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Μετάφραση : *Βελέντζας Γεώργιος*
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Περίληψη :

When Constantinople fell to the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, Theodore Laskaris, who had escaped to Nicaea of Bithynia followed by some of his supporters, established a new state thus laying claims to the continuity of the Byzantine Empire. The state, whose capital was Nicaea, finally expanded over a large part of Asia Minor and Greece mainland, and spread over territories of Epirus, the successor state of the Byzantine Empire. As the state of Nicaea actually replaced the imperial and ecclesiastical power of Constantinople, it attracted most of the Byzantines of the region and achieved remarkable economic, demographic and mainly cultural development. It survived in Asia Minor until 1261, when Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos and strategos Alexios Strategopoulos managed to recapture Constantinople and transferred the capital of the empire there.

Χρονολόγηση

1204-1261

Γεωγραφικός εντοπισμός

Nicaea, Bithynia, western Asia Minor

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1. Introduction

The Fourth Crusade put an end to the ongoing crisis in the Byzantine Empire that had broken out after the death of Manuel I Komnenos in 1180. The crisis was described by the inability of the central administration to control the provinces, where separationist movements started to appear, disputes in the capital among the members of the Angelos Dynasty and xenophobia, which culminated in the massacre of the Latins of the capital in 1182.

However, no one expected that the Fourth Crusade would last so long that its destination and aims would finally change and result in the fall of the Byzantine capital in April 1204 and the distribution of the empire between the Venetians and the crusaders. The Venetians and the doge, Enrico Dandolo, must have played an important role in the carefully prepared treaty for the partition of the Byzantine Empire (Partitio Romaniae) signed in March 1204, since Venice was the most benefited city after the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

As a result, a new Latin state was established replacing the formerly powerful Byzantine Empire. Baldwin IX of Flanders was proclaimed emperor, while the actual leader of the crusade, Boniface of Montferrat, was given the kingdom of Thessaloniki. Some crusader leaders occupied Greek territories and established Western feudalism in the Peloponnese, Athens and some Aegean islands loosely subjected to the Latin state of Constantinople. The Venetians imposed the Latin Thomas Morosini as patriarch at the church of Hagia Sophia and maintained under their domination a number of coastal cities and islands, including Crete and Euboea as well as a part of the capital. It was actually a triumph of Venice, which in this way founded its commercial state in the East and managed to maintain it for several centuries, but also an active involvement in the political matters of Byzantium from then onwards.

2. The States of Trebizond, Epirus and Western Asia Minor

Despite the shock of the unexpected fall, some members of the ruling class and the influential Byzantine families managed to found three independent Greek states: in Pontus with Trebizond as capital, in western Asia Minor with Nicaea and in Epirus with Arta.

The state of Trebizond was founded by Andronikos I’s grandsons, the brothers Alexios and David Komnenos, shortly before the fall of the Byzantine capital in 1204; they were helped by the queen of Georgia, Tamar. It was an ambitious state, which despite its early successes and expansion to Paphlagonia was finally detached from western Asia Minor and played a minor role in the following centuries before it fell to the Ottomans in 1461.

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The state of Epirus was founded in 1204 by Michael I Doukas Angelos (1204-1215), the cousin of emperors Isaac II and Alexios III, and initially extended to the west of the Pindus Mountains as far as Dyrrachium to the north and the Gulf of Corinth to the south. The crusaders could not defend the territories and therefore Michael expanded his state over Thessaly, while Macedonia and Thessaloniki (1224) were incorporated in the years of his half-brother and successor Theodore Angelos (1215-1230). Theodore Angelos was crowned emperor of the Romans in Thessaloniki, thus laying claims over the Byzantine throne. However, after his defeat by the Bulgarians (1230), the rulers of Epirus restricted their ambitions, while a large part of the state came gradually under the state of Nicaea.

3. The Historical Course of the Empire of Nicaea

3.1. Establishment of the Empire of Nicaea. The Reign of Theodore I Laskaris

The man who established the state of Nicaea was the despot Theodore Laskaris, the brother-in-law of Emperor Alexios III Angelos. Theodore left the capital in the autumn of 1203 and went to Bithynia with his family and some followers. He managed to take control of Prousa and Nicaea, while after his long conflicts with the local rulers Sabas Asidenos, Manuel Maurozomes and Theodore Mangaphas, he stabilised his state in western Asia Minor around the capital of Nicaea, as he successfully tackled the claims laid by the Latins, the state of Pontus and the sultanate of Ikonion.

The Bulgarians proved very helpful in the early years of the state of Nicaea: a joint force of Byzantines and Bulgarians under tsar Kalogiannis shattered the crusaders in Adrianople in April 1205. Several eminent crusaders were killed, while the Latin Emperor Baldwin was captured and his traces were lost after that.

