A 'Story' of Predestined Polities: Reviewing Nicaea's Anatolian Dominance (*c.* 1204-14)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contends that the historiography of the 'late' Byzantine world, and the thirteenth century in particular, has been compromised. The so-called 'turning-points' of 1204, 1261 and 1453 have come to monopolise a historical narrative which does little more than link these 'significant' events together. A teleological and anachronistic metanarrative has been created, which forces 'historical events' into a simplistic linear narrative framework, denuding the past of its due complexity. The historiographical treatment of the polities which came into existence after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 illustrates this macro-historiographical trend. The perceived 'success' of the polity founded at Nicaea, which captured Constantinople in 1261, is repeatedly projected backwards onto the entire period 1204-61. Historiographical treatment routinely denudes Nicaea's so-called rivals of power and potential, through a combination of the events on which historians place significance and the language they use to describe them. This thesis considers in depth the effect that (meta)narrativisation has had on the period 1204-14. It thus serves the dual function of identifying a macro-historiographical issue and starting to resolve some of the problems to which it has given rise.

For my mother, who gave me my love of history,

and my father, who has suffered it stoically.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS & FIGURES

A. Maps

B. Figures

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. 'Primary Literature'

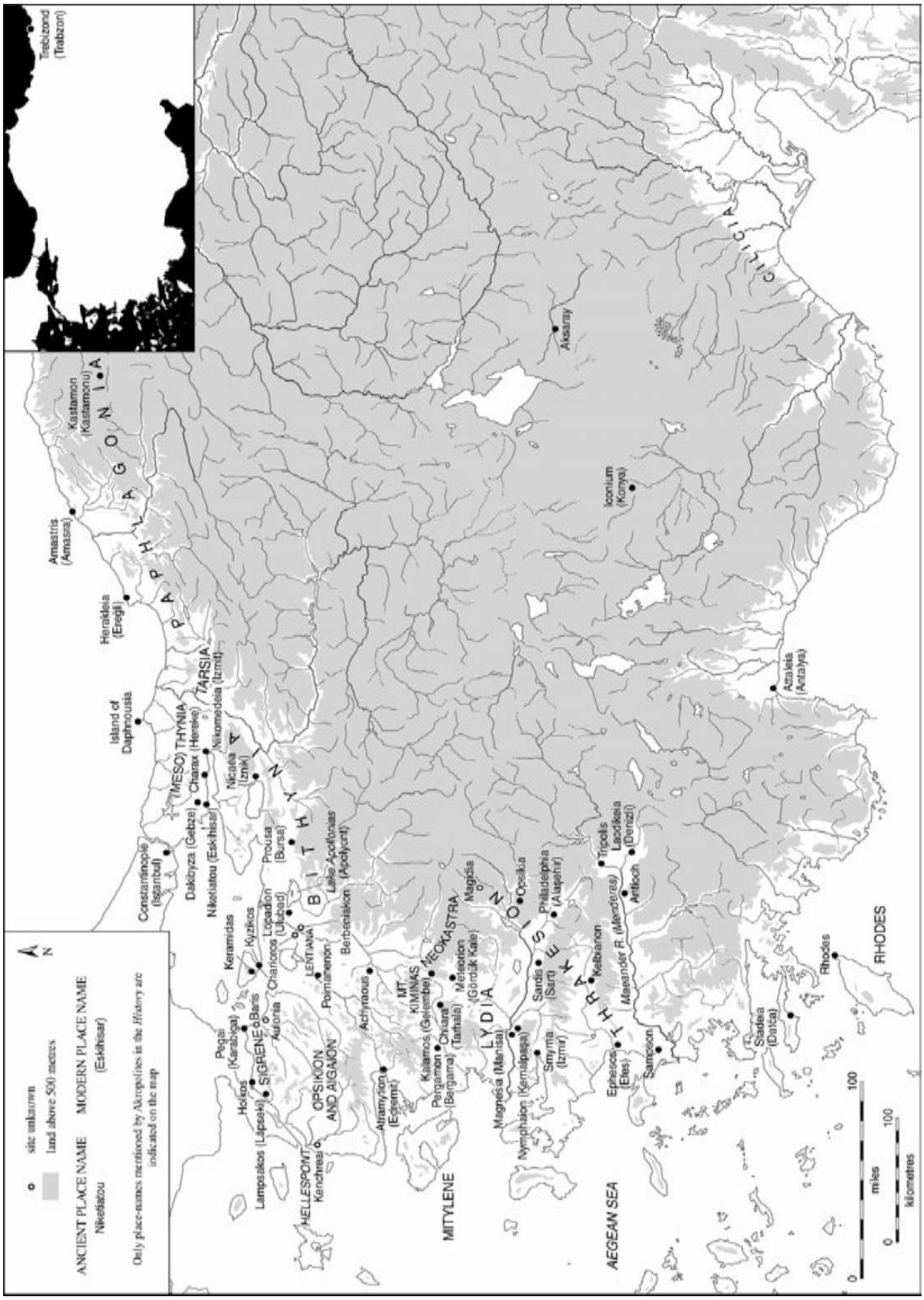
Akropolites	George Akropolites, *Annales*, (ed.) A. Heisenberg
Autoreianos	Michael Autoreianos, *Acts*, (ed.) N. Oikonomides
Blemmydes	Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Curriculum Vitae*, (ed.) J. A. Munitiz
Chomatenos	Demetrius Chomatenos, *Πονήματα διάφορα*, (ed.) G. Prinzing
Gregoras	Nikephoros Gregoras, *Historia Romana*, (ed.) I. Bekker and L. Schopen
Hen. *Epist*.	Henry of Hainaut, *Letter from Constantinople*, (ed.) G. Prinzing
Ibn al-Athīr	Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, (trans.) D. S. Richards
Ibn Bibi	Ibn Bibi, *Die Seltschukengeschichte*, (trans.) H. W. Duda
Mesarites I	Nicholas Mesarites, *Epitaphius in Joannem Mesaritem*, (ed.) A. Heisenberg
Mesarites II	Nicholas Mesarites, *Rogationes ad Imperatorem Theodorum Lascarem*, (ed.) A. Heisenberg
Mich. Chon. *Epist*.	Michael Choniates, *Epistualae*, (ed.) S. P. Lampros
MM	F. Miklosich & J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana*
Nik. Chon. *Hist.*	Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, (ed.) J-L. van Dieten
Nik. Chon. *Orat*.	Nicetas Choniates, *Orationes*, (ed.) J-L. van Dieten
Pachymeres	George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι*, (ed.) A. Failler & V. Laurent
Skoutariotes	Theodore Skoutariotes *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, (ed.) K. N. Sathas
TT	G. L. F. Tafel & G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden*
Villehardouin	Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, (ed.) E. Faral

B. Journals and 'Secondary' Literature

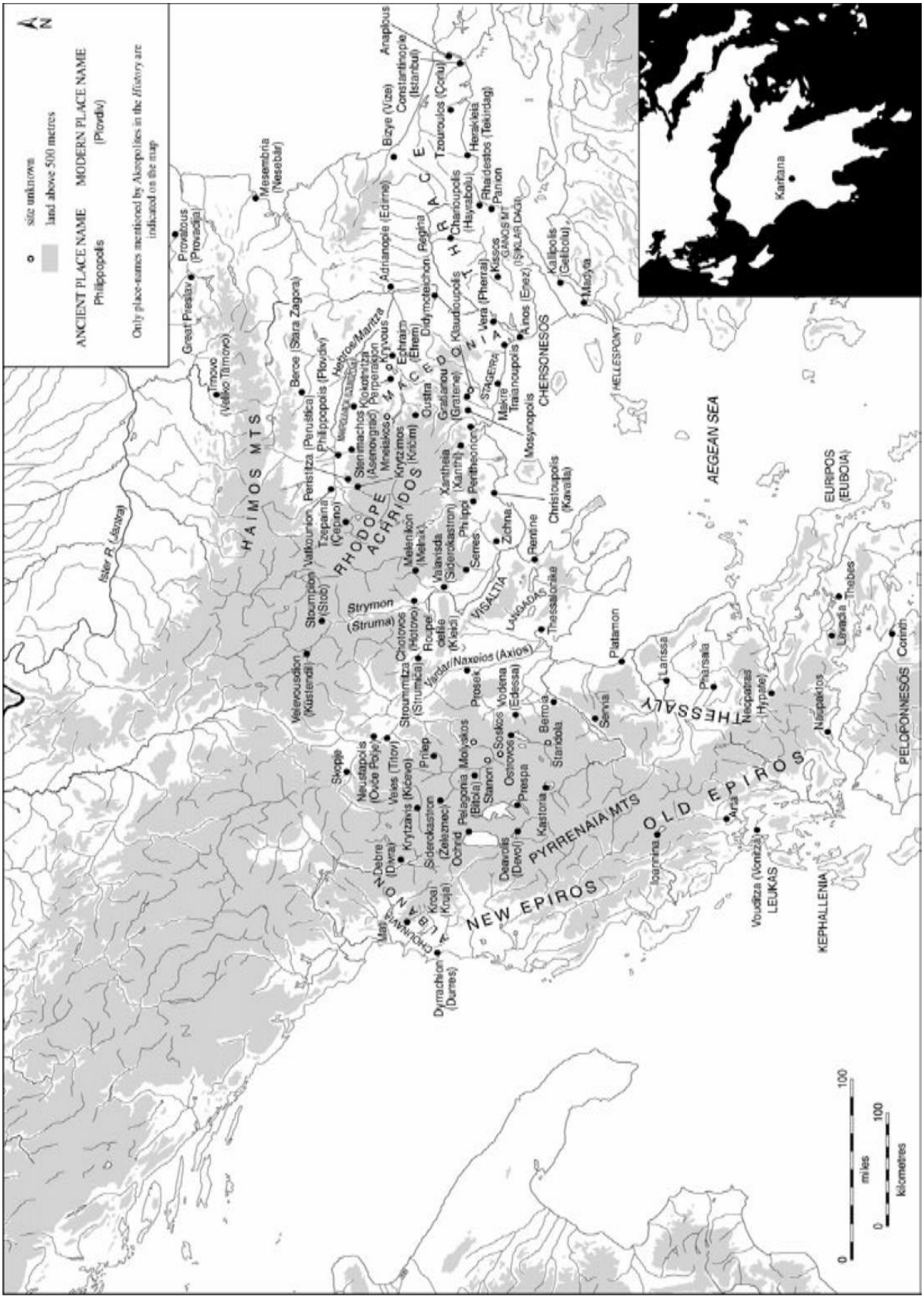
ΑΠ	*ΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ ΠΟΝΤΟΥ*
BF	*Byzantinische Forschungen*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CI	*Critical Inquiry*
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
IHR	*The International History Review*
NIV	New International Version (of the Bible)
REB	*Revue des Études Byzantines*

