treachery, thanks to the presentation of Maria.[1140] However, as with Maria, Chabaron's actions function as a vector for the characterisation of another, Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, who was responsible for his appointment and is also otherwise associated with him in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1141] Together with Michael and Manuel Laskaris and several characterisations in the following sections (§70-1), Chabaron's negative characterisation critiques Theodore, feeding into a negative commentary on the sexual weakness of the Laskarid rulers. This is most visible in the invective elements of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) summaries of both Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris and John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes' lives, where Theodore's "sexual pleasures" garner a brief critical aside and John's extramarital affair with the Latin lady-in-waiting of his wife, Marchesina, is the topic of an extended digression.[1142]

The story of Chabaron's seduction in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) explains and describes military action and critiques Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas and Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris. Even the strictest empiricist must acknowledge the consequent limitations for the use of this text in modern reconstructive projects, aimed at discovering 'what happened' in Makedonia in 1256/7. Yet, regardless of this story's gendered, generic, and invective quality, modern historians have never doubted its fundamental historicity.[1143]

[1140] Chabaron's sympathetic treatment in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), seems to be related to his close association with Akropolites, who shared his imprisonment in Epiros after his own capture. Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 164.16-9 (§79).

[1141] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 164.16-9 (§79).

[1142] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 32.2-3 (§18), 103.23-104.10 (§52). Macrides notes that this sexual weakness is contrasted with military valour: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 56. Note that the *Synopsis chronike* (β) includes one of its longest and most obvious divergences here: Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 535.5-536.12; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 296.19-298.10 (§52). See Macrides, *Akropolites*, 336. Marchesina features regularly in both Nikephoros Blemmydes' *Diegesis merike* and so-called open letter: J. Munitiz (ed.), *Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia sive Curriculum Vitae necnon Epistula Universalior* (Turnhout, 1984), 35-6 (I, §70-2), 67 (II, §49), 91-4 (Appendix 1, §1-6); J. Munitiz, *A Partial Account; Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Louvain, 1988), 83-5, 118-9, 139-43; J. Munitiz, 'Wicked', 529–37; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 49. See also the relish with which Gibbon described Theodore's marital infidelity: Gibbon, *Decline*, vol. 11, 57.

[1143] Most importantly, Macrides accepts the basic historicity of the story and characterisation of Maria, noting that "[j]udging from her behaviour towards Chabaron…she appears to have been a willing agent of Michael II": Macrides, *Akropolites*, 325, n. 2.

The story has been incorporated uncritically into the modern Nikaian narrative of 'what happened', more or less paraphrasing the *Chronike syngraphe* (α):

> …Constantin Chabaron, brave guerrier, et capable de résister à une armée entière, mais non pas à une belle femme.[1144] [Constantine Chabaron, a brave soldier, and capable of resisting an entire army, but not a beautiful woman.]
>
> News came that a powerful magnate in those parts, Constantine Chabaron, had been induced by a sister-in-law of Michael the Despot to rise in revolt. This lady must have been of the Petraliphas family – a sister of Saint Theodora, possessing her persuasive arts without her Christian principles.[1145]
>
> Pushing on now to Pelagonia, Acropolites learned that Constantine Chabaron, the military governor of Elbasan, had been caught in a trap set by the Despot Michael II of Epirus with the aid of his sister-in-law, Maria Petraliphas, with whom Constantine had fancied he was embarking upon a love affair.[1146]
>
> Chabaron was a good soldier but given to vanity. He was beguiled by the charms and ensnared by the love-letters of Maria Petraliphas, Theodora's sister.[1147]

In contrast to the naïve acceptance of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) narrative as 'fact', Fine's inventive attempt to historicise and rationalise the story is equally problematic.

> Michael's resulting anger [over the terms of the marriage alliance, see §65] found relief in the spring of 1257 when the tribal chiefs of Albania, stirred up and co-ordinated by Epirote agents, rose up against Nic[a]ea.[1148]

In Fine's reading, Maria becomes (plural) "Epirote agents" and a story, replete with gendered *topoi* and invective, is transformed into a military operation.[1149] However, neither naïve acceptance nor historicising invention can force this text to reconstruct the thirteenth-century past. Not least because all these descriptions still, to a greater or lesser extent, subordinate action to the interactions of elite individuals, who are mostly male and rulers.[1150]

[1144] Beau, *Histoire*, vol. 10, 244-5. Since historiographical approaches to this passage have clearly barely changed since 1820, despite its age, this reference remains illustrative. See above 1.3.
[1145] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 226. However, in contrast to Gardner's claim, nowhere is Chabaron associated with Albanon before his appointment. In fact, he is specifically attested as having grown up with Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris (presumably not in Albanon): Macrides, *Akropolites*, 320-1, n. 8.
[1146] Setton, *Papacy*, 74.
[1147] Nicol, *Despotate*, 162.
[1148] Fine, *Late*, 160.
[1149] Nicol also historicises, replacing the seduction with the capture of Dyrrachion as the cause of the invasion: Nicol, *Despotate*, 161-2. See also Miller, 'Recovery', 504.
[1150] See above 3.3.

None of the modern historiography, cited above, references the corresponding passages in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ), although the former presents almost as much 'detail' and the latter expands the narrative of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1151] Both the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ) also present the seduction as the cause (or, at least, the prerequisite) for the invasion of Makedonia. However, when stripped from the anti-Epirot/pro-Nikaian and the anti-Laskarid/pro-Palaiologan discourses, which contextualise the characterisations of Maria and Chabaron, the critiques that lend them meaning in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) either weaken or totally dissipate.[1152] Most notably, in both the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ) not only are the sexual weaknesses of Theodore I Komnenos-Laskaris and John Komnenos-Doukas-Vatatzes either excised or replaced with glowing eulogies, but also the link between Chabaron and Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris is lessened.[1153]

This case study offers yet another example of the transformation of the meaning of similar texts, when the dominant discourses of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) are either weakened or inverted. However, beyond these simplistic binaries of pro- or anti-Laskarid, this passage demonstrates how inextricable *littérarité* (here in the form of gendered discourse) is from the 'evidence' for 'what happened'. Maria's story is presented in the *Chronike historia* (γ) and *Synopsis chronike* (β), although much else is excised, because the Epirot invasion simply does

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[1151] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 529.30-530.5; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9179-88. The story of Chabaron's seduction is *excised* from the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ). See below 4.10. The *Chronike historia* (γ), unlike the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), locates the seduction in Kanina: Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9179-85, "ἔνθα διατρίβοντι κατ' ἄστυ τόδε / δυσάγγελος φήμη τις ἦκεν ἀθρόον / ὅτι περ ἄλοὺς Χαβάρων Κωνσταντῖνος / ἐν καστελλίῳ Κανίνων πρὸς Μαρίας / γυναικαδέλφης Μιχαὴλ τοῦ δεσπότου, / ἐρωτοδέσμαις ἀπατηθεὶς καὶ γάμῳ, / εἱρκτὴν κατακέκριτο κλοιὰ καὶ πέδας· [While he was remaining there in that city / suddenly some evil news came to him / that Constantine Chabaron having been caught / in the fortress of Kanina by Maria / the sister of the wife of the despot Michael / having been deceived with bands-of-love and with marriage, / he had been condemned to prison, [in] fetters and shackles.]" For other material relating to Maria and Kanina see P. Alexander, 'A Chrysobull of the Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus in Favor of the See of Kanina in Albania', *Byzantion* 15 (1940-1), 167-207; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 324-5, n. 2.

[1152] For the weakening/excision of the anti-Epirot discourse see the story of Asan and Eirene: Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 484.24-6; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 209, n. 10; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 8371-7.

[1153] These are two of the longest and most obvious divergences from the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) in the *Synopsis chronike* (β): Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 466.228-467.26, 506.6-509.11; Heisenberg, *Acropolitae*, vol. 1, 281.12-281.23 (§20), 284.17-288.7 (§33); Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 7856-75, 8897-929. On the weakening of the relationship see Anon. *Synopsis chronike*, 541.24-31; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9388-92. See below 4.12. See also Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 268.7-16 (§79).

not make sense without it.[1154] Indeed, in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), from which the story of Chabaron's seduction is entirely excised, it is grammatically unclear who is invading Makedonia or why.[1155] The story of Chabaron's seduction is thus demonstrated to be more than a literary or rhetorical flourish from which 'what happened' can be extracted, but the very substance of what these texts say happened.

4.11 – The siege(s) of Prilep (§68 and §72)

Within the wider narrative of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the main consequence of Chabaron's seduction is the Epirot and Serbian invasion of Nikaian-held Makedonia, which resulted, first, in a failed siege (collection of assaults) on Prilep (§68) and, later, in the settlement's siege and capture (§72).[1156] The contrasting presentations of the siege and capture of Prilep demonstrates the degree to which action is moulded by the narrative's organisation, because although two separate sieges are presented in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), these two events are collapsed into one, in the corresponding passages of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Synopsis chronike* (β).