The Latins had to evacuate northwestern Asia Minor, with the exception of the city of Pigai, thus giving Theodore Laskaris the opportunity to defeat David Komnenos, advance to Paphlagonia and reach as far as the Black Sea. Theodore hastened to proclaim himself emperor (1205) and invited the members of the ruling class and the senior clergymen to move to his state. He also invited the patriarch of Constantinople John X Kamateros, who had escaped to Didymoteichon, to get to Nicaea and crown him emperor. But the patriarch, who happened to be in the state of the powerful Bulgarian ruler at that moment and was able to discern the fluidity of the political situation after the fall of the capital, refused to go and died shortly later in exile (1206). In a dramatic letter they sent to Theodore Laskaris, the Orthodox of Constantinople, both clergymen and monks oppressed by the Latins, asked that a synod of archpriests be held in the East in order to deal with the election of a new Ecumenical Patriarch. And so it happened and, two years later, during the Lent of 1208, a synod of archpriests held in Nicaea elected the scholar Michael IV Autoreianos the first exiled Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople / New Rome. The first thing the new spiritual leader of the Orthodox did was to crown Theodore Laskaris emperor and anoint him with chrism on Easter Sunday of 1208. As a result, the two institutions of Byzantium, the emperor and the patriarch, were reestablished in exile. However, there was a third Byzantine symbol left, Constantinople. The struggle for the return to the capital became the raison d'être (reason for existence) for the inhabitants of the exiled empire.

At first, the relations between Theodore Laskaris and the Seljuk state of Rum were friendly, since the throne was occupied again by the Seljukid ruler Kaykhusraw I (1205), who had lived in Constantinople in exile and had been christened by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios III Angelos. For that reason, he felt a spiritual affinity with Anna Angelina, the daughter of Alexios III and wife of Theodore I Laskaris. But these relations deteriorated when Theodore's position was strengthened and particularly after the deposed Emperor Alexios III, whose right to the throne was defended by the sultan of Ikonion, arrived at the court of Kaykhusraw I.

The decisive encounter between Theodore and Kaykhusraw took place in Antioch-on-the-Meander in 1211; the two men clashed and the sultan was finally defeated and killed. This crucial victory of Nicaea was consummated by a treaty securing the eastern border, which remained unaltered for the next two generations. Furthermore, the Christians of the sultanate of Rum were probably allowed to freely perform their religious duties. The extremely ambitious Alexios III was captured and spent the rest of his life at the monastery of Hyakinthos in Nicaea.

The Latins of Constantinople took advantage of the weary and heavily defeated Theodore and attacked Asia Minor under their new Emperor Henry of Hainault (1205-1216). Their first victory came at the Ryndakos River (October 1211). The two sides continued

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fighting with minor forces until 1214, when a peace treaty was signed at Nymphaion. The Latins maintained control on the northwestern portions of Asia Minor as far as Adramyttion in the Aegean Sea, while the rest of the western Asia Minor as far as the Seljukid sultanate remained under the Empire of Nicaea. Through this treaty the two rivals officially recognised each other.

In the rest of his reign, Theodore Laskaris was deeply concerned about the better administrative and economic organisation of his state, while he also took care of his welfare as well as of his international recognition and influence. As a result, through his third marriage in 1219 to Maria of Courteney, the daughter of Empress Yolanda and Peter of Courteney, he aimed to become the viceroy of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. In the same year the Venetians signed a commercial treaty with Theodore Laskaris, who granted them the right to trade their goods free of duties within his state. In the relevant document preserved in Latin the exiled emperor is reported as "Theodorus in Christo Deo fidelis imperator et moderator Romeorum et semper Augustus Commanus Lascarus".

3.2. The Reign of John III Doukas Vatatzes

After Theodore I Laskaris died (1221) the main opponents of the Empire of Nicaea were the powerful state of Epirus under Theodore Angelos (1215-1230) and the reestablished state of Bulgaria under Ivan Asen II (1218-1241) rather than the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Those three ambitious states disputed over the succession to the Byzantine Empire and each of them aspired to recapture Constantinople first. Theodore Angelos nearly achieved his aim, but in 1230 he conflicted with the Bulgarians and suffered a heavy defeat. However, Ivan Asen was not to enjoy the fruits of his victory for long.

Most of the benefits were reaped by the new emperor of Nicaea, John III Vatatzes (1221-1254), as he successfully dealt with those who challenged his power, while he also defeated and turned the Latins out of Asia Minor before landing on Europe and capturing Adrianople (1225). In 1236, John Vatatzes allied with Ivan Asen and they both laid siege to Constantinople. The capital resisted thanks to the naval support of Venice. When the Bulgarian ruler realised that Vatatzes would be favoured by the alliance, he withdrew and allied with the Latins against his former partner. Asen's death (1241) and the subsequent Mongol invasion led to the fall of Bulgaria, which was to pay tribute to the new dominators.

John Vatatzes marched unperturbed to Macedonia and managed to annex territories controlled by the state of Epirus. In 1242, he laid siege to Thessaloniki and forced the ruler John Angelos to abdicate the title of emperor and accept the title of despot. But the news about the Mongol attack in the East made Vatatzes lift the siege and hurry back to Asia Minor. He also allied with the Seljuks in view of the common threat. However, after the Mongols shattered the Seljuks and subordinated the sultanate, they turned against the Middle East and Baghdad leaving the Empire of Nicaea intact. In this way, the emperor returned to Europe, captured Thessaloniki without a fight (1246) and advanced to western and northern Macedonia as far as the Adriatic Sea.