MAPS

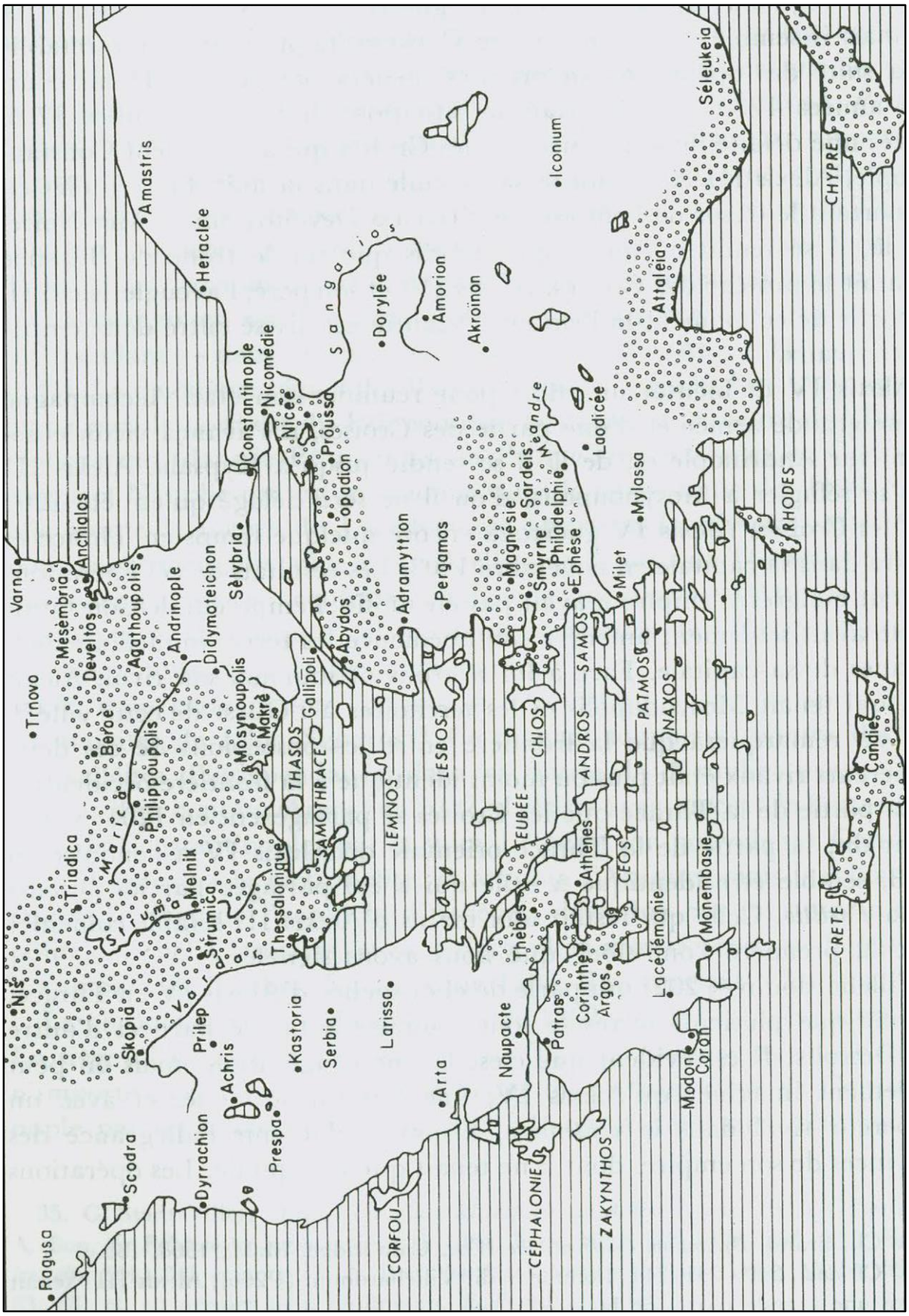
Map I: Asia Minor/Anatolia



Map II: The Balkans



Map III: Areas omitted from the *Partitio Romaniae*



INTRODUCTION

By the end of 1204 the territories of the 'former Byzantine empire' had become a patchwork of autonomous political entities. Three of these polities are relatively well-known – those named after Nicaea, Trebizond and Epiros/Thessaloniki – while others – including those in Anatolia, based around Attaleia, Chonai/Laodikeia, Philadelphia and Sampson – have received little attention, except as footnotes to the expansion of 'the big three', especially Nicaea.[1] The difference in the historiographical treatment of these polities results from an invented metanarrative, which has come to predetermine historical analysis of the thirteenth century.[2] This metanarrative, understood quite literally as a 'big-story', has subsumed all other stories and created a totalising narrative schema through which information and events have been ordered.[3]

Primarily responsible for this metanarrative are the Byzantine historians, Niketas Choniates and George Akropolites, whose own narratives have been regurgitated uncritically by modern scholars for so long that simply by merit of repetition they have become 'true'.[4] Constantinople and the significance attributed to its falls in 1204, to the

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[1] For an example of this see S. Redford, 'Sinop in the Summer of 1215: The Beginning of Anatolian Seljuk Architecture', *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 16 (1210b), p. 126.

[2] Although the metanarrative being discussed here is less 'meta' than those commonly mentioned by postmodernist thinkers, such as Jean-François Lyotard, whose examples included "the dialectics of the Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth." See J-F. Lyotard, (trans.) G. Bennington & B. Massumi, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, (Manchester, 1984), p. xxiii. Within the context of thirteenth-century historiography these metanarratives have been as totalising as the great metanarratives of marxism or capitalism have been in other contexts.

[3] This thesis makes no distinction between story and narrative following G. Roberts, 'Introduction', in G. Roberts (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader* (London, 2001b), p. 16. See below, p. 34.

[4] 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), pp. 51-2.

fourth crusade, and in 1261, to the Nicaeans, have dominated historiographical analysis of the thirteenth century throughout the Byzantine space. Having been endowed with such supreme significance these 'key-events' have acted as a framework around which the patchwork of propagandistic and anachronistic narratives, which form the historical record, have been arranged. When grafted together by scholars, this combination of narratives and fixed points has created a linear metanarrative according to which 'lesser events' have been attributed significance, in accordance with their position on the trajectories linking the fixed-points. Since 1204 has been deemed a catastrophic event the build-up to it has been given a negative trajectory and all events, at least from the death of Manuel Komnenos (1180), have been plotted onto it. The capture of Constantinople in 1261 has resulted not only in the period 1204-61 being treated as an anomaly and separated from "the mainstream of Byzantine history" by the falls of Constantinople, but also in their being characterised by Nicaean success because the polity of Nicaea was responsible for the capture of 1261.[5] The importance of 1453 as a preconceived *telos* has, however, resulted in the entire period being subsumed into the decline paradigm postulated for almost the entirety of Byzantine history.

The narrativisation of events involves adherence to a set of normative semiotic expectations and has resulted in the application of teleology and signification which has compromised historical analysis. The complex and unsatisfactory source-record has been simplified through narrative, so that events and causation can be comprehended and even controlled. This simplification must be attenuated and the problems it has created resolved. The data available for the study of this period should be examined outside the confines of this totalising discourse. Moreover, the literary, and especially narrative, character of central

[5] 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), p. 737.

texts must be acknowledged, so that 'events' can be analysed 'in their own right', as far as possible.

It would be impossible to examine the entire period and space in which the metanarrative is operative, since to do so would reduce this thesis to meaningless generalities. This study therefore, after examining the macro-theoretical problems within the historiography, investigates the manner in which this metanarrative discourse has distorted the historical analysis of the polities of western Anatolia in the decade following the fourth crusade.[6] This temporal and geographical delimitation, although arbitrary, as is all periodisation, allows the inevitability with which Nicaean success has been characterised to be reviewed. This thesis will attempt to treat events outside linearity and chronology, and thus challenge the compelling story that has been created and retold, serving the dual function of examining the metanarrative and starting to resolve some of the problems it has caused.

[6] Material and examples from outside this period and space will be drawn on where space allows, but unavoidably there is much that could usefully have been included for which there has been insufficient space.

CHAPTER I - The Tyranny of a Narrative: Inventing a Story from ἅλωσις to ἀνάῤῥυσις

This chapter considers how the highly centralised nature of the Byzantine 'empire' has allowed the three conquests of its capital, in 1204, 1261 and 1453, to dominate historical analysis of 'late' Byzantine history.[7] It demonstrates how significance has been attributed to these 'key-events' or 'turning-points' by Byzantine and modern scholars, according to the stories they were trying to tell, and how a vast array of stories has been incorporated into a metanarrative that in turn serves to predetermine historical analysis. It reflects on the implications for historical analysis of using vocabulary determined by the discourse of this metanarrative and the inherent problems of the narrative form of discourse for understanding historical causation. Finally this chapter sets out an alternative approach to the analysis of the polities under discussion.

Constantinople: City of the World's Desire[8]

In the twelfth century, Constantinople dwarfed the other urban centres of Byzantium and 'the West'.[9] It was so impressive that, to an obscure knight from Picardy, it appeared

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[7] The term 'late' has come to be used in academic parlance as a synonym for the period from *c*. 1203/4 – *c*. 1453/61. However, the term 'late' assumes a functionalism that distorts analysis (see below, p. 30, esp. n. 129). In this thesis the term is placed in inverted commas in recognition of and to bring the attention of the reader to the constructed nature of the term. The same is true of 'middle', 'early' and other words, such as 'empire', which despite being treacherous signifiers are difficult to avoid. For example, 'empire', although entrenched in the historiographical canon of vocabulary, bears modern connotations about the nature of the polity it describes, which are not always applicable in Byzantium.

[8] P. Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453-1924* (London, 1995).