In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the whole of §68, after the seduction narrative, focuses on the character of George Akropolites, in whose voice the passage is narrated.[1157] The narrative follows Akropolites as he first travelled to Albanon in an attempt to stifle the rebellion and was then forced to retreat to Prilep.[1158] As Akropolites retreated, the places he left (which are carefully named) were captured by the Epirots, until only Prilep was left, where Akropolites had taken refuge, like 'a ship reaching safe harbour'.[1159] There follows a short description of an unsuccessful assault on Prilep by the Epirots, in which military action is described in terms of elite men doing things, primarily the Epirot leader Michael, called 'the bastard' throughout the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1160] Although the whole passage is ostensibly about military action, the actions described are more important to the narrative for their

[1154] See below 4.11.
[1155] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.23-5 (§67-8). The hanging third person plural verb (κατέλαβον) is left without an explicit subject.
[1156] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 141.7-142.15 (§68).
[1157] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 141.14-18 (§68).
[1158] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 142.15-143.6 (§68).
[1159] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 143.5-6 (§68); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 324.
[1160] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 143.7-22 (§68).

prefiguration of the capture of Prilep, which will come in §72. Details that become significant in the later description of the settlement's capture, such as the strong defences and the treacherous inhabitants are (quite heavy-handedly) introduced and signposted.[1161] Finally, after the failed assault, the fate of Prilep and Akropolites is left dramatically unresolved and the audience in suspense, while the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) narrates a considerable amount of other military action (§69-71):[1162]

> **(α)** τῷ τότε μὲν οὖν ἀπεκρούσθη, καὶ τὸν στρατὸν αὐτοῦ λαβὼν ἐπανέζευξε καὶ τοῖς γύρωθεν τόποις περιεπόλευεν, ἡμεῖς δ' ἐγκεκλεισμένοι τῷ τοῦ Πριλάπου ἄστει καὶ ὡς ἐν εἱρκτῇ καθειργμένοι γεγόναμεν. καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐν ἡμῖν οὕτω ξυνέβη, ὁ δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας λόγος τῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ἕω γεγενημένων ἐχέσθω.[1163] [However, on that occasion he was beaten off and, taking his army, he turned back and prowled about in the surrounding places, while we were shut up in the town of Prilep and became confined as if in a prison. This is how our affairs turned out. Now let my narrative deal with events in the east.][1164]

Having resolved a sequence of events (§69-71), which, despite Michael Komnenos-Laskaris' heroic military exploits, resulted in no aid coming to Prilep, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) returns to Akropolites, who takes over the role of heroic (if under-resourced) protagonist left vacant by the absence of Michael.[1165] From the following story of the capture of Prilep in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the audience is left in no doubt that Akropolites is not to blame for the coming disaster, although almost everyone else present in Prilep, namely the inhabitants and garrison, is presented as culpable.[1166]

The *Chronike syngraphe* (α) narrates a detailed and vivid account of an Epirot siege and three assaults against Prilep, each of which were hard-fought but repulsed and after which victory appeared to have been achieved.[1167] Here the text reaches a crescendo of self-exulting rhetoric, in which the narrator (Akropolites) employs an enigmatic universal observation to illustrate his own heroic defence of Prilep:[1168]

[1161] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 143.15-6 (§68).
[1162] See below 4.12.
[1163] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 143.17-22 (§68).
[1164] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 324.
[1165] See below 4.12. Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 149.4-6 (§72).
[1166] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 143.16-7 (§68), 148.26-8 (§71), 149.7-8 (§72), 149.21-3 (§72).
[1167] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 149.8-21 (§72).
[1168] It is interesting that for this moment, which is most concerned with Akropolites himself he switches out of his first-person discourse.

> **(α)** θαῦμα δὲ ἂν εἴη τοῖς ἀκούουσι, εἰ ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς ἥττηντο οὐ πλείους τῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὑπηρέτας ἔχοντος καὶ μόνῃ τῇ πίστει καὶ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τεθαρρηκότος.[1169] [It would be a source of wonder to anyone who heard that the enemy were defeated by one man who had not more than 40 servants and who took heart in faith and truth alone.][1170]

The narrator thus casts himself in the role of the victorious martial hero.[1171] The praise is oblique, yet leaves no space for the passage to be read in any way other than as a claim to Akropolites' wondrous success. His qualities of faith and truth, in particular, are contrasted with Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas' failings.[1172] This builds on the alternative heroic presentation of Akropolites in §63, where he is presented as a scholarly Christian version of Achilles.[1173] After being beaten on Theodore's orders, Akropolites secludes himself in his tent and refused to meet the bishops sent to him by Theodore, instead confining himself to his books, in an intertextual allusion to Achilles' response to the overbearing Agamemnon in book nine of the *Iliad*.[1174] Finally, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) narrates the much-anticipated betrayal of Prilep and the opening of the gates to the enemy.[1175] Responsibility is placed squarely on "τῇ τῶν φυλάκων ἀβελτηρίᾳ καὶ ἀπιστίᾳ [the foolishness and disloyalty of the garrison]".[1176] Prilep's capture is described and explained by means of carefully constructed contrasts. The failure of the Epirots in battle is contrasted with their success in treachery and the strength of Prilep's fortifications with the foolish and disloyal garrison. Furthermore, the betrayal of the garrison in letting the Epirots in is part of an equally carefully constructed trio of betrayals, since Akropolites was betrayed a second time by the garrison which forced him to surrender the citadel to which he had retreated.[1177] He was then betrayed a third time, when Michael broke his vow to allow Akropolites' ransom, instead putting him in chains.[1178]

[1169] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 149.23-6 (§72).
[1170] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 332.
[1171] This emulates the prior success of Michael Komnenos-Laskaris. See below 4.12.
[1172] See below 4.11.
[1173] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, esp. 131.25-132.29 (§63).
[1174] *Il.* 9.162-713.
[1175] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 149.26-150.9 (§72). The *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is inconsistent in separating the inhabitants and the garrison.
[1176] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 150.8-9 (§72).
[1177] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 150.9-24 (§72).
[1178] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 150.15-24 (§72).

This final betrayal, in particular, plays on the earlier construction of Akropolites' truthfulness, which is set against Michael's falseness.[1179]

The *Chronike historia* (γ), *Synopsis chronike* (β), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) dramatically transform the sieges and capture of Prilep, presented in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). In all three, the two sets of action, depicted in §68 and §72 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), are presented as a single event in continuous prose. In the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ) text and story elements found in both §68 and §72 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) are combined into a single, heavily reduced, assault and capture of Prilep and depicted in passages corresponding to §68 in their own texts.[1180] However, in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), the assault on Prilep, depicted in §68 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), is entirely excised.[1181] The only mention of the capture of Prilep comes in a passage corresponding to §72 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), which includes no text or story elements corresponding to §68 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1182]

In the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ), the Epirot capture of Prilep is the immediate consequence of Chabaron's seduction, although the loss of the city is given less significance in both texts than the capture of Akropolites, which dominates both depictions:

> **(β)** τὰ δ' ἑξῆς, τὸ Ἄλβανον αὐτοῦ ἐγεγόνει, καὶ τὰ ἄστη καὶ αἱ χῶραι αὐτῷ προσερρύησαν, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ μέγας λογοθέτης καὶ πραίτωρ ἐντὸς τοῦ Πριλάπου τυχὼν συνελήφθη, προδοθέντος καὶ τούτου καὶ ἀπήχθη δέσμιος εἰς φυλακὴν, καὶ ταῦτα τοῦ δεσπότου ἐπομοσαμένου καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ ἀπολύσαι πρὸς τὰ οἴκοι προεύεσθαι· ἀλλ' ἔφθη καὶ τοῦτον παραβὰς τὸν ὅρκον, ὡς καὶ ἄλλους πολλούς.[1183] [As for the places next to it, Albanon had become his, both the towns and lands went over to him, and the *megas logothetes* and *praitor* himself happened to be inside Prilep and was captured, him also having been betrayed, and he was led away in chains to prison, and these things [happened] after the despot had sworn also that he would allow him [Akropolites] and those with him to pay a

[1179] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 149.25; 150.22 (§72). See above 4.11.
[1180] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 530.5-11; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9191-200.
[1181] Indeed, the only element corresponding to §68 is a telescoped list of the places captured by Michael, incorporated into a list corresponding to the dramatically concised §67: Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 262.23 (§68).
[1182] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 264.1-8 (§71-2). However, note that in Heisenberg's editions the sections in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) do not correspond to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), so the text I discuss actually comes mostly from text labelled as §72.
[1183] Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 530.5-11.

ransom to go over to their homes. But he anticipated him transgressing this oath, as he had all the others.]

(γ) τὸ φρούριον λέλειπτο Πριλλάπου μόνον, / ὅπερ προδόντων συνέλαβε καὶ τόδε. / Ἀκροπολίτης δ' εὑρεθεὶς ἔνδον τότε, / ἐρύματός τι καταλαβὼν πυργίον / ἐκεῖ διῆγε, καὶ λαβὼν πρὸς δεσπότου / ὅρκια κακῶν ἀπαθῆ πεφηνέναι / καὶ παραπεμφθῆναι δὲ πρὸς βασιλέα, / αὑτὸν παραδέδωκε σὺν τῷ πυργίῳ. / ὁ Μιχαὴλ δ' ἔφορκος ὢν ὁ δεσπότης / δεσμοῖς περιέβαλεν αὐτὸν ἀφύκτοις.[1184] [Only the fortress of Prilep had been left, / which [some people] having betrayed it he captured this also. / Akropolites, having been found within then, / who reached the tower of the defence / there he stayed, and received from the despot / oaths that he would not suffer evil / and would be guided to the *basileus*, / he handed himself over together with the tower. / The despot Michael, being a perjurer, / surrounded him with inescapable bonds.]

Just as the story of Chabaron's seduction dominated the start of §68, despite its heavy reduction, so too the story of Akropolites' betrayal dominates, even in the texts where his character is often actively decentred. However, in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), in which Akropolites is deemphasised, but maintained as the narrator, there is no mention of his capture. Otherwise the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is heavily concised with considerable excision:

(δ) καὶ ἐπεὶ ἐκεχειρίαν εἶχε, περιεστοίχισε τὸ ἄστυ καὶ ἑλεπόλεις συνίστα καὶ κλίμακας ἔφερεν, ὡς ἂν διὰ τούτων περὶ τὸ ἄστυ ἀναρριχήσαιντο. ἀλλὰ τότε μὲν τραπέντες πλεῖστοι ἔργον φόνου γεγόνεισαν. αὖθις δὲ προσβολὴ περισσοτέρα περὶ τὸ ἄστυ, καὶ ἡ ἀπόκρουσις ὁμοία· ὡσαύτως καὶ ἡ τρίτη. εἶτα ἠρέμα παρεκάθηντο, καὶ οὕτως εἷλον τὸν Πρίλαπον.[1185] [And when he [Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas] had respite, he surrounded the town, and set up catapults and brought ladders, in order that they might scramble up over them into the town. But then the majority turned to the deed of murder. Another profuse assault against the town, and a similar repulsion, and likewise the third. Then they sat calmly beside it (παρεκάθηντο), and thus took Prilep.]