John Vatatzes was on good terms with the two major powers of the West, the Papal Church and the German emperor. Despite the hostility between these two sides, he fostered a close relationship and cooperated with the German Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen. Their relations were consummated by intermarriage, since Vatatzes got married to Frederick's daughter, Constantia-Anna (1244), after his first, learned wife, Eirene Laskaris, died.

In two cases, in 1234 and 1250, John Vatatzes negotiated with the Papal Church over the union. Vatatzes considered that the two Churches could achieve the union on condition that Constantinople would be restored and the Latin Empire would be abolished. Although the discussions were fruitful, Vatatzes reconsidered his policies after Frederick II's death (1250) and suspended the negotiations as he thought he no longer needed the Papal help in order to recover Constantinople.

John Vatatzes managed to secure his borders in Asia Minor and overdoubled the size of the empire by occupying a considerable part of the Balkan Peninsula. His three major opponents in the region, the Seljuks in the East, the Bulgarians and the state of Epirus in Europe, were significantly weakened. The wretched Latin Empire of Constantinople was confined to the capital and had managed to survive thanks to its powerful walls and the naval support of Venice. Although Vatatzes in the capital had made all the preparations necessary for the restoration of the empire, it was someone else who finally enjoyed the triumph. The competent ruler died in

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November 1254 leaving an economically robust and powerful empire to his young son, Theodore II (1254-1258), who kept his mother's imperial name Laskaris.

3.3. The Short-lived Reign of Theodore II Laskaris

The aim of recapturing Constantinople could not be attained during the brief reign of Theodore II Laskaris. However, that period is particularly interesting as regards social and cultural matters. The emperor himself was a prolific writer of rhetorical, philosophical and theological works, while the large number of his letters surviving to date provides precious information about the mid-13th century court and Church.

The Bulgarians, who crossed the borders and temporarily threatened Vatatzes' conquests in Thrace and Macedonia, were defeated by the imperial troops. After two costly campaigns (1255-1256), the Bulgarians had to return the cities and the strongholds they had captured in Thrace and Macedonia. The fall and death of Michael Asen and the ascent of Constantine Tich (1257-1277) helped Nicaea and Bulgaria come closer, while the marriage of Eirene, the emperor's daughter, to the Bulgarian sovereign consummated the approach.

An alliance was at first achieved with the state of Epirus, while Theodore II's daughter, Maria, married the son of Michael II of Epirus (1256), Nikephoros, who was proclaimed despot following an agreement made in the years of John Vatatzes. But when Theodore II annexed Dyrrachium and the city of Serbia, an undecided war broke out, which ended after the early death of Theodore II in August 1258.

As regards external politics, Theodore II came to an agreement with the sultanate of Ikonion, which was once again threatened by the Mongols. The megas constabularius and governor of Bithynia, Michael Palaiologos, who had escaped to the sultan due to the disorder he had caused, contacted the emperor and returned to Nicaea after taking an oath of loyalty. Despite his agreement with the Seljuks, the emperor warmly welcomed a Mongol delegation in Magnesia.

Theodore II expressed an obvious disdain for the agreement with the Catholic Church and rejected any possible subordination of the Orthodox Church. He advocated the union of the two Churches on condition that the discussions would take place on a basis of full parity and under his chairmanship. In case of disagreement, his opinion should prevail. As a matter of course, the discussions his father had started were suspended throughout Theodore's reign.

Shortly before his death, Theodore II through his will appointed his close associate George Mouzalon guardian of the eight-year old successor John IV Laskaris and obliged the aristocracy, the state officials and the clergy to take an oath of loyalty to the underage emperor and his guardian. However, the ruling class hated the guardian with the humble background because Theodore II had displaced them. A conspiracy instigated by Latin mercenaries serving under Michael Palaiologos broke out during the memorial service held on the ninth day after Theodore II's death and resulted in the murder of the three Mouzalon brothers at Sosandra Monastery of (September 1258).

A new assembly of the clergy and the ruling class appointed Michael Palaiologos new guardian of John IV and awarded him the title of the megas doux. Before the end of the year, Michael ascended to the senior rank of despot, while he was proclaimed co emperor with John IV possibly at Christmas 1258. Born into an aristocratic family, Michael Palaiologos was married to Theodora, the great-granddaughter of John III Vatatzes. Under those adverse circumstances threatening the Empire of Nicaea, this competent military official was the right choice.

3.4. The Ascension of Michael VIII Palaiologos and the Recapture of Constantinople

While all these important developments were taking place in Nicaea, the European borders of the empire were at risk. Michael II Doukas of Epirus, who had disputed with Theodore II Laskaris, started capturing western Macedonian cities and was threatening Thessaloniki. He allied with the Serbs of the sovereign Uroš against Nicaea and reached an agreement with the king of Sicily

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Manfred, the illegitimate son of Frederick II, who unlike his father was not friendly to the state of Nicaea. The alliance was consolidated when Manfred married Helen, the daughter of Michael II. They were soon joined by the powerful ruler of Achaea William II of Villehardouin, who was married to Michael's daughter Anna.