[9] P. Magdalino, 'Medieval Constantinople: Built Environment and Urban Development', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Washington, 2002), pp. 534, 537. K-P. Matschke, 'The Late Byzantine Urban Economy, Thirteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Washington, 2002), pp. 463-95, esp. 463. Constantinople potentially had a population as large as 400,000 in the late twelfth century, see D. Jacoby, 'La Population de Constantinople à l'Époque Byzantine: un Problèm de Démographie Urbaine', *Byzantion* 31 (1961), pp. 81-109. See above, p. 4, n. 7.

perfectly plausible that "two thirds of the wealth of this world" could be in Constantinople "and the other third scattered throughout the world."[10] Geoffery de Villehardouin agreed when he saw the booty amassed by his fellow crusaders, writing that "no such spoils were won in any city since the creation of the world."[11] However, it was not only hoarded wealth which made Constantinople important. Its geographical position astride the Bosphorus, connecting Anatolia to the Balkans and the Black sea to the Aegean, made Constantinople an almost unavoidable entrepôt for eastern Mediterranean trade and communications.[12] Moreover, as the centre of government and the location of the court, it was "the chief centre of consumption in the Byzantine world", as well as the hub for collection and distribution of tax. [13] Michael Choniates, metropolitan of Athens, illustrates the centralising role of Constantinople well when he describes the wealth of the provinces as "rivers of money flowing together to form one sea [at] the imperial city".[14] Even the so-called 'Komnenian reform' never significantly changed the Constantinople-centric administration which, as Leonora Neville has demonstrated, unswervingly maintained the prerogatives of 'sovereignty' and revenue collection.[15]

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[10] Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, (trans.) E. H. McNeal, *The Conquest of Constantinople* (Toronto, 1996), p. 101.

[11] Villhardouin §250. Gunther of Pairis also includes a similar description of the wealth of Constantinople, see: Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, (trans.) A. J. Andrea, *The "Hystoria Constantinopolitana" of Gunther of Pairis* (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 108.

[12] This is illustrated by the major road networks of the Balkans and Asia Minor, see J. Haldon, *The Palgrave Atlas of Byzantine History* (Houndmills, 2005), pp. 11-12, maps 1.9-10.

[13] M. Whittow, 'The Middle Byzantine Economy (600-1204)', in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500-1492* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 477.

[14] Mich. Chon. *Epist*. §83.19-21.

[15] On the lack of fundamental change under the Komnenoi, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180* (Cambridge, 1993), ch. 4, esp. p. 235. L. Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge, 2004), *passim*, esp. pp. 165-7.

Furthermore, "the constitutional and ideological role of Constantinople within Byzantium far exceeded that of any capital city or metropolis in almost any other territorial state."[16] The "supreme importance of the ruling city" dominated not only Byzantine conceptions of 'the state', but also of cosmic world order.[17] The centre of an ostensibly oecumenical church network, the city was itself sacred, and only in eschatological thought could its fall be imagined.[18] It even dominated culture and art, exporting styles as a mark of sophistication, in painting, sculpture and architecture.[19]

So obvious was the importance of Constantinople to the Byzantine 'empire' that the Bishop of Langres, a participant in the French contingent of the second crusade, noted:

> …that if that city [Constantinople] were taken it would not be necessary to conquer the others, since they would yield obedience voluntarily to him who possessed their capital.[20]

The bishop was primarily a mouthpiece for Odo of Deuil's bitter anti-Byzantine propaganda, but however wrong he might have been about the Byzantine cities not resisting a crusader

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[16] P. Magdalino, 'Constantinople and the Outside World', in D. C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 150-1. The relationship between cities and polities ('states') is complex and understudied. However, Derek Keene has isolated some elements common among those polities which functioned as 'empires'. Some of his observations are pertinent to the case of Byzantium, see D. Keene, 'Cities and Empires', *Journal of Urban History* 32 (2005), pp. 8-21.

[17] Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 228; 237.

[18] P. J. Alexander, 'The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes', *Speculum* 37 (1962), pp. 339-57. A. Kraft, 'Constantinople in Byzantine Apocalyptic Thought', *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 18 (2012), pp. 25-36.

[19] For the example of sculpture see S. Alpaslan, 'Architectural Sculpture in Constantinople and the Influence of the Capital in Anatolia', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 187-202. N. Melvani, *Late Byzantine Sculpture* (Turnhout, 2013), p. 158. For an example of painting see M. Constantoudaki-Kitromilides, 'Alexios and Anghelos Apokafkos, Constantinopolitan Painters in Crete (1399-1421): Documents from the State Archives of Venice', in F. K. Haarer & E. Jeffreys (eds.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (Aldershot, 2006), vol. 3, pp. 45-6.

[20] Odo of Deuil, (trans.) V. G. Berry, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem: The Journey of Louis VII to the East* (New York, 1948), p. 69.

conquest of Constantinople, the significance he and his contemporaries attributed to Byzantium's imperial capital is clear. Even evidence of provincial dissent only serves to reinforce the actual importance of Constantinople. For example Michael Choniates railed sarcastically at the "'sensitive' citizens of Constantinople", who hid behind Constantinople's legendary "walls and gates", but never come out to look after neighbouring cities, and instead "only send out tax-gatherers…wave upon wave, gathering up the remaining wealth of the cities".[21]

The genuine importance of Constantinople has been reinforced in the historical record, not only by the accounts of visitors such as the bishop of Langres and Robert of Clari, but also by the dominance of Constantinopolitans among Byzantine authors. The Constantinopolitan perspective, which has been compared to the world-view of modern New Yorkers, has helped to focus on events in the imperial centre.[22] The foremost historian of events up to 1210, Niketas Choniates, despite being born in Chonai, was thoroughly Constantinopolitan, having been sent there for his education at the age of nine, and having lived, worked and written there for the majority of his life.[23] In 1204/5 he was identified by the inhabitants of Thrace as an alien Constantinopolitan and reviled for the errors of the Constantinopolitan elite (τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς) as a whole.[24] George Akropolites, the author of the only history which covers the whole period 1204-61, a work which has been so

[21] Mich. Chon. *Epist*. §83.8-10.

[22] For the New Yorker analogy, see Magdalino, 'Constantinople and the Outside World', pp. 150; 162. More generally, see P. Magdalino, 'Byzantine Snobbery', in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries British Archaeological Reports* (1984), pp. 58-71, esp. 65.

[23] 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), p. 21.

[24] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §644-5, esp. §644.26. Chonai, modern Honaz, near classical Colossae, is situated at the eastern end of the Maeander valley, 15km east of modern Denizli and was an important city in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Byzantine Lycia.

influential that Ruth Macrides has argued convincingly that "Akropolites' thirteenth century has become our thirteenth century", should also be viewed as a Constantinopolitan.[25] He was born and raised in Constantinople (1217-23), before he moved to the Nicaean court (which moved to Constantinople in 1261), where he remained until his death in 1282.[26] Other authors, whose evidence supplements Choniates and Akropolites' narrative histories, such as Nicholas Mesarites and Euthemios Tornikes, were also Constantinopolitans.[27] This dominance of Constantinopolitans in the production of surviving evidence is mirrored by the dominance of Constantinople in historical analysis.

Narrating up to 1204: Choniates and Villehardouin

1204 has come to represent the point of rupture between the 'middle' and 'late' Byzantine worlds.[28] Michael Angold, a historian so prolific in the study of 'late' Byzantine history that he almost singlehandedly represents historiographical orthodoxy, has argued that "1204 acted as a catalyst" and "crystallised trends that had been working against Byzantium for a century or more."[29] However, Angold's comments, can only be understood in the context of

[25] R. Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 2007), pp. ix; 5.

[26] Akropolites thus lived more than half of his 65-year life in Constantinople. Moreover, he also probably composed his *Chronike Syngraphe* in Constantinople. On Akropolites see below, pp. 23-6.

[27] Even Michael Choniates, who challenged the dominance of Constantinople on behalf of his flock studied and worked in the city before moving to Attica, see M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 197-212.

[28] The use of 1204 as a major marker of periodisation has become ubiquitous. Most illustrative are the subdivisions of important reference works. For example, J. Shepard, 'Periodisation and the Contents of this Book', in J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500-1492* (Cambridge, 2008b), pp. 21-52. C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002). S. W. Reinert, 'Fragmentation (1204-1453)', in C. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 248-83. M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: A Political History* (London, 1997). On the use of 'middle' and 'late' see above, p. 4, n. 7.

[29] M. Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (Harlow, 2003), p. 5.

a historiographical debate, which although contentious, has been dominated by a common focus on the profound significance of the fall of Constantinople.[30] Angold's argument simultaneously attacked both the "clash of civilisations" school and the crusader apologists, whose positions had dichotomised debate, either arguing that it was fundamentally 'inevitable', on the grounds of a breakdown of relations between 'East' and 'West', or conditioned by chance and circumstance.[31] While Angold's argument represents a sophisticated approach to the causation and consequences of 1204, it maintains emphasis on the event's dominance over the surrounding period, a problem characteristic of all the schools of thought on the fourth crusade. This is not, however, an accident, since Angold criticised the *Annales* school's over-concern with deep processes and de-emphasis of

[30] Due to the sheer volume of debate the fourth crusade has even been labelled "one of the most boring and stultified *topoi* of all medieval history", M. F. Hendy, 'Byzantium, 1081-1204: The Economy Revisited, Twenty Years On' in M. F. Hendy (ed.), *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and the Coinage of Byzantium* (Northampton, 1989c), III, p. 26, n. 92.

[31] The term "clash of civilisations" first used in this context by Jonathan Harris refers to those historians, mostly Byzantinists, who believe that the event of the fourth crusade was almost, if not actually, inevitable as part of the breakdown in relations between Byzantium and 'the west': J. Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London, 2006), p. xiv. Not to be confused with Johnathan Phillips' position which falls within this school, who described the fourth crusade as a "clash of cultures", see J. Phillips, 'The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople', *History Today* 54 (2004), http://www.historytoday.com/jonathan-phillips/fourth-crusade-and-sack-constantinople (accessed 14.08.14). For other proponents of this school see: S. Runciman, 'Byzantium and the Crusades', in T. F. Madden (ed.), *The Crusades: The Essential Readings* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 211-20; *A History of the Crusades* (London, 1990a-c), 3 vols. More recently argued by A. E. Laiou, 'Byzantium and the Crusades in the Twelfth Century: Why was the Fourth Crusade Late in Coming?', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e Croisade et ses Conséquences* (Paris, 2005c), pp. 17-40. For the revisionist school of western medievalists, who have blamed the accident of circumstances for 1204 and apologised for the crusaders and Venetians, see D. E. Queller & T. F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1997), *passim*, esp. p. 203. T. F. Madden, 'Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade', *IHR* 17 (1995), pp. 726-43; 'Vows and Contracts in the Fourth Crusade', *IHR* 15 (1993), pp. 441-68; 'Venice's Hostage Crisis: Diplomatic Efforts to Secure Peace with Byzantium between 1171 and 1184', in T. Madden & E. E. Kittell (eds.), *Medieval and Renaissance Venice* (Urbana, 1999), pp. 96-108. D. E. Queller & G. W. Day, 'Some Arguments in Defence of the Venetians on the Fourth Crusade', *American Historical Review* 71 (1976), pp. 717-37.

events.[32] Yet this target remains a straw-man, since not even the most deterministic analyses have removed 1204 from the Byzantinist's pantheon of 'key-events', and Angold fails to reference any examples of the application of an *Annales* methodology.[33] 1204 thus constitutes a historiographical "unifying event", upon the significance of which all historians are agreed.[34] Even those who come closest to a *longue durée* approach, still feel compelled to build their arguments within a framework that accepts the significance of 1204 through periodisation.[35] It is illustrative of 1204's perceived significance, that the words of Euthemios Tornikes, "cosmic cataclysm", are used almost reverentially by historians to describe the event.[36]

The unifying historiographical preoccupation with the event of 1204 can be traced back to the sources which describe it. Particularly Niketas Choniates, the dominant Byzantine historian of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the shape of whose *Historia* (or *Chronike Diegesis*) "defines as well as reflects the condition of the empire" before and after 1204, at least as moderns understand it.[37] Both of the major manuscript traditions (texts b(revior) and a(uctior) as defined by Jan-Louis van Dieten) climax with the capture of

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[32] Angold, *The Fourth Crusade*, *passim*, esp. pp. xi-xii; 3-7. See also M. Angold, 'Turning Points in History: The Fall of Constantinople', *Byzantinoslavica* 71 (2013), pp. 11-12. For a true *Annales* perspective see F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkley, 1995). P. Horden & N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000).