However, as in the description of the invasion of Makedonia in §68 of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), the very grammar of the text breaks down.[1186] Who the subject ("he") implied by the three third person singular verbs (εἶχε, περιεστοίχισε, and ἔφερεν) and the subject ("they") implied by the third person plural verb (ἀναρριχήσαιντο) in the first sentence of the story about Prilep are is unclear from the text.[1187] From the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) Michael

[1184] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9191-200.
[1185] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 264.1-6 (§71).
[1186] See above 4.10.
[1187] Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 264.1-3 (§71).

Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas and his men can be supplied, but the text of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) does not state this. The concise description of the three assaults is faithful to the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), but how Prilep was 'actually' captured is left a mystery. Treachery is not blamed and the capture is described enigmatically, through the verb "παρεκάθηντο", from which it is difficult to discern a specific action.[1188]

The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), *Synopsis chronike* (β), and *Chronike historia* (γ) all dramatically transform the bipartite sieges of Prilep presented in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), albeit in two radically different ways. However, both approaches to the transformation of the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) demonstrate the subordination of the requirements of 'representing' the past 'as it really happened' to the requirements of the narrative, in which that past is constructed. The same epistemological problems found at the micro-level in all of these texts, be it basic linguistic uncertainty (as seen with παρεκάθηντο), the subordination of action to elite men (especially Akropolites), or the rhetorical construction of binaries of betrayal and tripartite assaults, are also found at other levels of narrative. By demonstrating the ways in which two distinct events in one text have become a single event in others, the examination of the siege(s) of Prilep illustrates the partial and constructed quality of any event read in such a text. Although this comparative analysis only examined the relationship between these texts, it also invites reflection on the manner in which events are constructed (or not) in any individual text. Even just in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), it is impossible to demonstrate where narrative structures end and the past begins, let alone when the 'evidence' of multiple texts is examined. For example, the narrative restructuring of the capture of Prilep in the *Synopsis chronike* (β) and *Chronike historia* (γ), effectively changes when this action occurred, because in both texts chronology is used as a mechanism for historians to map narrative action onto the past. The historian is thus left not with reference to past action, but a web of textual relations, from which we see that all the 'events', which make up the data for historiographical analysis are unstable, multiplying and collapsing back in on themselves. It is not just the 'important' events, which have been

[1188] παρακάθημαι, which literally means to sit beside, although it is rendered as to occupy by Erich Trapp (besetzen, innehaben), does not here describe the capture of Prilep itself, which is rendered later with εἷλον, but a prelude: E. Trapp, *et al.* (eds.), *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität* (Vienna, 2007), vol. 6, 1211; Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1311. For the difficulties of understanding the specifics of action, because of analogic language, see above 3.2.

actively made meaningful by modern historians, but every single moment of action, which requires rethinking.

4.12 – Action as characterisation (§70-1)

In this sub-chapter, I widen the frame of analysis to consider how numerous epistemologically problematic presentations of action aggregate together into larger narratives. Further, I analyse how these (already aggregated) narratives are transformed in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) and Pachymeres' *Syngraphikai historiai*.[1189] In the process, I draw together narrative, events, and characters, in the terms discussed in the preceeding three chapters.[1190]

In the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), between the two sieges of Prilep (§68 and §72), the text narrates Theodore's sojourn in the East (§69), in which Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos is reintroduced to the narrative.[1191] After this the narrative switches away from Theodore in the East, following Michael, as he is sent back to the West. Michael will be the centre of attention in the proceeding passage, which narrates a host of military confrontations in short modular episodes, each including the characterisation of the commanders involved (§70-1). These (micro)characterisations are, like those of Chabaron and Maria in §68, used chiefly as vectors for the (macro)characterisation of the central protagonists, particularly Michael and to a lesser extent the absent Theodore. The (macro)characterisation of Michael holds the narrative of military confrontations together, since the failure of the preceding commanders all prefigure his victory at the so-called battle of Vodena, in which Michael is victorious. How this careful construction of action breaks down in the corresponding passages of the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), *Synopsis chronike* (β), and *Chronike historia* (γ), reveals the inadequacy of monolithic empiricist historiography.

The start of §70 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) portrays the return of Michael to the West with an army that is "very small and worthless in quality" and "paltry and unwarlike".[1192] With this introduction the scene is set for the proceeding action, building on earlier critiques of

[1189] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 144.24-149.2 (§70-1); Anon., *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 263.13-264.6 (§70-1); Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 531.17-533.7; Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9205-41.
[1190] See above 1-3, esp. 3.2.
[1191] See above 4.9.
[1192] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.4-8 (§70); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 328.

Theodore (for example §66 and §69) and laying the groundwork for the repeated failure of Michael to achieve lasting results, despite his valour.[1193] After narrating his journey to Thessaloniki, where he joined forces with Michael Laskaris, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) immediately demonstrates the inadequacy of the forces given to Michael by Theodore, stating that they could not even contemplate doing anything but raid the territory around Berroia, since they were so poorly equipped with forces.[1194] Although his absolute potential was prefigured by Theodore's meanness, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) shows that Michael achieves as much as was possible given his resources, noting that he captured so many animals that they were "not easy to count [οὐκ εὐχερῶς ἀριθμουμένην]".[1195]

The first in the string of characterisations, which follow is that of the Epirots' Serbian allies, who had assembled an army "numbering in the thousands [ὡς εἰς χιλίους ἠριθμημένον]", as treacherous and barbaric.[1196] It continues and extends both the critique of the Epirots, whose barbarism is reflected in their allies, and the critique of Theodore's inability to assemble a sufficient army, if even the unworthy Serbians can organise a much larger army.[1197] This is the only one not focused on a specific individual, although 'the Serbians' are treated as a single anthropomorphic unity.[1198] The next character analysis is of Xyleas, the commander put in charge of Prilep in §66, which both immediately precedes and explains the narration of his defeat by the Serbians:[1199]

> **(α)** ὁ δὲ σκουτέριος Ξυλέας μετὰ τοῦ ὑπ' αὐτὸν στρατεύματος ἐγγύς που τοῦ ἄστεος κείμενος, ὡς εἶδε τὸ τῶν Σέρβων στράτευμα τὴν χώραν ληΐζον καὶ πυρὰ πανταχοῦ ἀναπτόμενα, ἄνθρωπος ἀδαὴς τὰ πολεμικὰ καὶ μηδ' ὅλως ἐμπειρίαν ἔχων στρατιωτικήν—οὔτε γὰρ σκοποὺς εἶχε μακρὰν ὡς πόρρωθεν μαθεῖν τὴν τῶν πολεμίων ἔφοδον, οὔτε ξυντάξαι στράτευμα ἐπεγνώκει—ἀπέλυσεν ἕκαστον κατὰ τῶν Σέρβων ὁρμᾶν ὡς ἐβούλετο. διαλυθέντες γοῦν τῆς συντάξεως καὶ ὀλίγοι τοῖς Σέρβοις πλείοσιν οὖσιν ἡλίσκοντο συμπλεκόμενοι, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἔργον μαχαίρας ἐγένοντο, οἱ δὲ ἐζωγροῦντο καὶ δεσμῶται ἀπήγοντο. ὕστερον δὲ καὶ

[1193] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 329, n. 1, "Theodore II's mean spirit and suspicious nature in dealing with Michael Komnenos". For Michael's later inability to fight successfully see Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.11-2 (§70), 147.24-5, 148.16-8, 24-6 (§71), 149.4-6 (§72).
[1194] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.5-13 (§70).
[1195] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.13-15 (§70).
[1196] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.20-1 (§70); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 328. On the barbarity of the Epirots and Serbians, see above 2.5-6.
[1197] On anti-Serbian rhetoric in the later thirteenth century, see Angelov, *Ideology*, 177-9.
[1198] See above 3.2.
[1199] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.21-146.12 (§70). See above 4.8.

> αὐτὸς ὁ Ξυλέας σκουτέριος μετὰ τῶν ὑπολειφθέντων στρατιωτῶν κατὰ τῶν Σέρβων ὁρμήσας μόγις που διεσώθη, ὄρη διελθὼν καὶ βουνοὺς καὶ κρημνώδεις τόπους ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν διωκόμενος.[1200] [The *skouterios* Xyleas, who was near the town with the army which was under his command, saw that the army of Serbs was plundering the land and setting fires everywhere. He was a man ignorant in matters of war and with no military experience at all, for he did not have spies at a distance so as to learn from afar of the advance of the enemy, nor did he know how to array an army in battle order. He released each man to rush against the Serbs as he wished. Since their battle order had been broken up and they were few, they fell into the grip of the Serbs, who were more in number, and they were caught. Some were put to the sword, others were taken alive and carried off as captives. Later when Xyleas himself, the *skouterios*, charged against the Serbs with the remaining soldiers, he barely escaped with his life, crossing mountains, hills and precipitous places, pursued by the enemy.][1201]

The result of the confrontation itself is never in doubt. Its causes are presented as a combination of Xyleas' absence of martial ability and the greater numbers of the Serbians. Both causes reflect badly on Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, who both appointed this inexperienced commander and failed to supply sufficient forces. The pitiable fate of the killed and captured Romans generates both pathos for the Romans and a direct contrast to Michael's later victory.[1202] The final image left by the vignette of Xyleas fleeing across the mountains, as one of Theodore's associates, contributes to a discourse on the moral and martial weakness of Theodore, made through the vector of his principal associates and allies.[1203] Immediately after this characterisation, the narrator (Akropolites) notes that because of Xyleas' defeat "we" were imprisoned in Prilep. Thus, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) simultaneously dramatically foreshadows the future capture of Prilep, narrated in §72, inverts the earlier metaphor, in which Prilep was a safe harbour, by turning it into a prison, and displaces blame from Akropolites, who was the commander of the garrison at Prilep.[1204]

After this narratorial interjection, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) once more returns to focus on Michael.[1205] First, the formidable Epirot force in opposition to Michael, which we are told numbered five hundred handpicked men, led by Theodore, the bastard son of Michael

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[1200] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 145.23-146.10 (§70).
[1201] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 328-9.
[1202] See below 4.12.
[1203] See below 4.12.
[1204] See above 4.11. Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 146.10-2 (§70), 143.5-6 (§68).
[1205] The refocusing on Michael and the relocation of the narrative is achieved by restating the victory Michael had already won in the preceding passage: Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 146.13-6 (§71).

Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas, is compared to the pitiful Roman army, with just a few decent troops.[1206] Here again the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) carefully alludes backwards to previous critiques of Theodore and forwards to the tiny force of fifty that Michael will lead to defeat the Epirots.[1207] In implicit contrast to Xyleas, the Epirots were well informed about the Roman army and "how many it numbered".[1208] In explicit contrast to the Epirots, but implicitly like Xyleas, the army under Manuel Lapardas, another commander sent by Theodore, who is introduced after the Epirot army, is depicted as "a rough mob of an army" and a "rabble army".[1209] His men, who are easily defeated, are presented as the inversion of the orderly Epirot force:

> **(α)** ἄνδρες γοῦν στρατιῶται γενναῖοι ὑψαύχεσιν ἵπποις ἐποχούμενοι καὶ τοῖς ὅπλοις κατάφρακτοι ἀνθρωπίσκοις ξυντυχόντες ἀόπλοις καὶ ἀγεννέσι καὶ θηλείαις ἵπποις ἐφεζομένοις ἐν ἀκαρεῖ πάντας τούτους ἐτρέψαντο.[1210] [When these men, brave soldiers who rode stately horses and were clad in full armour, encountered manikins who were without arms, low-born, and riding mares, they defeated them all instantly.][1211]

Consequently, the Epirots are further elevated as opponents and the consequences of Theodore's appointment of incapable commanders is redoubled. The inconsistency of the characterisation of the Epirots as simultaneously barbaric rebels and brave organised opponents, demonstrates the extent to which the specific needs of the narrative at this point in the story and these specific anti-Theodore/-Laskarid sentiments trump even the consistently negative presentation of the Epirots.

After Lapardas' defeat, the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) again pivots back to Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, almost cinematically following the fleeing men of Lapardas' army, who fled to Michael:[1212]

> **(α)** ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἐθροήθη τῷ αἰφνιδίῳ, ἰσχυρὸς δὲ ὢν τὴν χεῖρα καὶ τὴν γνώμην ἀνδρεῖος καὶ τὰ μάχιμα ἔμπειρος - πολλοῖς γὰρ καὶ πρότερον τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἐγγεγύμναστο - ὁπλισθεὶς καὶ δόρυ λαβὼν καὶ τὸ στρατιωτικόν, ὅπερ ἦν ὑπὸ τὸν Λάσκαριν Μιχαήλ, ἐκ Παφλαγονίας ὡρμημένον,—ἐκεῖνο καὶ γὰρ μόνον

[1206] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 146.17-24 (§71); Macrides, *Akropolites*, 330.
[1207] See below 4.12.
[1208] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 146.17-20 (§71).
[1209] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 146.25-6-147.1; 147.5-6 (§71).
[1210] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 147.13-6 (§71).
[1211] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 330.
[1212] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 147.17-8 (§71).

> ἐτύγχανε τῶν ἄλλων κρεῖττον καὶ πολεμῆσαι δυνάμενον, εἰς πεντήκοντα ἄνδρας ἠριθμημένον—κατὰ τῶν ἐναντίων ὁρμᾷ.[1213] [But he [Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos] was not disturbed by the unexpected news, for he was strong in arm, brave in disposition, and tried in battle; he had been trained in many previous wars. He armed himself, taking a spear and the military detachment which was under Michael Laskaris and which came from Paphlagonia (this alone was better than the others and capable of fighting, numbering [*fifty*] men) and set out against the enemy.][1214]

Michael is presented as everything Xyleas and Manuel Lapardas are not. The limited number of men is once again foregrounded, with Michael's force comparing unfavourably to the bastard Theodore's. Michael's military credentials will soon be proved, but not before he is implicitly compared and contrasted to one last character, Michael Laskaris:

> **(α)** ὁ δὲ Λάσκαρις Μιχαήλ, ὡς εἰώθει, οὐ θώρακα ἀλλὰ θωρακίδιον ἐπενδυθείς, ὡς ἂν ἔχοι ῥᾳδίως φεύγειν, ἐκ πλαγίου τῆς μάχης ἦν καὶ ἐσκόπει τὸ γενησόμενον.[1215] [Michael Laskaris, who, as was his habit, had not put on a full breastplate but only a half breastplate so that he might easily flee, was on the sidelines of the battle and was watching the action.][1216]

Like Xyleas, another appointee of Theodore's, Michael Laskaris is presented in direct contrast with Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[1217] His cowardliness and predilection to flight, builds on the existing critique of Theodore's appointees and associates, Xyleas, the sultan, and later Karyanites.[1218] The critique of Michael Laskaris is particularly strong, because he is a vector for a more general critique of the whole Laskarid family and dynasty.[1219]

Consequently, it is only after the depictions of three terrible Laskarid commanders (Xyleas, Manuel Lapardas, and Michael Laskaris), repeated observations on the strength of the Epirot and Serbian armies, and frequent observations about the weakness of Laskarid forces, that the text climaxes in Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos' victory over Theodore 'the bastard', son of Michael Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas:

[1213] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 147.19-25-148.1 (§71).
[1214] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 330. Emphasis added. Note that there is a typographical error in Macrides' translation, fifty (πεντήκοντα) has been rendered as five-hundred. For this error see also Bartusis, *Army*, 35.
[1215] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 148.1-4 (§71).
[1216] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 330.
[1217] See above 4.8.
[1218] In contrast see Anon., *Synopsis chronike*, 532.25-7.
[1219] See above 4.8.

(α) ὁ μὲν οὖν Κομνηνὸς Μιχαὴλ τῷ πρώτως ἐπερχομένῳ ξυναντήσας βάλλει τῷ δόρατι καὶ ῥίπτει τῆς ἐφεστρίδος· ἦν δὲ ὁ ῥηθεὶς τοῦ ἀποστάτου Μιχαὴλ νόθος υἱὸς ὁ Θεόδωρος. τοῦ πτώματος γοῦν ἀναστὰς οὗτος προσέδραμε τῷ Κομνηνῷ Μιχαὴλ καὶ ἐδυσώπει μὴ φονευθῆναι. ἠγνόει δὲ τοῦτον ὁ Κομνηνός, καὶ ὅστις ἦν οὐκ ἠπίστατο. παραδίδωσι γοῦν αὐτὸν Τούρκῳ τινί, καὶ ὃς πεφόνευκε τοῦτον. εἶτα ξυμπλακέντες οἱ Παφλαγόνες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἄλλος ἄλλον ἔβαλλε, καὶ τὸ τοῦ πολέμου τέλος εἰς τροπὴν μὲν οἱ τοῦ ἀποστάτου Μιχαὴλ ἀπεῖδον, οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαὴλ πλείους ἢ εἴκοσι τῶν ἐγκρίτων ζωγρήσαντες καὶ πολλοὺς ἄλλους ξίφους ἔργον ποιήσαντες ἔστησαν· οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶχον διώκειν πάνυ ὀλίγοι τυγχάνοντες, προδιεφθαρμένων καὶ διαλελυμένων τῶν προαπερχομένων στρατιωτῶν, ὡς εἰρήκειμεν.[1220] [Michael Komnenos, however, encountering the first person who came against him, hurled his spear and threw him from his saddle. It was the previously mentioned illegitimate son of the renegade Michael, Theodore. When he had picked himself up from the fall, he ran towards Michael Komnenos and entreated him not to have him put to death. But Komnenos did not recognize him and he did not know who he was. He therefore handed him over to a Turk and he killed him. Then, the Paphlagonians accompanying him engaged in close combat with the others, man to man, and the renegade Michael's men were routed at the end of the battle, while those of Michael Komnenos checked them, taking captive more than 20 of the elite men and putting many others to the sword. But Michael Komnenos' men were not able to drive them away because they were very few in number since, as we said, the soldiers who had left earlier had already been destroyed and had scattered.][1221]

The rich text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), narrates an encomiastic and quasi-epic single combat. The hero, Michael, is so effective that there is barely a fight at all. The passage has an epic and Homeric feel, particularly the image of Michael hurling his spear (βάλλει τῷ δόρατι).[1222] The topos of the heroic single combats became particularly common in Byzantine historiography from the eleventh century, although they have a long antique and biblical tradition.[1223] However, although it draws on a wider epic and historiographical tradition of

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[1220] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 148.4-18 (§71).

[1221] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 330-1.

[1222] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 148.5 (§71). In Homer's *Iliad*, for example, the epic form for throwing of spears, most often δουρὶ βαλών and βάλε δουρὶ, appears twenty-one times. Thomas and Monro, *Homeri*, vols. 1-2, 4.501, 4.527, 5.537, 7.14, 11.108, 11.144, 11.321, 12.183, 12.189, 13.186, 13.387, 13.518, 13.567, 15.420, 16.399, 17.15, 20.168, 20.437, 20.458, 20.462, 21.113.