The Empire of Nicaea was facing a fatal danger because of the western alliance. Michael VIII sent his brother, Sebastokrator Constantine, to Europe heading a powerful army of Cuman and Turkish mercenaries. Manfred sent 400 knights from Italy, while Villehardouin led his forces to western Macedonia. Michael II and his son, John Doukas, the governor of Thessaly, arrived leading their own forces. The decisive battle was given in Pelagonia, in the gorge of Monastirion (modern Bitola) in late July 1259. The Empire of Nicaea scored a major triumph, while Michael II and his son John fled in disorder before the battle even started. Manfred's knights were killed in the battlefield and Villehardouin was captured. The Byzantine forces of Nicaea entered Arta and the sovereign of Epirus, Michael II, was saved thanks to reinforcements sent early enough by Manfred.

No other power in the region would dare to challenge the supremacy of the Empire of Nicaea so Michael VIII Palaiologos attacked Constantinople in the following year. It was an exploratory operation, which ended in an annual truce. Michael VIII was well aware that he needed a fleet to capture the capital. He tried to find ships by allying with Genoa, the rival of Venice in the East. Therefore, on March 13, 1261, he signed a treaty with Genoa at Nymphaion, according to which the Latin city would offer a naval force of 50 military ships during the final attack against the capital. In return, Genoa would enjoy all the privileges the Venetians had enjoyed in the empire, including the possession of a special district in the Golden Horn opposite Constantinople.

The recapture of the capital was actually much easier than the emperors of Nicaea had thought. In July 1261, while Alexios Strategopoulos was leading a small force of 800 riders just outside the walls of Constantinople on his way to the Bulgarian borders, the guard of the capital and the Venetians on the advice of the new Venetian podesta were involved in an operation to capture Daphnousia Island at the mouth of the Black Sea. Therefore, the walls of the capital were left unguarded. Helped by the thelematarioi of the capital, Strategopoulos entered and captured Constantinople on July 25, 1261. Although the Venetians dashed back to the capital when they were informed of what had happened, they only managed to collect the women and the children, who had escaped to the coast, and saved the Latin emperor Baldwin II, who had been trapped in the palace of Blachernai. After a period of 57 years, the Latin domination had come to a bitter end.

On August 15, 1261, the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos walked into the capital through the Golden Gate heading the army, the clergy, the ruling class and lots of people. The procession was preceded by the icon of Theotokos Hodegetria. Michael VIII walked as far as the Stoudiou Monastery, where he rode a horse and advanced to Hagia Sophia, which returned to Orthodoxy. The emperor offered Eucharist to God, with the ritual implying that Constantinople with the help of God was returned to the brilliant ruler Michael VIII, who was called "New Constantine".

A few months later Michael and his wife Theodora as well as their underage son Andronikos were crowned at Hagia Sophia. It was the official inauguration of the Palaiologos Dynasty, the most durable of Byzantium, which was to rule the empire until the final fall to the Ottomans in 1453. The underage John IV Laskaris was left in Nicaea and shortly later was blinded and exiled, thus completing the course and the mission of the Laskarids, who had governed the exiled empire in the best possible way.

4. Organisation of the State of Nicaea

4.1. Central Administration

After Theodore I consolidated his position in the administration of the Empire of Nicaea he organised the state according to the tradition of Constantinople. Several former officials of Constantinople responded to his call and staffed the central administration. A special position was held by Niketas Choniates, who was awarded the title of megas logothetes, praised the new emperor with encomiums and wrote a historical account including the emperor's first achievements. Demetrios Tornikios, who served as a mesazon, should also be mentioned. The same policies were followed by Theodore I's successors, particularly John Vatatzes. The protovestiarios must have been in charge of the central economic services, while economic and tax issues of the central administration were addressed by the megas logariastes. Part of the mesazon's duties was later assigned to the megas logothetes, an office held by

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the historian of the exiled empire, George Akropolites. The imperial servants also included a large number of traditional officials, such as the epi tou kanikleiou, the epi ton deeseon and the protoasekretis. The top state officials were members of the senate, an advisory body to the emperor, while the everyday agenda of the palace was prepared by a group of court officials, including the επί της τραπέζης, the parakoimomenos and the τατάς της αυλής, as well as by a special imperial guard under the megas τζαούσιος, the protostrator or other officials.

4.2. Provincial Administration

In the early 13th century, the population of western Asia Minor increased and the cities prospered again. This became evident with the foundation of new bishoprics as well as with the development of agriculture in the countryside and handicraft in the cities. The region was divided into provincial administrations under the doux, who was appointed by the emperor and had political and administrative power, supervised tax collection and was assigned with judicial duties. In the cities the praepositus was second in order, while inferior officials helped the doux exercise his duties, as he was the head of the theme. The themes reported in the sources of that period are those of Thrakesion, Neokastron, Mylasa and Melanoudion as well as the theme of Optimaton.

The border provinces had a military administrative character and were commanded by an imperial representative called “kephale” (head), who exercised absolute power.