[33] For example Laiou, 'Why was the Fourth Crusade Late?', pp. 17-40.

[34] L. Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London, 2000), p. 122.

[35] Most notably see M. F. Hendy, 'Byzantium, 1081-1204: An Economic Reappraisal' in M. F. Hendy (ed.), *The Economy, Fiscal Administration and the Coinage of Byzantium* (Northampton, 1989b), II, pp. 31-52; 'Byzantium, 1081-1204: The Economy Revisited', pp. 1-48.

[36] Tornikes' words were primarily popularised by Angold. See Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 731; *Church and Society*, p. 213; *The Fourth Crusade*, p. xi.

[37] A. J. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study* (Oxford, 2013), p. 145. For the influence of Choniates' narrative see also A. J. Simpson, 'Before and After 1204: The Versions of Niketas Choniates' "Historia"' *DOP* 60 (2006), p. 189. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire*. C. M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West 1180-1204* (Cambridge: MA, 1968).

Constantinople and the foundation of the Latin 'empire', finishing in early 1205.[38] Only the smaller LO-text tradition records events after 1205, covering the period July 1203-10/11.[39] This later addition was transmitted with Choniates' *Dogmatike Panoplia* and was also possibly composed at the request of Constantine Mesapotamites.[40] In the main edition of Choniates' *Historia* the majority of the text is based upon Dieten's a-text, with other sections grafted on.[41] The rather confusing manuscript tradition and the dominance of the a-text have dramatic consequences for the interpretation of the *Historia*, which are not always incorporated into the analyses of scholars. While the b-text was largely written during the reign of Alexios III, the a- text was the product of revision during the second decade of the thirteenth century. Although not uncritical of imperial authority, the b-text is far less so than the a-text, in which Choniates' critique is far harsher, especially of Alexios III. Clearly, as Alicia Simpson has argued, "when revising his text in the second decade of the thirteenth century, Niketas worked backwards from the fall in 1204 in order to trace the beginnings of the collapse of Byzantium's political system and illustrate the progressive deterioration of Byzantine society through the decades of the twelfth century."[42]

Choniates created this narrative, as historians from the classical and Byzantine worlds had done for centuries, by linking historical causation to characters (particularly imperial ones). Choniates' conception of individuals as the units of history, illustrated

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[38] Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, p. 68. J-L. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia* (Berlin, 1975), pp. lviii-ci.
[39] Based on only two manuscripts, the Laurentianus IX 24 and the Oxoniensis Bodleianus Roe 22, both of thirteenth-century composition.
[40] Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, pp. 73-5. For a more detailed analysis of the composition and transmission of the text, see ibid., pp. 68-127; Simpson, 'Before and After 1204', pp. 189-221. Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, pp. lviii-ci.
[41] The a-text is the obvious choice because it is the largest of the surviving texts.
[42] A. J. Simpson, *Studies on the Composition of Niketas Choniates' Historia* (Doctoral Thesis for King's College London, 2004), p. 195.

clearly in his *prooimion*, represents more than the aping of classicising forms.[43] Using the anthropocentric approach dominant in Byzantine historiography from at least the tenth century, Choniates' *Historia* belongs, in part, to the genre of *kaiserkritik*.[44] John II Komnenos, the first emperor who appears in the *Historia*, is made into the semi-heroic role-model for imitation through Choniates' almost encomiastic depiction.[45] Choniates explicitly states that John was "the crowning glory…of the Komnenian dynasty", a statement which prefigures the decline to follow.[46] The more ambivalent depiction of Manuel, who receives positive and negative characteristics, then gives way to a succession of incapable emperors, who become successively less competent. His critique extends beyond the emperor to the entire Komnenian family, which by the period under discussion comprised almost the entire Byzantine elite, including the Angeloi.[47] His treatment of Michael Komnenos-Doukas' failed rebellion at Mysalla exemplifies his attitude:

> It was the Komnenos family that was the major cause of the destruction of the empire; because of their ambitions and their rebellions, she suffered the subjugation of provinces and cities and finally fell to her knees. These Komnenoi, who sojourned among barbarian nations hostile to the Romans, were the utter ruin of their country,

[43] Nik. Chon. *Hist.* §1-2. In which Choniates reports that his goals include "elucidating human nature".
[44] Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, p. 145. Harris, 'Distortion, Divine Providence and Genre', pp. 19-31.
[45] Indeed Riccardo Maisano has argued that Choniates used encomiastic material, from orators such as Nikephoros Basilakes, Michael Italikos and Theodore Prodromos, as sources for his *Historia*. See, R. Maisano, 'Tipologia delle Fonti di Niceta Coniata (Libri I-VIII)', in R. Maisano (ed.), *Storia e Tradizione Culturale a Bizanzio fra XI e XII Secolo* (Naples, 1993), pp. 394-6. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, pp. 230-1
[46] Nik. Chon. *Hist.* §47.
[47] Alexios 'III' traditionally called 'Angelos', according to Niketas Choniates chose to use the name of Komnenos instead of Angelos. Nik. Chon. *Hist.* §459: "The emperor repudiated his patronymic of Angelos and chose that of Komnenos instead, either because he held the former in low esteem in comparison with the celebrated name of Komnenos, or because he wished to have his brother's surname disappear with him."

> and whenever they attempted to seize and hold sway over our public affairs, they were the most inept, unfit, and stupid of men.[48]

The outburst at this point in his history (describing events in 1200) is exemplary of the way his narrative teleologically prefigures 1204. The survival of the b-text as a benchmark for comparison, allows the extent of Choniates' conscious rewriting of a historical narrative to fit his teleological endpoint to be seen. Choniates "does not seem to be a propagandist for any individual or family", unlike John Kinnamos or Anna Komnena.[49] However, he traces Byzantine decline through the Komnenos family because they were in power.

Simpson believes that what she calls "The Argument of the *Historia*" revolved around the reason for the fall of Constantinople.[50] Patently although, the LO-text moves significantly beyond 1204, the capture of Constantinople exerts pressure on the later narrative. After the conquest, Choniates dramatically changes his narrative-structure, which had been organised from a Constantinople- and imperial-centric perspective, to a more geographical organisational system.[51] This shift in style, however, does not disrupt a continuity with the a-text, for which infighting and incompetent leadership post-1204 follows on directly from before 1204. Illustrative is his dour impression of Theodore Laskaris, Manuel Mavrozomes and David Komnenos, whom he famously described as "a three-

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[48] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §529.20-6: "Εἴ τι οὖν αἰτιώτατον τοῦ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν ἐς γόνυ καταπεσεῖν καὶ χωρῶν καὶ πόλεων χειρώσεις παθεῖν, ὕστατα δὲ καὶ αὐτὴν ἐξαπολωλέναι, τοῦτο οἱ ἐκ Κομνηνῶν γεγόνασιν ἀφιστάμενοι καὶ βασιλειῶντες· παρὰ γὰρ ἔθνεσι καταλύοντες μὴ φίλα Ῥωμαίοις νοοῦσι τῆς πατρίδος ἦσαν πανώλεια, καίπερ ἐν τῷ παρ' ἡμῖν μένειν πράγμασιν ἐγχειρήσειν ἐλεῖν τε καὶ κρατήσειν ἀνεπιτηδειότατοι ὄντες καὶ πάντων ἀχρειότατοι καὶ σκαιότατοι."

[49] R. Scott, 'The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography', in M. Mullet & R. Scott (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* (Birmingham, 1981), p. 66.

[50] Simpson, *Studies on Composition*, pp. 178-200, esp. p. 178.

[51] Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, pp. 144-5.

headed monster constituted of the stupid".[52] The effect of Choniates on modern historiography is unmistakable. Paul Magdalino has noted that historians have causally connected Manuel Komnenos' reign with the failure of the Byzantine 'empire' to survive the fourth crusade.[53] Moreover, Angold, in his textbook, after setting out his argument that Byzantine military collapse was caused by "internal disintegration", claimed to be "only following the great historian Niketas Choniates."[54] The periodisation in his title alone, to a great extent prefigures the conclusions of his study.

The dominance of Choniates' narrative has been aided by historians of the fourth crusade, foremost among them Villehardouin, who shares Choniates' *telos* of 1204. Colin Morris' characterisation of Villehardouin captures the central characteristic of his work:

> The greatness of the book, and the secret of its popularity, lie in this single-minded intention. Ignoring all complexities of policy and motive, it presents in dramatic simplicity the exciting chain of events which led to the conquest of Constantinople.[55]

Villehardouin tells the story of the events leading up to and culminating in the capture of Constantinople. *La Conquête de Constantinople* is held together by chronological structure so strict that it requires transitional formulae to maintain sense in the micro-stories that occur over a more extended period of time.[56] By reducing his subject to a clear linear narrative of events, Villehardouin creates a convincing case for the sequence of events which led to Constantinople's capture and thus deflects blame from the leaders of the crusade, including

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[52] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §625.

[53] Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, p. 3.

[54] Angold, *The Byzantine Empire,* p. 173.

[55] C. Morris, 'Geoffroy de Villehardouin and the Conquest of Constantinople', *History* 53 (1968), p. 34. Morris' interpretation of Villehardouin borders on the patronising and understates the skill with which the work was composed. However, in isolating the "single-minded" narrative drive of the text Morris is absolutely right.