[1223] Kyriakidis omits this episode from his diachronic appraisal of single combat, including only the duel at Antioch-on-the-Maeander and Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos' trial by combat: Kyriakidis, 'Combat', 125-6. See above 2.3. For a much earlier example, a similar single combat between the Roman Andreas and a Persian can be seen in Prokopios' sixth-century *Hyper ton polemon logoi*: H. Dewing (ed. and trans.), *Procopius: History of the Wars* (Cambridge MA, 1954), vol. 1, 110.31-2 (§1.13), "φθάσας δὲ τὸν βάρβαρον ἔτι περισκοπούμενον ὅπη ὁρμήσεται, παρὰ μαζὸν τὸν δεξιὸν τῷ δόρατι παίει; H. Dewing (trans.) and A. Kaldellis (rev.), *The Wars of Justinian* (Indianapolis IN, 2014), 33, "He [Andreas] reached the barbarian while the latter was still considering how to make his attack,

single combats, it also makes a specific intratextual allusion within the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) to Michael's actions when fighting in the Seljuk army against the Mongols in §65:[1224]

> **(α)** τὸ μὲν οὖν μέρος τοῦ στρατεύματος τὸ παρὰ τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ Μιχαὴλ τεταγμένον τοὺς ἀντιτεταγμένους αὐτῷ Ταχαρίους κατὰ κράτος νενίκηκε, τοῦ Μιχαὴλ αὐτοῦ πρώτως δόρατι παρὰ μαζὸν βαλόντος τὸν τοῦ στρατεύματος προηγούμενον, ὅς, καθάπερ ἔφησαν οἱ γινώσκοντες, μετὰ μικρὸν ἐκ τῆς βολῆς ἐτεθνήκει.[1225] [The part of the army drawn up in battle order by Michael Komnenos won a victory by storm over the Tatars opposing him, with Michael himself first striking in the chest with a spear the man who rode in advance of the army; he died from the wound after a short time, as those who know said.][1226]

Together these single combats generate a powerful picture of Michael's martial ability, which desperately seeks to exonerate Michael from culpability for the loss of Makedonia and the capture of Prilep. His success defies Theodore's failure to provide adequate forces, as the size of the two armies are at the heart of the description of the confrontation in which, thanks to Michael's example, fifty men defeat five hundred. Further, Michael's success not just in the whole battle, but personally, is directly contrasted with the negative characterisations of the preceding commanders. In particular, there is a direct intratextual allusion to what happened to the Romans under Xyleas:

> **(α)** εἶτα ξυμπλακέντες οἱ Παφλαγόνες οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἄλλος ἄλλον ἔβαλλε, καὶ τὸ τοῦ πολέμου τέλος εἰς τροπὴν μὲν οἱ τοῦ ἀποστάτου Μιχαὴλ ἀπεῖδον, οἱ δ' ἀμφὶ τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαὴλ πλείους ἢ εἴκοσι τῶν ἐγκρίτων ζωγρήσαντες καὶ πολλοὺς ἄλλους ξίφους ἔργον ποιήσαντες ἔστησαν· οὐδὲ γὰρ εἶχον διώκειν πάνυ ὀλίγοι τυγχάνοντες, προδιεφθαρμένων καὶ διαλελυμένων τῶν προαπερχομένων στρατιωτῶν, ὡς εἰρήκειμεν.[1227] [Then, the Paphlagonians accompanying him engaged in close combat with the others, man to man, and the renegade Michael's men were routed at the end of the battle, while those of Michael Komnenos checked them, taking captive more than 20 of the elite men and putting many others to the sword. But Michael Komnenos' men were not able to drive them

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and struck him with his spear on the right breast." Although these texts are unlikely to be directly related, their similarities illustrate the longevity of the motifs seen here in the *Chronike syngraphe*. For biblical single combat see R. Vaux, 'Single Combat in the Old Testament', in R. Vaux (ed.), *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (London, 1971), 122-35. For a more recent study and up to date bibliography see M. Garsiel, 'The Valley of Elah Battle and the Duel of David with Goliath: Between History and Artistic Theological Historiography', in G. Galil, *et al.* (eds.), *Homeland and Exile: Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern, Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded* (Leiden, 2009), 391-426.

[1224] Possibly also to the so-called battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander. See above 2.3.

[1225] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 137.19-25 (§71). Also omitted from Kyriakidis, 'Combat', 125-6.

[1226] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 316.

[1227] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 148.11-8 (§71).

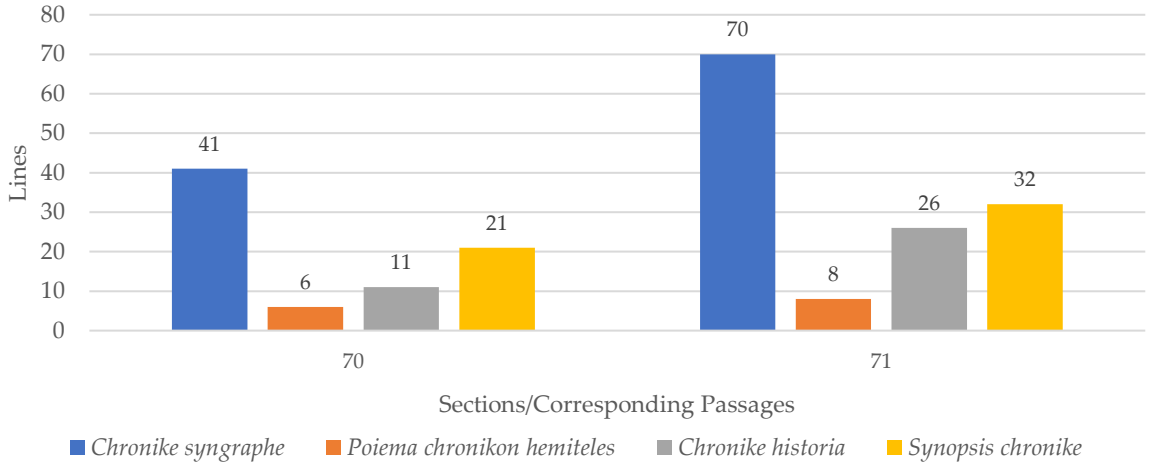
away because they were very few in number since, as we said, the soldiers who had left earlier had already been destroyed and had scattered.][1228]

(α) διαλυθέντες γοῦν τῆς συντάξεως καὶ ὀλίγοι τοῖς Σέρβοις πλείοσιν οὖσιν ἡλίσκοντο συμπλεκόμενοι, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἔργον μαχαίρας ἐγένοντο, οἱ δὲ ἐζωγροῦντο καὶ δεσμῶται ἀπήγοντο.[1229] [Since their battle order had been broken up and they were few, they fell into the grip of the Serbs, who were more in number, and they were caught. Some were put to the sword, others were taken alive and carried off as captives.][1230]

The fate of Xyleas' men is inverted under Michael. While under Xyleas the Romans were captured and killed, under Michael it was the Epirots who suffered this treatment. The *Chronike syngraphe* (α) makes this intratextual allusion even more clear by mentioning that Michael's forces were so few, precisely because of their previous defeat.

In these two sections of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) the narrative revolves around and builds to the praise of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos, whilst (and partially by) criticising Theodore II Komnenos-Laskaris, through his subordinates. Michael's heroic presence is contrasted with Theodore's absence. However, the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) are transformed both quantitatively and in meaning. The *Synopsis chronike* (β) considerably reduces the text of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) by excision and concision, approximately halving the text (figure 4λ).

Figure 4λ – Comparative line distribution (§70-1)



[1228] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 330-1.
[1229] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 146.3-6 (§70).
[1230] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 328.

An extensive narrative of Michael's victory, including the single combat with Theodore, is present at the end of the passage.[1231] However, the meaning of this story is dramatically transformed by the transformation of the text leading up to the victory. Throughout the obsessive focus on the number of men is often excised. This leaves Michael's inability to do more than plunder Berroia unexplained and the Serbian force represented as "στράτευμα [an army]", rather than "στράτευμα…ὡς εἰς χιλίους ἠριθμημένον [an army numbering in the thousands]".[1232] Furthermore, although the actions of the Paphlagonian troops under Michael are presented similarly, albeit slightly condensed (that is they capture and kill the enemy after Michael's victorious duel), they generate different meaning, since the fate of Xyleas' defeated men, which the description in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) inverted, is excised from the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1233] In addition, the whole modular character-based progression of the passage is disrupted and transformed. The negative characterisations of Xyleas and Michael Laskaris are both excised, and with them the criticism and praise constructed in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). Manuel Lapardas' defeat, in contrast, is included in only slightly concised form. However, without the foolish Xyleas and the cowardly Michael Laskaris, Lapardas' folly cannot build to the inversion of Michael's victory. The intratextual allusion to Michael's victory over the Mongol leader remains, but with both duels shorn of their encomiastic narrative contexts, they read more as engaging anecdote than explicit praise.[1234] Not only is the whole episode transformed, but its elements take on different meanings, when rearranged. From this reading of the *Synopsis chronike* (β), we see that the meaning of action read in the hypotext is transformed when the context shifts in this hypertext.

The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) and *Chronike historia* (γ) excise considerably more material from the narrative than the *Synopsis chronike* (β).[1235] However, both excise material

[1231] Anon. *Synopsis chronike*, 532.27-533.7.
[1232] Anon. *Synopsis chronike*, 531.19-24, 28-9. Thus, Michael's victory is diminished with his enemy.
[1233] Anon. *Synopsis chronike*, 533.5-7, 532.5-7.
[1234] Anon. *Synopsis chronike*, 528.6-15.
[1235] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9205-41; Anon. *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 263.13-25. Note that the section numbers assigned to the text in Heisenberg's edition do not correspond to the material in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). I consider §71 to end with the sentence "καὶ ἐτρέψαντο τοὺς τοῦ ἀποστάτου·" in line twenty.

differently. The *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is most dramatic, reducing §70 and §71 from forty-one and seventy to six and eight lines respectively (figure 4λ), primarily by excision:

> **(δ)** Καὶ στέλλει τοῦτον κατὰ τοῦ ἀποστάτου Μιχαὴλ μετὰ στρατεύματος. ὁ δὲ διαβὰς τὸν Βαρδάριον, ὃν οἱ παλαιοὶ Ναξειὸν ὀνομάζουσι, καὶ τῷ Λάσκαρι Μιχαὴλ ἑνωθεὶς τὴν Βέρροιαν ἐληΐσαντο. οἱ δὲ Σέρβοι τὴν Κύτζαβιν παραμείψαντες τὰ πέριξ Πριλάπου ἐσκύλευον. ὁ δὲ σκουτέρης ἐμπλακεὶς τούτοις ἀσυντάκτως ἥττηται. Καὶ ὁ ἀποστάτης Μιχαὴλ στρατιὰν ἐκπέμψας, στρατηγὸν ἐπιστήσας αὐτοῖς τὸν νόθον υἱὸν αὐτοῦ Θεόδωρον, τοὺς ὄντας ἐκεῖσε ἐν ἀκαρεὶ ἐτρέψατο. ὃ γνοὺς ὁ Παλαιολόγος Μιχαὴλ κατ' αὐτῶν ὁρμᾷ, καὶ τῷ στρατηγῷ τοῦ ἀποστάτου νόθῳ Θεοδώρῳ συρρήξας βάλλει τοῦτον τοῦ ἵππου καὶ ἱκέτην ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ θανεῖν δέχεται. παραδίδωσιν οὖν τοῦτον Τούρκῳ τινί, καὶ ὃς πεφόνευκε τοῦτον. καὶ ἐτρέψαντο τοὺς τοῦ ἀποστάτου·[1236] [And he [Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris] sent him [Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos] against the rebel Michael with an army. And he [Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos], having crossed the Vardar, which the ancients called the Naxeios, and joined with Michael Laskaris, they ravaged Berroia. The Serbs having left Kytzavis, were despoiling the whole area around Prilep. The *skoutarios* having been caught by them [the Serbians] unawares was defeated. And the rebel Michael having sent forth an army, [and] set above them as general his bastard son Theodore, turned in a moment to the people who were there. Michael Palaiologos, having discovered this set out against them and having met in battle the general Theodore, bastard of the rebel, struck him from his horse and received him begging not to be killed. Therefore he handed him over to a certain Turk and he killed him. And they routed those men of the rebel.]