4.3. Military Organisation

The state of Nicaea had a purely military character right from its start. All its rulers headed in the battlefield the imperial forces, which included Latin and Cuman mercenaries. The latter were christened and offered valuable services in decisive encounters, such as the battle of Pelagonia (1259) and the recapture of Constantinople. The Latin mercenaries fought bravely during the battle in Antioch-on-the-Meander (1211) and played an important role in the struggle for succession in 1258.

In the years of John Vatatzes the fleet was reorganised under the megas doux and was stationed at the naval yard of Smyrna. In this way, the emperor managed to recapture Rhodes and the eastern Aegean islands.

The borders were defended by natives or Cuman soldiers settled there in exchange for agricultural holdings. Furthermore, the emperors of Nicaea founded or fortified a number of strongholds, which defended successfully the borders in the East and the recaptured European territories. Apart from the military pronoiai, the Empire of Nicaea also granted vast pronoia holdings to the middle military aristocracy, particularly in the years of John Vatatzes.

4.4. Economy

Agriculture was a key factor in the economy of the exiled empire. For this reason, Theodore I granted state land or land previously possessed by the monasteries of the capital even to members of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy that had escaped to his state, though without affecting the local ruling class of land-owners.

Agriculture and stock breeding were also given particular importance by John Vatatzes, who promoted the imperial farms as models. He granted several pronoia holdings to aristocracy and pursued the economic self-sufficiency of the Empire of Nicaea as well as its independence from fancy goods traded by the Italian naval cities. The destruction of the sultanate of Ikonion by the Mongols helped Nicaea, which did not hesitate to export foodstuff and staple commodities to the Seljuks in exchange for gold, precious metals, silken clothes and other products. The wise and long reign of Vatatzes brought prosperity and monetary stability to the Empire of Nicaea, whose economy became much more robust than it had been in the years of the Komnenos and Angelos dynasties.

Economic prosperity gave the emperors the opportunity to maintain an adequate number of mercenaries and follow a social-friendly policy. As a result, Vatatzes founded hospitals and poor houses, and built churches and monasteries in response to the public religious feeling, such as Sosandra Monastery in Magnesia, as well as luxurious summer palaces with royal gardens in the same area.

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However, the economic surplus was soon wasted after Constantinople was recaptured, as the capital had to be rebuilt, fortified and maintained.

4.5. Culture

The sovereigns of the Empire of Nicaea were deeply interested in boosting education, which had suffered terribly when Constantinople was sacked by the crusaders. Besides, the top state positions were occupied by well educated people. Therefore, Theodore II introduced the teaching titles of the Church as well as the hypatos ton philosophon, who was assigned the supervision of education.

But when the first generation of refugee officials had to be replaced, John Vatatzes hired private teachers for the prospective state officials. The state supported teachers and students, as it happened with the teacher Theodore Hexapterygos and the philosopher Nikephoros Blemmydes, who shouldered this duty in the 1230s.

The successor Theodore II received a decent education by Nikephoros Blemmydes and George Akropolites. Theodore II founded public libraries in the imperial cities and promoted higher studies. In Nicaea, which he praises in a rhetorical encomium, he reconstructed the church of St Tryphon and founded a school of rhetoric. The fame of Nicaea as an educational centre spread over the entire Greek world and attracted students even from Latin-occupied regions.

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Μετάφραση : *Βελέντζας Γεώργιος*
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Παραθέματα

Ίδρυση βιβλιοθηκών στην Αυτοκρατορία της Νίκαιας από το Θεόδωρο Β΄ Λάσκαρι.

Ψευδο-Σκουταριώτης, *Σύνοψις Χρονική*, Σάθας, Κ. (επιμ.), στο *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη* Ζ΄ (Βενετία 1894), σελ. 535.26-536.6

«Καὶ βίβλους δὲ συνηγάγετο, οὐδ' ὅσας ὁ ἐπὶ τούτῳ μεγαλυνόμενος Πτολεμαῖος, παντοίων τεχνῶν τε καὶ ἐπιστημῶν, καὶ ταύτας ταῖς πόλεσιν ἐναποτιθείς, τοῖς βουλομένοις εἰς ἀνάγνωσιν καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐταῖς σπουδασμάτων ἀνάπτυξιν ἐθέσπισε μεταδίδοσθαι, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ τὰ τοῦ λόγου εἰς τὸ μηδὲν σχεδὸν καταντήσαντα ἐκ τῆς καταστροφῆς τῆς βασιλίδος τῶν πόλεων, ἐπὶ τούτου αὔξεσθαι ἤρξατο, καὶ ἐπὶ μείζω προέκοψεν, ὡς ἐκασταχὴ τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν χωρῶν τε καὶ πόλεων χορείας σοφῶν καθοράσθαι καὶ Μουσῶν συνίστασθαι θέατρα, καὶ πάντα σχεδὸν τόπον, ἀγοραῖς πλήθει ἐλλογίμων ἀνδρὼν ἐπιστημονικῶν ζητημάτων παραθέσεις καὶ ἀντιθέσεις ἀσχολουμένων, καὶ πονουμένων ἐπὶ λογικὰς προτάσεις καὶ συμπεράσματα».

Εγκύκλιος του πατριάρχη Μιχαήλ Αυτωρειανού (1208-1213) προς το στράτευμα του Θεοδώρου Α΄ Λάσκαρεως.