[56] J. M. A. Beer, *Villehardouin: Epic Historian* (Geneva, 1968), pp. 40-2.

himself. His very carefully crafted narrative has often been taken to constitute an account of 'the facts', with Jean Frappier even claiming that it constitutes "the victory of history over rhetoric".[57] His style in the old French is, according to Peter Noble, "sober and undramatic, perhaps because he did not have the rhetorical or literary resources to elaborate or ornament it."[58] Villehardouin's supposedly factual account has been faithfully imitated by modern historians, particularly Donald Queller and Thomas Madden, who have set the agenda for analysis of the fourth crusade in recent years.[59] They sought to tell the story of the fourth crusade as a journey from the perspective of the crusaders: "We have tried, as far as possible, to march along with [them], to become observers in their councils, to view events as they saw them."[60] The approach of Queller and Madden demonstrates the influence of the narrative identified by Morris at the heart of Villehardouin's text. Even documentary and epistolographic evidence has been co-opted into narrative shape; for example Alfred Andrea, through his collection and presentation of *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* even constructs a narrative, driving towards 1204, out of this ostensibly non-narrative sources.[61]

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[57] J. Frappier, *Histoire, Mythes, et Symboles: Études de Littérature Française* (Geneva, 1976), pp. 57; 69; 83. N. D. Guynn, 'Rhetoric and Historiography: Villehardouin's *La Conquête de Constantinople*' in W. Burgwinkle, N. Hammond & E. Wilson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of French Literature* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 106. *Contra* Beer, *Villehardouin*, *passim*. Beer argues that *La Conquête* owes much to its epic and verse antecedents, although she notes that it is difficult to tell how much of this is conscious.

[58] P. Noble, '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), p. 409.

[59] Queller & Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, *passim*. See also T. F. Madden, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople's Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders', in T. F. Madden, 'The Latin Empire of Constantinople's Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders', in T. F. Madden (ed.), *The Fourth Crusade: Event, Aftermath, and Perceptions* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 46.

[60] Queller & Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, pp. ix; 18.

[61] A. J. Andrea, (trans.) *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden, 2000), *passim*.

Although Villehardouin's account goes considerably beyond the capture of Constantinople, everything after 1204 reads like an epilogue and the period is consequently treated like one by scholars. Thus the significance of 1204 is overemphasised. In modern academia the Latin 'empire' has come to form a sub-discipline somewhere between Byzantine and crusader studies, but at the heart of neither. This scholarly peripheralaity has to an extent been projected back onto the polity that neither branch of scholarship truly accepts as more than an anomaly.[62] Angold, for example, has subjugated the entire history of the Latin 'empire' to the event of the fourth crusade, by arguing that the "failure of the Latin Empire was a judgement on the crusader conquest of Constantinople".[63] Villehardouin again sets the tone for any judgement, by leaving his audience with an emotionally gloomy impression of a stillborn polity in desperate need of assistance. By finishing with the "tragic disaster" that was the gruesome beheading of the corpse of Boniface of Montferrat, Villehardouin sets modern historians' expectations of this polity at zero.[64] It is only in the context of the closure of Villehardouin's narrative that Byzantine and crusader historiography's search for the "underlying weakness" of the Latin 'empire', in the assumption that there must be one, appears credible.[65]

Like Villehardouin, the other two major crusader narrative accounts of the crusade, those of Robert of Clari and Gunther of Pairis, also drive steadily towards the teleological

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[62] F. V. Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)*, (trans.) P. Longbottom (Leiden, 2011), pp. 1-39, esp. 1-14.
[63] Ibid., p. 129.
[64] Boniface's death follows on from the death of Baldwin of Flanders at the battle of Adrianople, in 1205, and should be seen as part of a general pessimistic narrative. Villehardouin emphasised the importance of his chosen narrative endpoint by describing Boniface as "…one of the noblest and large-hearted of all the barons, and one of the finest knights in all the world." Villehardouin §500.
[65] Angold, *Fourth Crusade*, p. 133.

endpoint of 1204, with any events afterward recounted like an epilogue.[66] Clari, for example, probably returned to France in 1205 and his ephemeral treatment of subsequent events has been incorporated into modern historical interpretations of an equally ephemeral Latin 'empire'.[67] Gunther of Pairis' *Hystoria Constantinopolitana* similarly has next to no interest in the fate of Byzantium post-1204, since it follows its protagonist Martin of Pairis, as he continued his pilgrimage to the Levant and then returned home with his stolen relics.[68] Sources, such as the fairly positive, if short, chronicle of Henri de Valenciennes, which celebrates the successful rule of Henry of Flanders and presents a more positive portrayal of the Latin 'empire', have done little to modify this compellingly bleak narrative.[69] Consequently even the most positive events in the history of the Latin 'empire', such as Henry's reign, are subordinated to the decline inaugurated by the epilogic treatment of the Latin 'empire' by sources overly-concerned with the event of 1204. Steven Runciman's interpretation, who after Gibbon has produced the most influential 'modern' historical narrative of the period in the form of *A History of the Crusades* in three volumes, remains indicative of English-speaking historical orthodoxy regarding the 'fate' of the Latin 'empire'.[70]

> But in Baldwin's brother Henry the Latin East produced its one great ruler. The energy and tolerant wisdom that he showed in his ten years' reign saved the Latin Empire from *immediate destruction*; and the rivalries of the Greek potentates, their

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[66] Villehardouin. Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*. Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*.

[67] E. H. McNeal, *Robert of Clari: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Toronto, 1996), pp. 6-7.

[68] Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana* §21-25.

[69] Henri, Valenciennes de, *Histoire de L'Empereur Henri de Constantinople*, (ed.) J. Longnon (Paris, 1948). Of the old French texts mentioned, Valenciennes' is the only one that has not been translated into English.

[70] On the importance of Runciman's influence, see: E. Peters, *The First Crusade: "The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres" and Other Source Materials* (Philadelphia, 1971), p. 314.

> quarrels with each other and with the Bulgarians, and the presence in the background of the Turks kept it alive till 1261.[71]

In this passage Runciman robs the Latin 'empire' of its own agency and makes it dependent on the whims of its rivals, in an uncritical reproduction of Choniates' desire to blame the Komnenian elite for defeating themselves.[72] At the same time Runciman accepts that there could never be any possibility of sustained Latin success, not only because of the legacy of 1204, but also because the teleological endpoint of 1261 is simultaneously being projected backwards onto expectations of the Latin 'empire'. This position is echoed in Alice Gardner's narrative history, in which she argues that the Latin 'empire' could not legitimately claim to be imperial, while Nicaea could.[73]

Thus, alone, 1204 functions as something of a black hole, sucking in and distorting the period around it, but when combined with 1261 and 1453 it acts as one of several nodal points on a constructed linear narrative, with two major trajectories. The first links 1204 and 1261 in a narrative of Nicaean 'resurgence' (and consequently Latin 'decline'), while the second connects 1204 to 1453 in a prolonged narrative of 'decline'. Despite apparent contradictions these two trajectories comfortably coexist within the metanarrative that has come to dominate analysis of this period.

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[71] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades: Volume III: The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades* (London, 1990c), p. 127. Emphasis added.

[72] Choniates makes his opinion of Byzantine division very clear, see Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §639: "These rulers should have united in their efforts and taken precautions to preserve their portion of the fatherland from further afflictions and to recover the conquered cities, but they lost control of themselves in their mad thirst for fame and desire to be named tyrants, and so they took up arms against one another. Because of the dissensions and divisions among themselves, the Romans at the first assault awarded the enemy the scepter and their submission…" Here again is the "three-headed monster constituted of the stupid", see: Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §625.

[73] A. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea* (London, 1912), pp. 50-1.

1261: 'Exile' and 'Predestined 'Re'-conquest'

1204 and 1261 have become nadir and zenith of an almost separable historical period, characterised by the absence of Byzantine rule in Constantinople and bracketed by the moments of its loss and 'recovery', because on either side of the period apparently similar 'imperial' polities were ruled from Constantinople.[74] Since the polity founded at Nicaea was the one that captured Constantinople and so came to look like the 'empire' that both Byzantines and moderns expect of 'Byzantium', it has become the focus of a narrative of success, with a *telos* firmly fixed at 1261, onto which all events of the intervening period have been mapped.

The start and endpoints of 1204 and 1261 have created a linking trajectory and thus a story of Nicaean 'success', 'recovery', 'restoration', 'resurrection', 're-conquest' and 'recapture'. These 're' prefixes, ubiquitous in modern historiography, are linguistically problematic and analytically obfuscatory. 'Re' implies either repetition or movement backwards. Thus the Nicaean polity is assumed to have been the same as the Byzantine 'empire' of old. Although Angold's title refers to *A Byzantine Government in Exile* the substance of his work assumes that it was 'the' Byzantine government in exile, an important distinction, which few scholars have made.[75] Byzantinists insist on maintaining the system of regnal numeration through the thirteenth century and beyond, without acknowledging that

[74] Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 3; 'The Thirteenth Century in Byzantine Historical Writing', in C. Dendrinos, J. Harris, E. Harvalia-Crook & J. Herrin (eds.), *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 63-5.
[75] M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)* (Oxford, 1975a), *passim*.

new political entities were created *c*. 1203/4.[76] No Laskarid or Palaiologian polity had held Constantinople before 1261, so the suggestion that 1261 constituted a 're'-conquest is more illustrative of metanarrative assumptions than historical 'reality'. Notions of 'exile' assume diasporic continuity, which although reasonably accurate culturally, was certainly not the case politically in the thirteenth century. Accepting this sort of terminology at face value is as problematic as passively accepting Nicaean assertions that the 're'-conquest was 'providentially predestined'.[77]

Some historians have even gone so far as to refer to 1204-61 as the "Nicaean period", although this polity was one of many, 'Byzantine' and 'non-Byzantine'.[78] Nicaea's only major distinguishing feature in 1204/5 was its future success.[79] However, in almost all literature it is referred to as an 'empire' and its ruler as an 'emperor', while the polity based in Epiros and later Thessaloniki, has been and continues to be described as a 'despotate' and its ruler a 'despot'.[80] This allocation of titulature implies Nicaean superiority from the genesis of both polities, since the δεσπότης ranked below the βασιλεύς in the Byzantine

[76] John 'III' Doukas-Vatatzes and John 'IV' Laskaris are two such examples of regnal numeration that implicitly link Nicaea with the Konmnenian and Palaiologian 'empires' as the legitimate Byzantine polity 'in exile'. This is highly significant because it demonstrates that the very building blocks of the histories that have been written about this period prefigure analysis.

[77] For providential destiny see below, pp. 36-9.

[78] For example L. Maksimović, *The Byzantine Provincial Administration under the Palaiologoi* (Amsterdam, 1988), p. 8.

[79] Although it came to differentiate itself in other ways, such as appointing/appropriating a/the 'patriarch', which have allowed historians to justify this prefabricated narrative. See below, pp. 74-81.