Even more dramatically than in the *Synopsis chronike* (β), the text is reduced. All character analysis is excised. Lapardas and Laskaris are totally excised, while Xyleas' defeat is concised to one short sentence and his very name excised. However, Michael's successful raid is retained, although concised, and his single combat becomes even more dominant, since it is one of the elements least heavily concised and thus takes up approximately a third of the passage. The dominant position of Michael is thus retained, albeit without the more explicit or complex praise of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and a stronger focus on action than characterisation.[1237]

As in the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), Michael's single combat also occupies a third of the corresponding passage of the *Chronike historia* (γ) and dominates an otherwise heavily

[1236] Anon. *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 263.13-25.

[1237] The allusion to Michael's victory over the Mongol commander is also muted, reading only as "πρῶτος τὸν πρῶτον τούτων βαλών. (first striking their leader)": Anon. *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, 261.24-5.

redacted text.[1238] Again similarly, Michael's successful raid of Berroia is also one of the few elements only slightly concised.[1239] Again of the three negative characterisations only one escapes excision, although in the *Chronike historia* (γ) it is Lapardas' defeat, which is concised into two verses:

> **(γ)** ἣ Ῥωμαϊκῷ συντυχοῦσά που στίφει / ἥττησεν, ἐσκέδασεν αὐτὸ ῥᾳδίως.[1240]
> [Which having happened upon a Roman force somewhere / vanquished and scattered it easily.]

Unlike the *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), the *Chronike historia* (γ) maintains the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) colourful description of the Serbians as wicked and treacherous, as well as the fact that their army numbered in the thousands.[1241] The sharp focus on Michael, which guided the excision of elements corresponding to §64, §65 (in its entirety), and §69 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), is clear and even maintains a modicum of explicit praise.[1242]

This comparative analysis of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Synopsis chronike* (β) has built on my earlier analyses, to demonstrate that the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) text, in which modular characterisations aggregate into greater narrative meaning, does not survive the narrative restructuring of its three hypertexts. However, even to claim from just the 'evidence' of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) that Michael 'actually' vanquished the leaders of both the Mongol and Epirot armies in single combat or that the Paphlagonians 'actually' did to the Epirots what the Serbians had previously done to the Romans, is to misunderstand the text's relationship to the past. However, as with other assuredly 'literary' elements of the *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) text, such as the (equally tropic) gendered narration of Chabaron's defection, or indeed the Prokopian

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[1238] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9205-41, esp. 9224-35. That is twelve out of thirty-seven.
[1239] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9207-10.
[1240] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9222-3.
[1241] Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9212-4. Note that the *Chronike historia* (γ) also comments that the army of Theodore 'the bastard' was "sufficient (ἱκανὴν)" (see Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9219), but omits any mention of the size of Michael's insufficient forces, simply stating that he has an "army (στρατιὰν)", with no qualifier (see Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9205), although fairly ambiguously the *Chronike historia* (γ) does note after the duel that "Thus Michael did this alone (τουτί μὲν οὕτω Μιχαὴλ ἔδρα μόνος)" (see Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9236), albeit along with the unnamed force of Paphlagonians under him.
[1242] Along with one verse of explicit praise of Michael, noting that he was a "strong man and noble fighter (ἀνὴρ μαχητὴς γεννάδας, ῥωμαλέος)", this gives the *Chronike historia* (γ) a different feel to the other two *hypertexts*: Ephraim, *Chronike historia*, 9225.

single combat mentioned above, this narrative of Michael's duel has been incorporated uncritically into modern narratives of 'what happened':[1243]

> Ὁ Παλαιολόγος, ἐπελθούσης τής ἐκ τοῦ συστάδην συμπλοκῆς, ὁρμᾷ κατὰ τοῦ πρώτον βαλόντος Θεοδώρου, τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Μιχαήλ Β', καί ῥίπτει ἐκ τοῦ ἵππου διὰ τοῦ δόρατος. Οὗτος δὲ πεσὼν ἐξελιπάρησε τὸν Παλαιολόγον, ἵνα φεισθῇ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ· ἀλλ' ὁ Παλαιολόγος, μὴ γνωρίζων τίς ἦτο, πάρέδωκεν εἰς Τοῦρχόν τινα, ὅστις ἐφόνευσεν αὐτόν.[1244] [Palaiologos, arriving at the engagement at close-quarters, starting against Theodore, the son of Michael II, and striking him first, threw him from his horse with his spear. He falling begged Palaiologos, in order that he might spare his life. But Palaiologos, not recognising who he was, handed him over to a Turk, who murdered him.]
>
> The imperial forces were victorious, Palaeologus having unhorsed Theodore, who was dispatched by a Turk, his rank not being recognised.[1245]
>
> Battle was joined in the hills to the west of Vodena, and the discipline and bravery of the Paphlagonians, encouraged by the personal bravery of their general [Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos], won the day. The unfortunate Theodore, unhorsed by Palaiologos at the first charge, was put to the sword by a Turkish soldier before his rank was recognized.[1246]
>
> In a battle outside Vodena, Palaiologos led some 500 Paphlagonians and Turks against Theodore, one of Michael's sons. Theodore's forces were defeated and he himself was slain.[1247]
>
> Though Michael Palaeologus did subsequently distinguish himself, according to Acropolites, by organizing a modest counterstroke spearheaded by Paphlagonians under his command—in which the despot's son was killed by a Turk in Palaeologus's service…[1248]

Here, the same processes can be seen, as found in the examples discussed above in chapter two. A description of an epic single combat has been formalised in modern historiography, not only as 'what happened', but as "the battle of Vodena".[1249] No reference has been made to the 'evidence' of the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), in modern historiographical presentations of 'what happened'. However, the

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[1243] On what he describes as the "literary character of these single combats" in reference to the Prokopian example see C. Whately, *Battles and Generals: Combat, Culture, and Didacticism in Procopius' Wars* (Leiden, 2016), 75-6, esp. nn. 8-9. See above 4.10.
[1244] Meliarakes, *Ἱστορία*, 469.
[1245] Gardner, *Lascarids*, 227.
[1246] Nicol, *Despotate*, 164.
[1247] Bartusis, *Army*, 35-6.
[1248] J. Langdon, 'Twilight of the Byzantine Lascarid Basileia in Anatolian Exile, 1254-1258: Continuity and Change in Imperial Geopolitical Strategy', *Viator* 34 (2003), 199.
[1249] See above 2. Macrides, *Akropolites*, 331, n. 2.

reading of the *Syngraphikai historiai*, by George Pachymeres, has been combined with this problematic interpretation of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and understood as corroborating 'evidence' for the so-called battle of Vodena.[1250] Only a short part of the text 'overlaps' with the 'evidence' of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α):

> Ὡς γοῦν Θετταλίας διὰ ταχέων ἐπέβησαν καὶ ἤδη πρὸς τῷ περαιοῦσθαι τὸν ποταμὸν Βαρδάριον ἦσαν, περαιοῦται μὲν ὁ ἡγεμὼν σὺν ταῖς τάξεσι πρότερον, εὑρίσκει δὲ τὰ τῇδε συγκεχυμένα καὶ πρὸς ἀπιστίαν κλίναντα, ὅτε καὶ ὁ τοῦ δεσπότου Μιχαὴλ ἐκ νοθείας σκότιος παῖς Μανουήλ, τυχὼν ἐκεῖσε σὺν ἱκανῷ στρατεύματι καὶ συμπλακεὶς τῷ πολέμῳ, τὰ πρῶτα μέν, ὁμόσε χωρήσας τῷ ἡγεμόνι, τῷ κοντῷ συνωθεῖ καὶ ῥιπτεῖ, ἔπειτα δέ, συστάντος καὶ ἐπικαθεσθέντος τῷ ἵππῳ, παρ' ἐκείνου καιρίαν βάλλεται, μὴ λαβὼν ἴσην.[1251] [After they had reached Thessaly with all speed, and had come to the crossing of the Bardarios river, the *hegemon* [Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos] first crossed with the soldiers and found the province in confusion and raised in revolt; and at the same time Manuel, bastard son of the *despot* Michael, was there at the head of a strong army. He engaged him in battle straight away Manuel came against the general, struck him with his lance and unhorsed him. Then the latter, picking himself up and remounting his horse, gave a mortal wound, without receiving one himself.][1252]

The most notable difference between the *Syngraphikai historiai* and the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) and the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) is that Michael's bastard is called Manuel rather than Theodore.[1253] However, this has not prevented modern historians from collapsing Pachymeres' description into the so-called battle of Vodena, as constructed by the *Chronike syngraphe* (α).[1254] They have simply assumed that this is an error in the *Syngraphikai historiai*, since within the hierarchy of evidence constructed by historians of the thirteenth century the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) is always

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[1250] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 45.21-47.6 (§1.10). Note that there is also a *metaphrasis/paraphrasis* of the *Syngraphikai historiai*, in which this passage is reduced from thirteen to ten lines. However, as with the hypertexts of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) the duel is the most persistent element of the text and is not reduced at all, although it is intralingually translated: Failler, *brève*, vol. 1, 10.1-12 (§1.10). Note also that although it has been assumed that the *Syngraphikai historiai* used the *Chronike syngraphe* (α) as a source, their textual relationship remains unclear: Macrides, *Akropolites*, 71-5. The *Chronike syngraphe*'s (α) hypertexts have never been considered as potential 'sources'.