Oikonomides, N. (επιμ.), "Cinq actes inedits du patriarche Michael Autoreinos", *Reveu des etudes byzantines* 25 (1967), σελ. 117-119

«Ενταύθα τοις εν τω πολέμω πίπτουσι συγχωρεί

Του αυτού και της κατ' αυτόν μεγάλης συνόδου προς άπαν το στρατιωτικόν και συγγενές και οικείον τω βασιλεί, μάλλον δε εις τους υπηκόους του βασιλέως και στρατιώτας άπαντας.

Άνδρες Ρωμαίοι (τούτο γαρ αρκεί και μόνον το πρόσρημα της αρχαίας αναμνήσαι υμάς ευανδρίας και πάσης στρατιωτικής αρετής), οι τε μεγαλογενείς και υψηλοί τους προγόνους και το ακατάληπτων φρόνημα και οι λοιποί, γενναιότατοι μαχηταί, όσοι τον στρατιωτικόν μετέρχεσθε βίον. Νυν καιρός υμάς επιδείξασθαι συν τη άνωθεν χάριτι την υμών αυτών αρετήν και σταθηράν γενναιότητα και, τούτο μεν διά την αμώμητον υμών χάριν της πίστεως και της εκλεκτής κληρονομιάς Χριστού, ης και υμείς πάντως ετάχθητε πρόμαχοι κατά χείρα και σωματικήν την βοήθειαν, τούτο δε και υπέρ της ελευθερίας του ημετέρου γένους και ευδοξίας και πατέρων και γυναικών και τέκνων τιμής και συστάσεως, ζήλον αναλαβέσθαι διάπυρον καί εκκαυθήναι τας καρδίας και υπερζέσαι τω δικαίω θυμώ κατά των επερχομένων ημίν αδίκων και αλαζόνων εχθρών και υπεραιρομένων πάσης της Χριστού φυτείας και γεωργίας κατά τας ακάρπους του Λιβάνου κέδρους, ους συντρίψει Κύριος κατά την προφητείαν, πεποίθαμεν· και διανάστητε θαρρούντες Θεώ και αναλάβατε τα πρώτα φρονήματα, και την ευγένειαν των ενεγκουσών υμάς πατρίδων καταρριφήναι μη καταδέξησθε.

Ουκ εισίν οι εχθροί ημών εξ ετέρας ειργασμένοι της φύσεως ουδέ άτρωτοι και απαθείς κατά τας ψυχάς και τα σώματα, κατά τους μυθευομένους αρχαιοτέρους εν Έλλησιν. Η προπέτεια τούτους και η αλαζονεία και η ψεγομένη θρασύτης επαίρουσι και οπλίζουσιν, αλλά και η του πλείονος έφεσις και αδίκου κέρδους –επιθυμία θεομισής και παράνομος, δι' ην και τας ψυχάς αυτάς προσαφαιρούνται και απολλύουσι και τω αιωνίω πυρί παραπέμπουσιν. Ει ουν αυτοί, από τοιούτων παθών κινούμενοι και ορμώμενοι, αφειδούσι και των οικείων ψυχών και, ληστρικήν αναλαβόντες αναίδειαν, κατατρέχουσι τα αλλότρια και, ως υπέρ σωτηρίας αληθινής της εαυτών απωλείας μαχόμενοι, ούτω μετ' αλλήλων ομοψυχούσι και την κακήν ομονοούσιν ομόνοιαν, πώς ημείς, οι και τω φυσικώ δικαίω προσβοηθούμενοι, τον αλάθητον οφθαλμόν κριτήν επισπώμενοι ου μετά θάρρους αντιστρατεύειν οφείλομεν και υπέρ δύναμιν σχεδόν αγωνίζεσθαι, οπότε μετά των επί γης αγαθών και τον από του Θεού μισθόν επιχορηγούμενον έχομεν; Μόνον ει επ' αυτώ θαρρούμεν ολοτελώς και την θεάρεστον κατά το δυνατόν πολιτείαν, ει μη μέχρι του νυν, αλλ', ουν από γε του νυν καθυποσχόμεθα τω Θεώ και έκαστος ιδία και πάντες κοινή...