[80] Donald Nicol is best known for using the term despotate to refer to this polity, in its first years. See D. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros* (Oxford, 1957). It is still used in recent literature. See for example: A. E. Laiou, 'Introduction', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e Croisade et ses conséquences* (Paris, 2005c), p. 11. Reinert, 'Fragmentation', p. 251.

hierarchy.[81] This assumption also involves anachronistically projecting the political situation of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century back onto early thirteenth-century political realities, when no Epirot claimed the title δεσπότης.[82] That this terminological convention has been demonstrated to be both erroneous and deceptive, but still continues to be used in otherwise sophisticated historiography illustrates just how embedded the pro-Nicaean narrative has become.[83] The polity which emerged at Trebizond, although one of the three polities designated as 'important' by modern historians, is consistently placed "outside the mainstream of Byzantine history".[84] The terminology used to describe the Trapezuntine rulers is also illustrative, since although the sources often use the terms βασιλεύς and αὐτοκράτωρ, as used at Nicaea, modern historians prefer to use the uniquely Trapezuntine appellation of *Megas Komnenos*.[85] However, this term although thoroughly justifiable for the description of the Trapezuntine rulers does not fit with preconceptions about who governs 'the true Byzantine empire'. Because of the teleology exemplified by such normative terminological choices, even scholars studying Trebizond, such as Alexander Vasiliev, have over-emphasised the remoteness of Trebizond and focused on its

[81] Pseudo-Kodinos, *Offices and Ceremonies*, (trans.) R. Macrides, J. A. Munitiz & D. Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies* (Farnham, 2013), p. 133.

[82] For the moment of transition into a polity that could legitimately be described as a despotate see below, p. 77, n. 337.

[83] 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 and retracted by Nicol. *Contra* R-J. Leonertz, 'Aux Origines du Despotat d'Épire et de la Principauté d'Achaïe', *Byzantion* 43 (1973), pp. 360-94. R. Guilland, 'Recherches sur l'Histoire Administrative de l'Empire Byzantin: Le Despote, δεσπότης' *REB* 17 (1959), pp. 52-89. B. Ferjančić, *Despoti u Vizantiji i Juznoslovenskin Zemljama* (Belgrade, 1960). A. D. Karpozilos, *The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros (1217-1233)* (Thessaloniki, 1973). L. Stiernon, 'Les Origines du Despotat d'Épire: À Propos d'un Livre Récent', *REB* 17 (1959), pp. 90-126. Rescinded by D. Nicol in *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 2.

[84] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 12.

[85] R. Macrides, 'What's in the Name "Megas Komnenos"?', *ΑΠ* 35 (1979), pp. 238-45. A. Bryer & D. Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* (Washington, D.C., 1985), 2 vols.

failure to retake Constantinople as the defining aspect of the polity, which remained autonomous for almost a decade after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.[86] However, those polities which survived for less time, were smaller in size or left less evidence have been even more comprehensively marginalised by the narrative of Nicaean 're'-conquest. The polities based around Chonai/Laodikeia, Phildaelphia and Sampson remain little more than footnotes in the story of the expansion of Nicaea.[87] The large territorial power created by Leon Sgouros, focused on the Argolid, is either incorporated into the narrative of the Latin conquest of central and southern Greece or perceived merely as an interesting precursor to the 'Principality of Achaea' and the 'Duchy of Athens'.[88]

The deconstruction of the vocabulary used to describe these polities and this period is not merely a case of academic hypercriticism, because vocabulary demonstrably affects analysis and embeds metanarratives. Although the postmodernist challenge has demonstrated that there is a fundamental disconnection between all language and 'reality' and historians must accept that the words they use cannot transfer 'knowledge' neutrally, this does not excuse the use of excessively loaded vocabulary, through a plea to universal subjectivity and inadequacy. Byzantinists cannot, as many have claimed, use the vocabulary of the sources, because to do so overlooks not only the complexities of translation, and even transliteration, but also the biases of those sources themselves. Using terms such as 'emperor'

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[86] A. A. Vasiliev, 'The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond (1204-1222)', *Speculum* 11 (1936), pp. 3-4.

[87] See below, pp. 81-98.

[88] Savvides describes it as an "extensive albeit short-lived *Territorialstaat* in the NE Peleponnesus". Thus although Savvides takes Sgouros as his subject and examines him in more detail than any other historian (in itself problematic given that the article is only six pages), Savvides confines him to the north-eastern Peloponnese, despite giving evidence that his polity grew much larger than this. Moreover, it was not especially short-lived, since it could potentially predate the death of Manuel Komnenos (1180). See A. G. C. Savvides, 'A Note on the Death of Leo Sgurus in A.D.1208', *BMGS* 12 (1988), pp. 289-95, esp. 289. For the start-date of the polity see Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, p. 155.

(Byzantine Greek options include βασιλεύς and αὐτοκράτωρ) involves a set of judgments about legitimacy, authority and political structures, so to build these assumptions into the very building blocks of the historical craft, language, prefigures analysis, yet is too easily dismissed as finicky hypercriticism.[89] Historians of the thirteenth century cannot simply choose to ignore the questions raised by the postmodernist challenge. Historians must try to "employ rhetoric properly to overcome the inadequacy between the real and the words used to portray it".[90] Not to do so allows language to determine analysis.

As with Choniates for the earlier period, modern historiographical assumptions are dominated by a single key Byzantine narrative history. For the period 1204-61 George Akropolites' *Chronike Syngraphe* dominates the historiography, to the extent that the orthodox historical narrative is his invention.[91] The conquests of Constantinople frame his narrative, which starts in 1204 and ends in 1261:

> So let our beginning be the capture of the city of Constantine which is so notorious and well known to everyone that there is not a single nation (ἐθνῶν) that did not learn about it.[92]
>
> The monarch (αὐτοκράτωρ) [Michael Palaiologos] arrived at the city of Constantine.[93]

This second quotation does not actually end the history, which finishes mid-sentence (§89.20) and may even have gone on to record the subsequent reign of Michael Palaiologos into the 1280s, as the text's editor August Heisenberg has argued.[94] However, Heisenberg's

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[89] For a brief introduction to the terms βασιλεύς and αὐτοκράτωρ see: G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, (trans.) J. Birrell (Cambridge, 2003), p. 31.
[90] N. Bonneuil, 'The Mathematics of Time in History' *History and Theory* 49 (2010), p. 33.
[91] See above, p. 8, n. 25.
[92] Akropolites §1.36-9.
[93] Ibid. §88.1.
[94] Briefly see, A. Heisenberg, *Georgii Akropolitae: Opera I* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. xiii-xiv.

supposition appears unlikely for two reasons. First, elements within the text point to a composition in the 1260s.[95] Second, the text works structurally as a coherent whole if it were to finish in 1261.[96] The lack of evidence makes it impossible to claim anything with certainty about the end of this text. However, despite the ambiguous double negative in the preceding sentence, it seems plausible that Akropolites intended to finish his text with the encomiastic oration of Michael Palaiologos' "deliverance of the city of Constantine", which would have neatly completed his narrative drive.[97] This however, remains unsubstantiated conjecture. Regardless of the 'intended' endpoint, the surviving text ends with 1261 and has influenced historiography accordingly, since the work does not feel incomplete.[98]

Not only does Akropolites frame the period with the falls of Constantinople, but he also presents a highly biased account in favour of Nicaea. Unlike Choniates' often personal history, Akropolites' was a conscious work of propaganda on behalf of his patron, Michael 'VIII' Palaiologos, for whom he worked in several capacities.[99] Akropolites' support of Michael extended to the religious controversy over union with the Latins, on account of which much of his work was burnt by anti-unionists at the council of Blachernai.[100] His work reflects this, presenting a Nicaean and Palaiologian perspective with all its attendant biases. For example, Michael is portrayed positively throughout and cast as the legitimate

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[95] Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 31.

[96] Ibid., pp. 31-4.

[97] The confusing preceding sentence, Akropolites §89.1-2: "Ἐγένετο δὲ τῷ τότε καί τι τοιοῦτον, ὃ μὴ παραδοῦναι γραφῇ τῶν οὐ δεόντων ἐλογισάμην". For Macrides' thoughts see Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 387, n. 1. For the quotation see, Akropolites §89.2-3: "λόγον ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναρρύσει τῆς Κωνσταντίνου συνεγραψάμην." It is worth mentioning that Akropolites seems to use the term ἀνάρρυσις to evoke the opposing ἅλωσις with which he started his story.

[98] As does the text attributed to Theodore Skoutariotes. See Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 31-4.

[99] Most were non-military. Akropolites died in the high-ranking office of *megas logothetes*, fifteenth in precedence, according to Pseudo-Kodinos, *Offices and Ceremonies*, p. 137.

[100] Pachymeres §3.35-7.

'emperor'.[101] Moreover, the Nicaean polity is presented as the only legitimate 'successor to the Byzantine empire' from its genesis.[102] His presentation of the Epirots is characteristic of his 'official' and efficient negation of other polities' importance and legitimacy.[103] Only Theodore Komnenos-Doukas' defeat of Peter of Courtenay received even the most grudging approval from Akropolities, who, although he admitted that his victory "was a great help to the Romans at the time", refused to accept that the Epirots were in fact true Romans.[104] Akropolites, who had himself been a prisoner in Epiros for two years, firmly otherised the Epirots as alien "westerners".[105] Moreover, although the a-text of Choniates is distinctly ambivalent towards Nicaea and Laskaris, whom he criticises heavily but also compliments, his later orations, which provide influential and, importantly, detailed information for the first two decades of the thirteenth century, present a highly censored official perspective.[106] This is unsurprising since they were written for presentation before or even by the leaders of the Nicaean polity.[107] Akropolites' narrative structure thus combines with the biases of the main sources to present an idealised and propagandistic picture of the period, since the *telos* of 1261 is projected backwards as an inevitable victory. The work of literature Akropolites created, is in harmony with Michael Palaiologos' other attempts to cultivate an ideology of 'restoration' from the works he patronised.[108] However, although Byzantinists now

[101] Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 31.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 94-7.
[104] Akropolites §14.
[105] Ibid. §72.
[106] Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, pp. 50-67.
[107] Ibid.
[108] For example architecturally, see: A-M. Talbot, 'The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII', *DOP* 47 (1993), pp. 243-61. See also: R. Macrides, 'The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261?', *BMGS* 6 (1980), pp. 13-41.

acknowledge Akropolites' bias, they are unlikely to read the literary work that is the *Chronike Syngraphe* with this in mind.