[1251] Pachymeres, *Syngraphikai historiai*, vol. 1, 45.21-47.6 (§1.10).

[1252] Cassidy, *Pachymeres*, 9-10. Adapted.

[1253] On names see below 4.8.

[1254] Note that the texts of the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), and the *metaphrastic/paraphrastic Syngraphikai historiai* are never referenced and historiography has simply consisted of a binary comparison between the *Syngraphikai historiai* and the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). For another example of this direct comparison see Avgerinou-Tzioga, 'Murder', 13-6.

understood to be "*sans doute mieux renseigné* [without doubt better informed]".[1255] Beyond 'the bastard's' name, the description of the duel itself is different, since Michael kills Manuel himself. Furthermore, the whole narrative context in which the duel is embedded diverges. In the *Syngraphikai historiai*, this episode is not part of a military campaign in Makedonia, but rather much more explicitly a moment within an extended description and explanation of the early life and rise to imperial power of Michael Komnenos-Palaiologos.[1256] Thus despite the description of action through an epic topos, the divergence of the two textual traditions, in detail, narrative context, and meaning, modern historians have insisted on uniting these two descriptions. This passage thus offers an insight into the multiplicity of ways in which the 'evidence' of these texts has been mishandled and forced into a singular past that cannot sustain the complexity of the texts from which it has been created. The alternative pasts constructed by four texts, which are about as closely related as any the modern historian might find, are impossible to collapse into a single narrative of what actually happened. When other, even more divergent, texts are incorporated into the analysis, the notion that this variation can be collapsed into one thirteenth-century past becomes even more difficult to sustain.

4.13 – Preliminary conclusions

This chapter presents several (of my) readings of §66-72 of the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), the corresponding passages of the *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ), and the (transtextual) relationships between them. Together they demonstrate the multiplicity, uncertainty, and indeterminacy of the thirteenth-century Byzantine textual record and reveal the claims embedded in modern historiographical knowledge for the epistemological leaps that they are. At a very basic level (4.6-9), as well as

[1255] A. Failler and V. Laurent (eds.), *Georges Pachymérès: Relations Historiques* (Paris, 1984-2000), vol. 1, 46, n. 1; Cassidy, *Pachymeres*, 118, "We may assume that Akropolites, who met Palaiologos shortly after the battle, is the more reliable source"; Macrides, *Akropolites*, 331, n. 2, "Pach. (I, 47.1–6) mistakenly refers to the presence of a Manuel, not Theodore, at this battle"; D. Polemis, *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London, 1968), 94, n. 7; Nicol, *Despotate*, 168, n. 15, "Akropolites 145-9. Pachymeres, I, 26 (who calls Theodore Manuel)." For a paradigmatic example of this positivistic preference, see the analysis and statements of Avgerinou-Tzioga, 'Murder', 13-6, "This appears to be a deliberate departure on the part of Pachymeres from Acropolites' version…this is a wilful distortion of historical truth… Essentially, Pachymeres' later narrative outshines the earlier but hardly objective version of Acropolites as a historic document."

[1256] Not unlike that seen in the *Chronike syngraphe* (α). See above 2.6.

in more complex settings (4.10-3), both individual texts and the totality of the past that it might be possible to construct from them disintegrate into linguistic, narrative, and ideological pieces, which refuse to be put back together. Consequently, in this chapter, I have both reinforced the arguments of the first three chapters (since narrative, event, and character are constantly present) and offered an alternative method for approaching textual relations as textual relations, rather than representational 'versions' of the past. Together the *Chronike syngraphe* (α), *Synopsis chronike* (β), *Chronike historia* (γ), and *Poiema chronikon hemiteles* (δ) reflect the palimpsestic (or palimpsestuous) quality of both Byzantine literature generally and thirteenth-century narrative historiography in particular. The wider applicability of both this palimpsestuous quality and this attempt to rethink the epistemological quality of such historiographical 'evidence' can be seen immediately in other texts, encountered earlier in this study, such as the multiple 'versions' of the *Chronicle of Morea*, the various 'versions' of Choniates' *Chronike diegesis* (including the *metaphrastic/paraphrastic* 'version'), the *metaphrastic/paraphrastic* 'version' of Pachymeres' *Syngraphikai historiai*, and even beyond the Greek texts, the *metaphrastic/paraphrastic Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn Bībī's *al-Awāmer*. In short, Byzantine written culture is fundamentally anti-canonical.[1257] There is no true version of any story, whether an 'Aesopic' fable, an Antique 'pagan' myth, a saint's life, or a narrative of thirteenth-century historiography. Not only are the texts from which modern historians have sought to 'reconstruct' a past linguistic, narrative, and ideological, but they are also palimpsestic and pluralistic even when we believe (or rather will) them to be stable.

[1257] M. Lauxtermann, 'His, and Not His: The Poems of the Late Gregory the Monk', in A. Pizzone (ed.), *The Byzantine Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* (Berlin, 2014), 77-86.

5 – Conclusion: Ends and Beginnings

> πολυσχιδῶν γὰρ τουτωνὶ τελούντων καὶ μηδὲ παρ' αὐτῶν ἴσως τῶν ἐνεργούντων γινωσκομένων, σχολῇ γε ἂν τοῖς ἐξιστοροῦσι τοῦ ἀληθοῦς παντάπασι γενήσεται ἡ ἐπίτευξις·[1258] [Since these things are complex and perhaps not even understood by the very men who effect them, the attainment of truth is hardly to be realised in full by those who narrate them.][1259]

5.1 – Ends: Smashing the Nikaian narrative

To conflate historiography with the past is to make a categorical error. Linguistic, narrative, and ideological historiographical texts are generative, rather than simply mimetic. They do not offer a means of knowing, much less of reconstructing *the* past. Rather, each discursively constructs *a* past, equal (at least in absolute epistemological terms) and unverifiable amongst other discursive constructions. Although the contemporary study of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world is no longer focused exclusively on the 'representation' of 'what happened' in monographic Narrative Histories, this does not mean that the constant conflation of historiography with the past no longer affects contemporary scholarship. Instead, the modern Nikaian narrative and the metanarrative logic that sustains it, reified as fact (as much by repetition as anything else), hold a more dominant position within modern historiography today than ever before.[1260]

Before thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography can be rethought, the established Nikaian narrative and metanarrative, which has straightjacketed its study, had to be smashed. I have done this principally by exploring the disjuncture between modern historiographical presentations of the thirteenth-century Byzantine past and the medieval texts that provide 'evidence' for them. Since the majority of the 'evidence' for modern historiography has been derived from Nikaian-centric narrative historiographical texts, most notably the *Chronike syngraphe*, it has been the relationship between these texts and modern historiographical production that I have sought to deconstruct. Searching for alternative

[1258] Akropolites, *Chronike syngraphe*, 4.11-4 (§1).
[1259] Macrides, *Akropolites*, 105.
[1260] See above 1.3.

bodies of 'source material' (whether in Epirot epistolary collections, *metaphrastic/paraphrastic* 'versions' of Nikaian texts, marginalised Seljuk, Bulgarian, or Armenian historiography, or the ecclesiastical art and architecture of Trebizond), without first deconstructing the entrenched Nikaian narrative and metanarrative, can never solve the fundamental problem presented by the Nikaian-centric textual record and traditional modes of reading it. As long as the Nikaian narrative, resting on the 'evidence' of the *Chronike syngraphe*, provides the 'mainstream' framework for thirteenth-century historiography, the 'counter-narratives' that investigations of these 'alternative sources' offer will always be marginalised and subordinated. They might superficially challenge the Nikaian narrative, but such counter-narratives end up reifying that which they frame themselves against, just like counterfactuals, because they leave its central premises unquestioned, but confirm its importance.[1261] The uncompromising confrontation of the Nikaian narrative and problematic readings of the *Chronike syngraphe* are therefore the principal places where thirteenth-century historiography can be fundamentally disputed.

In the first chapter, I demonstrated that modern historiography is dominated by a naturalised Nikaian narrative (and metanarrative logic, from which it is inextricable), which constructs a single story about the thirteenth-century Byzantine 'past', saturated with teleology, linearity, and inevitability. I then introduced the texts which have been used as 'sources' for that narrative, the dominant *Chronike syngraphe* and other marginalised texts. In the second chapter, I engaged in more detail with five of the most 'important' events, which structure the Nikaian narrative, thus illustrating the military-political action that dominates the narrative of 'reconquest'. In so doing, I demonstrated that meaning has habitually been allocated according to the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, by revealing how medieval texts have been dislocated from their textual contexts and stitched together to create a single hypothetical past reality. These close textual analyses served to highlight the role of characters within both medieval and modern narratives, since each battle-event was constructed as 'significant' in large part because of the death of non-Nikaian rulers. Consequently, in my third chapter, I followed up the deconstruction of these structuring battle-events, with an analysis of the dominant characters within both Byzantine and

[1261] See above 2.1.

modern historiography. I started by demonstrating characters' representational limitations, caused by the uncertainty and indeterminacy created by their linguistic (and, in particular, analogic) quality, which highlighted the disconnect between medieval and modern conceptions of agency. Further, I demonstrated that the types of characters that seem natural in the narration of thirteenth-century historiography, particularly elite men/rulers and unitary anthropomorphic 'states' are not real mimetic people or things, but non-mimetic text-grammatical compositional units of narrative. As such, they function firmly within the logic of the Nikaian metanarrative, excluding those actors that do not move the narrative towards its telos in 1261 and imposing and conflating divergent modern and medieval assumptions about military-political action and agency indiscriminately.