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Σύνετε δη, τέκνα αγαπητά, και ακούσατε· <ο> Θεός την βασιλείαν ημίν ως μοναρχικόν αγαθόν εδωρήσατο, εικόνα της εαυτού διοικήσεως, πάντως το της πολυαρχίας άναρχον αναιρών, <και> συνηλικιώτιν της εαυτού μετά σώματος επί γης παρουσίας ανέδειξεν, ίνα μη κατ' αλλήλων εική και μάτην φερόμενοι οι εις α<υτόν π>επιστευκότες και το σέβας και εαυτούς κακώς αναλώσωσιν. Οίδατε ουν όπως παιδεύσας ημάς ο Θεός διά τας αμαρτίας ημών, <ώστε> μικρού κινδυνεύσαι και τέλεον ημάς παραδοθήναι τοις έθνεσι, πάλιν ηλέησε και ημίν το πρώτον αγαθόν, την βασιλείαν, επανέσωσεν <και> επέστησεν ημίν βασιλέα φιλεργόν και φιλόπονον και οίον ο καιρός απήτει –και ημείς εκ των έργων αυτών κατεμάθετε, οι αυτώ συστρατεύοντες– αλλά και φιλοδωρότατον και τας στρατιωτικάς αριστείας βασιλικώς αμειβόμενον· και έργα εν αυτώ επέδειξεν ο Θεός εν ταις ημέραις ημών θαυμαστά και εξαίσια, ων εισαεί μεμνήσθαι οφείλομεν, ώστε κατ' ίχνος τούτων πορεύεσθαι. Ει δε και τούτο γινώσκομεν φυσικώς, ότι και εν τοις του σώματος μέλεσιν η κεφαλή τιμιωτάτη και τα άλλα μέλη ταύτην δορυφορούσι καί περισκέπουσι, πώς ου πρέπει ημάς την δεδομένην εκ Θεού κεφαλήν σπουδάζειν εν παντί συνιστάν και υπερκινδυνεύειν αυτής. Ουχ οράτε και τας μελίσσας φυσικώς τον οικείον βασιλέα περιπεσούσας και πάντοθεν συρρεούσας περί αυτόν και μηδαμώς αποσπωμένας απ' αυτού, καν τις επίβουλος έρχηται, αλλά περιβομβούσας και του συνήθους βαρύτερον και τοις κέντροις αμυνομένας τους φιλονεικούντας παραλυπήσαί τι τον άρχοντα; Και ει ταύτα οίδε τα ζώα τα άλογα, πόσω πλέον ημάς αρμόζει, τους λόγω και συναίσει και διακρίσει τετιμημένους παρά Θεού, του αγίου ημών αυτοκράτορος υπερασπίζειν και προκινδυνεύειν αυτού και προμάχεσθαι και μηδέποτε του συνίστασθαι αυτώ απολείπεσθαι; ίνα μη, την εαυτών καρδίαν ώσπερ αρνούμενοι, άνδρες ακάρδιοι και παρά της Γραφής ονομάζησθε. Ανδρίζεσθε ουν και κραταιούσθω η καρδία υμών και κατισχύετε παντός ανθισταμένου και αντιπίπτοντος· αλλά και ημείς, το ιερατικόν, τα όπλα του πνεύματος ενδυσάμενοι, ταις ευχαίς υμίν συναρήξομεν.

Η χάρις του κυρίου ημών Ιησού Χριστού μετά πάντων υμών, αμήν.

Παρ' ου και ημείς, την μεγάλην δωρεάν της αυτού δεξάμενοι χάριτος, συγχωρούμεν υμίν, υπερμαχούσι του λαού του Θεού, τα εν τω βίω πεπλημμελημένα υμίν, όσοις των πατρίδων προκινδυνεύουσι <και> της κοινής σωτηρίας του λαού και λυτρώσεως επισυμβαίη και θάνατος».

Η είσοδος στην Κωνσταντινούπολη του Μιχαήλ Η΄ Παλαιολόγου στις 15 Αυγούστου 1261

Γεώργιος Ακροπολίτης, *Χρονική Συγγραφή (Annales)*, Heisenberg, A., *Georgii Acropolitae Opera, 1*, Leipzig 1903, επανέκδοση Wirth, P., Stuttgart 1978, σελ. 186.29-188.10

«§ 88. Κατέλαβε γουν ο αυτοκράτωρ την Κωνσταντίνου· τεσσαρακαιδεκάτην ήγε τότε ο Αύγουστος. Εισελθείν γουν εις την Κωνσταντινούπολιν ουκ ηθέλησε την αυτήν ημέραν, αλλά τας σκηνάς εν τη μονή του Κοσμιδίου επήξατο, τη άγχι διακειμένη των Βλαχερνών. Εκείσε γουν διανυκτερεύσας έωθεν αναστάς την εις Κωνσταντινούπολιν είσοδον απειργάσατο τρόπον τοιούτον. Επεί δε ο μεν πατριάρχης Αρσένιος ου παρήν, οία εκείνος ανήρ νωθρότερος περί τα καλά και δύσνους προς τον βασιλέα τελών και μικρού δυσχεραίνων, ότι προς του βασιλέως η Κωνσταντίνου τη των Ρωμαίων αρχή συγκατείλεκται. ίδει δε άρα των τινα αρχιερέων τας ευχάς εις επήκοον εξειπείν, ο της Κυζίκου μητροπολίτης Γεώργιος, ον και Κλαδάν κατωνόμαζον, επλήρου την χρείαν, και εις ένα των πύργων των της Χρυσείας αναβάς, έχων μεθ' εαυτού και το της Θεοτόκου εκτύπωμα το ούτω πως εκ της μονής παρωνομασμένον των Οδηγών, εις επήκοον απάντων απεστομάτισε τας ευχάς. Ο μεν ουν αυτοκράτωρ την καλύπτραν αποβαλών και γόνυ κλίνας έπεσε χαμαί, και πάντες δε οι συν αυτώ όπισθεν αυτού επί γόνυ κατέπεσον. Επεί δε η πρώτη των ευχών εκτετέλεσται και ο διάκονος εσήμηνε την ανέγερσιν, πάντες αναστάντες το κύριε ελέησον, εις εκατόν αριθμήσαντες, επεβόησαν. Και τούτων τετελεσμένων προς του αρχιερέως και αύθις ετέρα τις εξεφωνήθη ευχή. ως εν τη πρώτη γουν και εν τη δευτέρα γεγένηται, και ούτω πως διαπέπρακται μέχρι και συμπληρώσεως των όλων ευχών. επεί γουν ουτωσί πως τα βασιλικώς την της Χρυσείας πύλην εισήλθεν ο βασιλεύς πεζός γαρ εβάδιζε, προήρχετο δε τούτου της θεομήτορος η εικών. Μέχρι μεν ουν της του Στουδίου μονής απελθών, εκείσε την εικόνα καταλιπών της υπεράγνου μητρός του θεού, επιβάς του ίππου περί το της Σοφίας του θεού αφίκετο τέμενος. Εκείσε γουν τω δεσπότη προσκυνήσας Χριστώ και τα εικότα τούτω ευχαριστήσας, περί το μέγα κατηντήκει παλάτιον. εν ευφροσύνη γουν και θυμηδία πολλή και απλέτω χαρά το Ρωμαϊκόν τω τότε γεγένηται πλήρωμα· ουδείς γαρ ην ο μη σκιρτών τε και αγαλλόμενος και μικρού δειν τω πράγματι απιστών διά το απροσδόκητον του έργου και το