Choniates and Akropolites dominate modern reconstructions of the thirteenth century, despite the survival of other sources, which have been treated dismissively or underutilised.[109] For example, the *Chronicle of the Morea* and the hagiographical *Life of St Theodora of Arta*, by an Epirot, probably the monk Job, supply evidence for events of the thirteenth century.[110] These 'demotic' texts are consistently treated as less reliable in their details than the narrative chronicler-historians.[111] However, although examples of historians' analyses of specific events demonstrate this hierarchy to be unhelpful, it still holds sway across historiography.[112] Sources acknowledged to be 'reliable', such as the trinity of Epirot bishops (John Apokaukos, Demetrios Chomatenos and George Bardanes), provide evidence that contradicts the 'official Nicaean narrative'. However, because they fail to provide an equally compelling narrative to the pro-Nicaean chronicler-historians, since they did not

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[109] Margaret Mullett has considered the overrepresentation of large works, particularly histories and novels, see M. Mullett, 'Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the Revival of Fiction', in J. Burke, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006), p. 5.

[110] *The Chronicle of Morea*, (ed.) J. Schmitt (London, 1904); (trans.) H. E. Lurier, *Crusaders as Conquerors: the Chronicle of Morea* (New York, 1964). *Life of St Theodora of Arta*, (ed.) J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca* (Paris, 1864), vol. 127: 903-9; (trans.) A-M. Talbot, *Holy Women of Byzantium: Ten Saints' Lives in English Translation* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), pp. 323-33.

[111] The term chronicler-historian is used simply to identify the writers of longer works based on these traditionally 'accepted' forms of literature. This thesis does not draw a sharp distinction between the two, following: H-G. Beck, 'Towards an Understanding of Byzantine "Monastic Chronicles"', (trans.) D. Bachrach & D. Jenkins, in *Speculum Historiale* (Freiburg & Munich, 1965), pp. 188-97.

[112] Cheynet's treatment of Senacherim illustrates this phenomenon. Choniates writes that when Baldwin 'I' arrived at Xantheia "the men there…led by a certain Senacherim" (οἱ ἐκεῖσε…Σεναχηρείμ τινος ἐξηγουμένου) ambushed his army and then retreated (Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §598.15-7). However, Job states that Senacherim was "sent to Aitolia and Nikopolis" (πρός Αἰτωλιάν καί Νικόπολιν ἀποστέλλεται·) by Alexios 'III' Angelos as governor (*Life of St Theodora of Arta* §904.A). Although partially supported by Villehardouin's testimony (Villehardouin §301), Cheynet rejects Job's testimony out of hand, favouring the traditionally reliable Choniates.

produce an extended chronological account, they have not yet been accorded equal significance in the historical record.[113] The Nicaean prelate Nikephoros Blemmydes, whose work has been reasonably well studied and made available, although he provides a dissenting account still does so from a highly Nicaean-centric perspective, and only does so for the later period.[114] It would be unfair to suggest that Byzantinists have failed to engage with any material other than Choniates and Akropolites. Paul Magdalino's two short articles using evidence provided by Demetrios Chomatenos clearly demonstrate what can be achieved if the evidence of these types of sources are introduced to the equation.[115] Karpozilos too has written a more Epirot-centric counter-narrative based on the three Epirot bishops.[116] However, generally other sources have taken an auxiliary position to the evidence provided by the two major historians, particularly in their narrative histories, which has only exacerbated the linearity and teleology of historical analysis by conforming to the literary form of a narrative.[117] Thus a combination of terminology, source bias, the overrepresentation of 'key-events' and the way in which different sources have been treated combine together to create a metanarrative framework within which thirteenth-century 'events' have been evaluated.

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[113] The Epirot bishops have left several hundred letters and legal acts, but no sustained narrative. Only recently have the works of the most prolific, Demetrios Chomatenos, been edited by a modern academic. The contrast between the coverage of the even less well published Bardanes and Choniates is obvious, and, this thesis would argue, problematic.

[114] J. A. Munitiz, *Nikephoros Blemmydes: A Partial Account, Introduction Translation and Notes* (Leuven, 1988), *passim*, esp. §1.81; 2.23, pp. 35-6.

[115] P. Magdalino, 'Between Romaniae: Thessaly and Epirus in the Latter Middle Ages', in B. Arbel, B. Hamilton & D. Jacoby (eds.), *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989), pp. 87-110; 'A Neglected Authority for the History of the Peloponnese in the Early Thirteenth Century: Demetrios Chomatianos, Archbishop of Bulgaria', *BZ* 2 (1977), pp. 316-23. This attitude does appear to be changing, albeit slowly.

[116] Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, *passim*.

[117] See below, pp. 33-48.

1453: The Inevitability of 'Decline'[118]

The recapture of Constantinople was not the unambiguous 'renaissance' Palaiologian propaganda claimed. George Pachymeres, albeit with the benefit of hindsight, recognised this and expresses this ambivalence through his mouthpiece, Senacherim, who on hearing that Constantinople had been captured laments:

> "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 Romans are again walking in the city."[119]

For, however dominant the Nicaean polity is within the historiography of the thirteenth century, in the macro-conception of Byzantine history, even the strong narrative leading to 1261 has been subordinated to the 'turning-point' of 1453.[120] The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, which has been accorded 'global' significance, especially since it has been considered as part of the foundation of a polity which existed into the twentieth century, has been overrepresented in the historical record, for much the same reasons as 1204. 1453 despite not being the moment of the foundation of the Ottoman 'empire' has come to symbolise its establishment as a serious power, overstating the importance of the event.[121] However, despite the less dramatic 'reality', Byzantine history after 1204 has become a story of survival until the inevitable terminus of 1453. The continuity projected by the Palaiologoi

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[118] See generally D. Lawton, '1453 and the Stream of Time', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37 (2007), pp. 469-91.

[119] Pachymeres §2.28.

[120] For an example of this subordination to the greater metanarrative, see: S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Los Angeles, 1971).

[121] On the foundation of the Ottoman 'empire' see H. J. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York, 2003), *passim*. C. Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. chs. 1-6. C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire: 1300-1650* (London, 2002), esp. ch. 1. H. Inalcik, 'The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (1981-2), pp. 71-9. H. J. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York, 2003), *passim*.

between 1204 and 1261 has been co-opted by 1453 into inferiority and decline, both for Nicaea and the other Byzantine polities. Modern scholars describe all the polities that emerged *c*. 1204 as 'rump' or 'successor states', in 'exile'.[122] However, by doing this scholars subject the thirteenth-century polities to temporal comparisons, with the pre-1204 Komnenian and the post-1261 Palaiologian 'empires', rather than comparing them with contemporary polities. It seems to have been immaterial to historians that the polities of the early thirteenth century were of a similar magnitude to the Seljuk sultanate, which had become far less centralised in the late twelfth century, and the 'feudal' Latin polities, which insisted on fighting each other, for example over Thessaloniki.[123] These unhelpful comparisons expect traditional and Constantinople-centric criteria for 'true Byzantine-ness'. The effect of this, while mitigated in the case of Nicaea, which can become the 'legitimate' 'empire in exile', itself an implicitly negative title, has a grave impact on the study of the smaller polities, which can simply be brushed away as insignificant as the *telos* of 1453 projects itself back onto the narrative. In the shadow of a lost Komnenian 'golden age' the potential and dynamism of the thirteenth-century polities is understated or ignored.

Thus, although the narratives of 1204-61 and 1204-1453 seem contradictory, they come together to minimise the importance of these smaller polities, which have literally been written out of the story.[124] While Gibbon's famous postulation of 'decline' has been revised and attenuated repeatedly, his legacy, accompanied by orientalism and functionalism, has

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[122] For example see: Angold, 'Greek Rump States', pp. 731-58.
[123] For the Seljuk example see C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, (trans.) J. Jones-Williams (London, 1968), p. 111. For Thessaloniki see: P. Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204-1500* (London, 1995), pp. 57-66.
[124] Anthony Bryer has noted that Gibbon focuses almost exclusively on Nicaea. A. Bryer, 'Gibbon and the later Byzantine Empires', in R. McKitterick & R. Quinault (eds.), *Edward Gibbon and Empire* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 105.

proved impossible to fully excise, especially from the study of 'late Byzantium'.[125] Peter Charanis' statement in 1953 remains indicative of Byzantine historiography: "Yet in a sense Gibbon was right."[126] Thus in 2014 it appears uncontroversial for Cecily Hilsdale to characterise 'late' Byzantium as an "age of decline".[127] Orientalism, as understood by Edward Said, has been universally decried, yet still affects the study of Byzantium.[128] Functionalism is used here, as by Ehud Toledano when describing similar problems in the context of the Ottoman decline paradigm, as the "attribution of organic qualities to non-organismic entities. Organizations, institutions and states are seen as having gone through the life-cycle stages experienced by humans or animals: they are born, they grow, mature, stagnate with age, and finally die."[129] This phenomenon, most recognisable in the depiction of the Ottoman 'empire' as 'the sick man of Europe', introduces another complementary trajectory to this complex metanarrative.

The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 has been co-opted, in a similar way to 1204, into becoming both locus and focus of this phenomenon. That 1453 has been suggested as the moment of transition from medieval to early modern, that Angold's most

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[125] E. Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (London, 1993), 6 vols., esp. vol. 6. M. Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Context and Consequences* (Harlow, 2012), p. vi.

[126] Charanis continues: "The empire which Mohammed II destroyed on May 29, 1453, had been wasting away for over three hundred years, although part of this time, notably during the period of the Comneni, it was not an insignificant force." See P. Charanis, 'Economic Factors in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire', *The Journal of Economic History* 13 (1953), pp. 412-3.

[127] C. J. Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 2014). R. Macrides, 'From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile', in P. Magdalino, *New Constantines* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 269-82.

[128] Concerning Orientalism see E. W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2003). B. S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London, 1994). A. L. Macfie, *Orientalism: A Reader* (Edinburgh, 2000); *Orientalism* (London, 2002). J. M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester, 1995).

[129] E. Toledano, 'The Arabic-speaking World in the Ottoman Period', in C. Woodhead (ed.), *The Ottoman World* (London, 2012), pp. 453-66, esp. 458.

recent publication *The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Context and Consequences*, appeared alongside *The End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1923*, *The Fall of France, 1940* and *Ending Apartheid* in a "Turning Points Series" and that Ludmilla Jordanova, in an otherwise completely unrelated book, used the fall of Constantinople as a classic example of a "unifying event", illustrates just how much significance has been attributed to 1453.[130] Thus the linking of 1204 to 1453, a connection made by many scholars explicitly and implictly, distorts anew the period 1204-61.[131] Having 1453 on the horizon allows the events of the thirteenth century to become inevitable, and to be endowed with inappropriate significance. Constantinople must be recaptured, but must also 'remain' weak, because it must be lost in 1453. Most illustrative of this phenomenon is Angeliki Laiou's often insightful examination of fourteenth-century politics, which concludes that there was a systemic "imperative to centralize", which only the Ottomans were able to fulfil, as if the Aegean basin were not suitable for the existence of a multiplicity of political agency.[132] The massive variety of arrangements present in the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and early modern periods suggests that there was no set pattern of political organisation which 'works' in the geographical space inhabited by the twelfth-century Byzantine 'empire'.[133]

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[130] For example, E. C. Lodge, *The End of the Middle Ages: 1273-1453* (New York, 1910). Although he disagrees see S. Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453* (Cambridge, 1965), p. xi. Angold, *Fall of Constantinople*. A. L. Macfie, *The End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1923* (London, 1998). A. Shennan, *The Fall of France, 1940* (Harlow, 2000); J. E. Spence & D. Welsh, *Ending Apartheid* (Harlow, 2010). Jordanova, *History in Practice*, p. 122.