In the fourth and final chapter, I showed how narrative, events, and characters, principally explored separately in the previous chapters, come together in an illustrative textual sample. I thus demonstrated more profoundly the problem generated by attempts to find the past in historiography, by revealing the extent to which the textual record, even when it and its 'evidence' of past action is presumed to be most homogenous, is multiple, uncertain, and indeterminate. Importantly, these qualities are manifested at all levels of the texts, from individual linguistic signs through to the aggregate effect of multiple complex characterisations. Having destabilised the basic building-blocks of modern historiographical constructions of the past (actions, people, space, time *etc.*), I showed that not only are these elements individually uncertain, but that they are also dependent on their positioning within equally problematic narrative and ideological contexts. Modern scholars will never find either a mechanism or a level of analysis (whether micro or macro) capable of separating the supposedly problematic '*littérarité*', 'bias', or 'form' (however framed) from the supposedly unproblematic 'history', 'unbiased facts', or 'content', because both are always already inextricable.

5.2 – Beginnings: …

The quadripartite deconstruction of this thesis smashes the Nikaian narrative and metanarrative. Superficially, it seems to stop the study of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography dead, especially if historiography is conceived of only in empiricist terms. However, if emplotted differently, the end of this thesis offers not a terminating, but an

inaugural motif. That is to say, rather than closing down the study of the texts that claim to present the thirteenth-century Byzantine world, it creates an opportunity to rethink, amongst other things, how we (as Byzantinists) approach texts and transtextual relations, how we structure and narrate periods of Byzantine historiography (beyond the thirteenth century), and how we acknowledge the ideological, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of modern Byzantine historiography.

When the past is removed as the primary arbiter of meaning in historiographical texts, then those texts can be treated as, just that, texts and the relationships between them can be treated as the relationships between texts, without either those texts or their relationships being subordinated to a single hypothetical past reality. This opens the possibility of not only reframing the kinds of knowledge claims and statements that Byzantinists make about the past, but also the way that these texts can be read individually and placed in relation to each other.[1262] When texts cease to be treated as 'evidence' or 'sources', scholars can escape the atomistic analysis of texts. Instead, texts can be analysed more holistically, without reducing narrative or argumentative structures to mere 'biases' or obstructions to 'true' knowledge of the past. When bits of texts no longer need to be taken out of their narrative context, so that they can be compared or conflated with other narratives of 'the same event', those texts can be read and made meaningful in different ways and through different systems of signification.

The state of contemporary research on the anonymous *Synopsis chronike* illustrates just how desperately Byzantinists need to rethink their approach to thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography.[1263] This long and complex text has been treated atomistically in the handful of passages where it has been deemed to provide 'additional evidence' to the *Chronike syngraphe*. To the extent that it has been analysed as a narrative whole, it has been treated only in the sections determined by its use of 'source material' and constructed not as a narrative or argumentative text in itself, but as a counter-narrative to the *Chronike syngraphe*. This presents serious problems for Byzantinists. For example, in this thesis, I have not been

[1262] By reframing I do not just mean weakening empiricist claims that 'something happened' to claims that 'something *probably* happened', but a genuine reassessment of the epistemological assumptions which underpin historiographical practice.
[1263] See above 4.2.

able to situate the passages discussed in chapter four in their extended narrative context within the *Synopsis chronike*, because so much basic work remains to be done, not just on the latter parts of the text not sanctioned as *additamenta* (to Akropolites' *Chronike syngraphe*), but also on the earlier parts of the text that have effectively been reduced to mere extensions of the text-/source-critical study of Zonaras' *Epitome historion* and Choniates' *Chronike diegesis*.[1264] In the *Synopsis chronike*, Byzantinists have a text that integrates a presentation of the thirteenth-century into a construction of the Byzantine past, yet this narrative, that can be read into the text, has been ignored in favour of attempts to 'reconstruct' events, that are problematic even in crudely empiricist terms. The assumptions that, even today, allow modern historians to write that Theodore Komnenos-Laskaris killed Kay-Khusraw in a duel or that John Asen pinned his broken treaty with Theodore Komnenos-Angelos-Doukas to his standard are symptomatic of a project that is built on unsteady philosophical foundations, even when modern 'reconstructive' efforts are less obviously farfetched.[1265]

Beyond the more textual, methodological, and theoretical argument of this thesis, my analysis offers a starting point for the radical rethinking of the thirteenth-century and, beyond that, Byzantine historiography more broadly. The thirteenth-century is not the only period dominated by a modern narrative constructed primarily from either one or a handful of historiographical narrative texts, nor the only period in which the modern analysis of texts has been structured by and subordinated to a normative linear narrative of 'Byzantine history' assumed to stretch from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. However, its analysis is particularly insightful, because it demonstrates that even in a period (1204-61) framed by a rhetoric of fragmentation, transformation, and discontinuity, modern historiography still naturalises continuity. The period following the fall of Constantinople in 1204 and the so-called 'Nikaian empire' have been incorporated uncritically into the grand sweep of 'Byzantine history', albeit as something of an anomaly. This is not to say that Byzantine texts do not actively present the Laskarid and Palaiologan polities as heirs of the pre-1204 'empire', but rather that the modern construction of the relationship between these polities conflates these Byzantine presentations with modern assumptions and teleologies. Modern ethno-nationalisms and state-fetishism have been mixed up with medieval articulations of

[1264] The *Chronike historia* (γ) is in a similar, if even more marginalised, position. See above 4.3.
[1265] See above 2.3 and 2.5.

imperial legitimacy, rhetorics of loss and exile (drawing on biblical allusions), and articulations of identity. In marshalling these modern and medieval concepts into historiographical narratives, modern historians have deployed various logics selectively. For example, as seen in the determination to use the 'proper' Byzantine term despot in the case of Epiros, but not Nikaia, or to sanction the variously termed Roman/Byzantine/Greek polities as successor states, but to exclude the Seljuk, Bulgarian, and Latin polities as something else.[1266] Even if Byzantinists reject the theoretical argument made in this thesis, this conceptual reframing of Byzantine historiography still demands a serious reassessment of traditional common-sense assumptions and practice.

Given how strong the influence of modern ideology proves to have been in the construction of the Nikaian narrative and metanarrative and the impossibility of creating a historiography that is non-ideological, perhaps the most important argument of this thesis is for a more self-aware and self-reflexive approach to Byzantine historiography, one which is not only more explicit and precise about its epistemological claims, but also one which is constantly willing to acknowledge its own modernity, whether conceptual or formal. This means the incorporation of historiography into a fully articulated Byzantine reception studies, not just as a mechanism for tracking Byzantine ideas and stuff into modernity, but as a means of radically destabilising the certainties and hierarchies, which locate meaning in a single past reality or a moment of textual production. Reception has the potential to empower a non-hierarchical, multiplicitous, and transtextual historiography, because it starts by acknowledging that meaning is neither fixed nor singular.[1267] In short, contemporary Byzantine historiography must be framed as an act of reception, rather than as one of knowledge production, advancement, or reconstruction.

The acknowledgement of contemporary Byzantine historiography's modernity means the equally careful analysis and articulation of its ethical, moral, political, narrative, and argumentative structures, as has already started to be carried out on some aspects of some

[1266] See above 1.4.

[1267] The need for historiography in Byzantine reception studies can be seen from the importance of the early-modern editions of the various texts discussed in this thesis. See above 4.4. A fully articulated field of Byzantine reception studies remains a major lacuna, despite recent advances. For which, see the scholarly activity under Przemysław Marciniak at the University of Silesia, *Center for Studies on Literature and the Reception of Byzantium*, http://www.byzantium.pl/?page=main [Accessed 21.01.18].

Byzantine texts. Medieval Byzantine assumptions about imperial legitimacy or divine protection must be scrutinised alongside the hybrid Whiggish/Darwinian/capitalist assumption that more historiographical research and publication *will*, through cumulative endeavour, generate 'progress', in the form of the 'fittest', 'most-competitive', 'best', 'truest', and 'most real' possible past/historiography. Contemporary and personal ethical and political assumptions cannot be exorcised from historiography, so we need to develop a method of incorporating them holistically into Byzantine historiography, not as a marginal bonus, but at its centre.

Finally, a rethinking of Byzantine historiography, especially one focused on its linguistic and narrative qualities, offers the possibility of articulating modern Byzantine historiography in alternative forms and making alternative aesthetic choices. From minor adjustments, such as the expected length of monographic or article-length studies, to more radical transformations, such as a rejection of prose, aesthetic experimentation (even if tokenistic) would demonstrate the extent to which the 'aesthetic' and 'formal' qualities of texts are inextricable from 'content'.[1268] What would demonstrate the covert exercise of power at play in the partiality of thirteenth-century Byzantine historiography better than a *paraphrastic* reduction of the *Chronike syngraphe* that only presented the scenes in which female or non-elite characters are accorded agency? The blank pages of such a reduction, only occasionally disrupted by a fragment of text, would embrace the metaphoric quality of thirteenth-century historiography, using it as a vehicle for analysis rather than an obstacle to be overcome.

[1268] A. Munslow and R. Rosenstone (eds.), *Experiments in Rethinking History* (New York, 2004).

6 – Bibliography[1269]

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Athos, Dionysiou Monastery Library, *Athonensis 3758 (Mon. Dionysiou 224)* (= *Athon. 3758*).

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Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, *Ambrosianus graecus 411 [G 73]* (= *Ambr. gr. 73*).

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[1269] Note that abbreviations are included in parentheses for manuscripts, for which the abbreviations are the first and only citation used in text, and in square brackets after entries in the bibliography where short-form second and subsequent references might be difficult or impossible to distinguish from other publications by the same author. Otherwise short-form abbreviations are not given.

[1270] Limited to those manuscripts of texts considered in the case study in chapter four, namely the *Chronike syngraphe*, *Synopsis chronike*, *Poiema chronikon hemiteles*, *Chronike historia*, and the related *Chronika*.

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6.7 – Electronic resources

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