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υπερβάλλον της ηδονής».

Χρονολόγιο

1203 (autumn): Theodore Laskaris settles in Bithynia.

1204 (April): Partitio Romaniae: Treaty distributing the territories of the Byzantine Empire among the forces of the Fourth Crusade. Constantinople falls to the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade.

1204: Alexios and David Grand Komnenos found the state of Trebizond. Michael I Doukas Angelos founds the state of Epirus.

1205 (April): Battle of Adrianople between a coalition of Byzantines and Bulgarians and the Latins. The latter are defeated and the Latin Emperor Baldwin is captured.

1205: Theodore Laskaris is proclaimed emperor of Nicaea.

1208: Michael IV Autoreianos ascends the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in Nicaea.

1208 (Easter, April 6): Theodore Laskaris is crowned by Michael IV Autoreianos.

1211: Battle of Antioch-on-the-Meander between Theodore Laskaris and Kaykhusraw I, the sultan of Rum.

1211 (October): Battle at the Ryndakos River between Theodore and the Latins. Theodore is defeated.

1214: Treaty of Nymphaion between the Empire of Nicaea and the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

1215: Theodore Angelos ascends the throne of Epirus.

1218: Ivan Asen II reforms the state of Bulgaria.

1219: Theodore Laskaris marries the daughter of Yolanda, the empress of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Commercial agreement between the Empire of Nicaea and Venice.

1221: John III Vatatzes ascends the throne of Nicaea.

1225: John III Vatatzes captures Adrianople.

1234: Negotiations with the papal Church over the union of the two Churches.

1236: Constantinople is besieged by the coalition of the Empire of Nicaea and the Bulgarians.

1240: Eirene, the wife of John III Vatatzes, dies.

1241: Death of Ivan Asen II and subordination of his state to the Mongols.

1242: John III Vatatzes lays siege to Thessaloniki and annexes the state of Epirus.

1244: John III Vatatzes marries Constantia, the daughter of the German emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen.

1246: John III Vatatzes annexes Thessaloniki and territories as far as the Adriatic Sea.

Συγγραφή : *Κωνσταντινίδης Κωνσταντίνος*
Μετάφραση : *Βελέντζας Γεώργιος*
Για παραπομπή : *Κωνσταντινίδης Κωνσταντίνος , "Byzantine empire of Nicaea", Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Μ. Ασία*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=7471>

1254: Theodore II Laskaris ascends the throne of Nicaea.

1258: Theodore II Laskaris dies and John IV Laskaris ascends the throne of Nicaea.

1258 (September): The Mouzalon brothers are murdered by order of Michael Palaiologos.

1258 (Christmas): Michael Palaiologos is crowned co emperor.

1259 (late July): Battle of Pelagonia.

1261 (March 13): Treaty signed between the Empire of Nicaea and Genoa.

1261 (July 25): Constantinople is captured by the troops of Nicaea under Alexios Strategopoulos.

1261 (August 15): Michael VIII Palaiologos enters Constantinople.

Βοηθ. Κατάλογοι

Emperors of Nicaea

1204-1222: Theodore I Laskaris

1222-1254: John III Doukas Vatatzes

1254-1258: Theodore II Laskaris

1258-1259: John IV Laskaris

1259-1261: Michael VIII Palaiologos

Latin Empire of Constantinople

1204 - 1205: Baldwin I of Constantinople (Baldwin IX Count of Flanders)

1206 - 1216: Henry of Flanders

1217: Peter of Courteney

1217 - 1219: Yolanda

1221 - 1228: Robert of Courteney

1228 - 1261: Baldwin II

(1231 - 1237): John of Brienne