[131] Angold, *Fall of Constantinople*, pp. vi-vii. E. Pears, *The Destruction of the Greek Empire and the Story of the Capture of Constantinople by the Turks* (London, 1903). Runciman, *Fall of Constantinople*, *passim*. Macrides, 'Komnenoi to Palaiologoi', pp. 269-82.

[132] A. E. Laiou, 'Byzantium and the Neighbouring Powers: Small-State Polities and Complexities', in S. T. Brooks (ed.), *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 42-55, esp. p. 49.

[133] See for example: A. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkley, 2006); 'Intra-Greek Balancing, the Mediterranean Crisis of c. 201-200 BCE, and the Rise of Rome', in S. J. Kaufman, R. Little & W. C. Wohlforth (eds.), *The Balance of Power in World History* (London, 2007),

Indeed a growing consensus in the field of international relations argues that there are no set rules in 'international systems', in which power can shift both towards both uni-polar (hegemonic) and multi-polar balances.[134] Laiou implicitly projected such a view backwards onto the thirteenth century, in which it is assumed that one power was going to come to dominate the rest, thus allowing Nicaea to dominate historiography.

Despite appearances this thesis does not seek to argue that 1204, 1261 and 1453 did not have any impact on the 'realities' of the Byzantine world; since such a position is untenable. However, it seeks to demonstrate that their significance has been projected over the entire period, which has been forced into the background. Thus Byzantinists must acknowledge that the political landscape of the Aegean basin changed dramatically and the number of polities increased between 1204 and 1453. However this must be done without characterising the entire period as one of "Fragmentation".[135] Scholars should not continue to treat everything after September 1204 as "already 'Byzance après Byzance'", but nor should they project Gibbonian expectations of continuity forward.[136] The history of Byzantium should not be read as continuing "cycles of rebuffs and recoveries", as Jonathan Shepard has implied, because to do so prescribes analysis.[137] Angold has suggested that scholars break away from the dominance of "long-term" trends, and has criticised the "wary reception" historians have given to chaos theory.[138] He is right to do so. Yet his own

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pp. 71-98; *Rome Enters the Greek East: From Anarchy to Hierarchy in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, 230-170 BC* (Oxford, 2008).

[134] S. J. Kaufman, R. Little. & W. C. Wohlforth (eds.), *The Balance of Power in World History* (London, 2007).

[135] Reinert, 'Fragmentation (1204-1453)', pp. 248-83.

[136] Macrides, *George Akropolites*, p. 4.

[137] J. Shepard, 'Periodisation', p. 28.

[138] Angold, 'Turning Points in History', pp. 11-12.

approach, which focuses the chaos on just two events, which he, like many others, has chosen to imbue with significance, undermines his position.[139] The study of the events of the period covered in this thesis (*c.* 1204-14) is what suffers as a consequence, because they are overshadowed by these 'great events'.[140]

The Narrative Form: Inadequacy and Distortion

The human "impulse to narrate", that is to organise 'events' into stories in order to convert knowledge into a form that can be comprehended, is not limited to thirteenth-century Byzantium, but is rather, as Roland Barthes famously argued, "international, transhistorique, transculturel, le récit est là, comme la vie."[141] Some philosophers, foremost amongst them David Carr, have argued that the narrative form has the capacity to accurately reflect the past, because humans experience time and events through the lens of a narratively structured world-view.[142] However, even Carr does not go so far as to argue that the sort of narratives that historians offer are able accurately to reflect 'the past'.[143] More appropriately

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Angold even goes so far as to argue that these were "events which changed the course of history", see: Angold, *Fall of Constantinople*, p. vi. Macrides, 'Komnenoi to Palaiologoi', pp. 269-82.

[141] For quotations see respectively H. White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *CI* 7 (1980), p. 5. R. Barthes, 'Introduction à l'Analyse Structurale des Récits', *Communications* 8 (1966), p. 1; (trans.) L. Duisit, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', *New Literary History* 6 (1975), p. 237. Also repeated in R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, (trans.) S. Heath (London, 1977), p. 79.

[142] D. Carr, 'Narrative Explanation and Its Malcontents', *History and Theory* 47 (2008), pp. 19-30; 'Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity', *History and Theory* 25 (1986b), pp. 117-31; *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington, 1986a), *passim*, esp. pp. 18-72. For brief summary see Roberts, 'Introduction', pp. 6-7.

[143] Carr's successful examples are always extremely simple narratives. For a detailed analysis of Carr see W. H. Dray, 'Narrative and Histoical Realism', in G. Roberts (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader* (London, 2001), pp. 157-80.

narrative should be conceived of as a literary construct, because contrary to Carr's postulation, "real events do not offer themselves as stories".[144]

Before continuing it is important to clarify some problematic terminology. First this thesis makes no distinction between the terms 'narrative' and 'story', both of which are used to mean "a connected sequence of human happenings".[145] Secondly this thesis uses 'reality' and 'events' to describe human happenings in the past in their pure form.[146] However, this is epistemologically problematic, because 'events' are themselves constricted by the stories that we tell about them and include them in, since they are never treated consistently by historians, either being reduced to dots on chronologies or expanded into their own extended narratives.[147]

A narrative requires certain normative linguistic features, most importantly a linear structure with a beginning, middle and end. However, these literary signposts are inventions since no sequence of events could truly be said to start or end 'naturally', without the start or end of reality.[148] This can be clearly seen in our subject matter, where historians,

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[144] White, 'The Value of Narrativity', p. 8.

[145] Some scholars have sought to differentiate the two but such differentiation is simply the product of extensive definition. This thesis follows Roberts, 'Introduction', p. 16.

[146] That is as they really happened, although the historian must accept that this is impossible to reconstruct.

[147] W. Cronon, 'A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative' *The Journal of American History* 78 (1992), p. 1351, n. 8. L. O. Mink, 'Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument', in R. H. Canary & H. Kozicki (eds.), *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison, 1978), pp. 145-7.

[148] White, 'The Value of Narrativity', p. 26. This point is agreed upon by anthropologists who stress continuity over rupture. See P. A. McAnany & N. Yoffee, 'Why We Question Collapse and Study Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire', in P. A. McAnany & N. Yoffee (eds.), *Collapse Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire* (Cambridge, 2009b), p. 5: "When closely examined, the overriding human story is one of survival and regeneration."

Byzantine and modern, use the years 1204, 1261 and 1453 as signposts, depending on the story they are trying to tell. For example, 1204 functions both as endpoint and start, depending on whether Choniates is narrating a story of twelfth-century 'decline' or Akropolites is creating a narrative of Nicaean 're-conquest'. However, there is nothing intrinsically 'beginning-like' or 'end-like' about the 'event' outside the logic created by the narratives it is placed in. Jonathan Gorman has successfully summarised the problem this creates:

> The importance of a fact depends on the plot that is chosen, and an event has no importance or value independent of some plot.[149]

It is impossible for a historian to naturally "follow a historical narrative", reproducing it as they go, as some of the earlier philosophers of narrative argued in the 1970s, because before a historian starts to write they must decide what story they want to tell.[150] Moreover, even the very process by which the historian 'remembers', or indeed 're'-constructs, his own past, be that his own memories or the stories he has been told, is trapped within a teleological temporality of his present self.[151] This combination means that narrative is an "intrinsically teleological" form.[152]

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[149] J. L. Gorman, 'Review of P. Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology*, (trans.) M. Moore-Rinvolucri, *History and Theory* 26 (1987), p. 107.

[150] W. B. Gallie, 'The Historical Understanding', *History and Theory* 3 (1963), p. 193. *Contra* L. O. Mink, 'Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument', in R. H. Canary & H. Kozicki (eds.), *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Madison, 1978), pp. 147-8, esp. 147: "…the formal structure of a narrative is constructed rather than discovered."

[151] J. Mensch, 'Remembering and Forgetting as a Function of Life', *Investigaciones Fenomenológicas* 4 (2013), pp. 177-90, esp. 179.

[152] Cronon, 'A Place for Stories', p. 1370: "Stories are intrinsically teleological forms, in which an event is explained by the prior events or causes that lead up to it." On the pervasiveness of teleology and its relationship with history see: T. R. D. Grayson, *Going Somewhere? The Pervasiveness of Teleology in History and the 18th Century Great Experiment to Eliminate It* (Masters Thesis for the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg, 2000).

The linear teleology of the narrative form is complemented in medieval sources by the use of divine providence as a dominant factor in historical causation.[153] The effect of enlightenment historiography has seen the possibility of divine providence as a causative factor so comprehensively expunged from analysis that historians often fail to acknowledge that their authors wrote with such preconceptions.[154] Choniates melded his conception of divine providence into his *kaiserkritik*, postulating that the Latins were the agents of divine retribution, sent to punish the excesses of the Byzantine emperors.[155] For Akropolites too, divine providence sits at the heart of his conception of historical causation, although this element has never been emphasised as heavily as with Choniates.[156] Most telling is his assertion that "by the providence of God (προνοίᾳ θεοῦ) the city of Constantine again became subject to the emperor of the Romans" in 1261.[157] The chroniclers of the crusade were particularly invested in representing the events they described as divinely preordained. Most illustrative is the monk Gunther of Pairis's belief that: "All things that God wills happen, and things foreordained become reality."[158] As important as the content of this statement is the context in which Pairis makes this claim. In what Alfred Andrea has demonstrated was an exceptionally carefully organised narrative, Pairis uses this ode to

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[153] Generally see P. Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (New York, 1969), *passim*, esp. p. 1-6. Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 14-5.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §586.67-9: "The supine and stay-at-home ministers of the Roman empire ushered in the pirates as judges to condemn and punish us." For Choniates' use of divine providence see Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 14-5. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, pp. 284-94. Jonathan Harris has argued that divine providence was not "an overall vision or theme in the work". However, this misconstrues its influence, which worked alongside other factors. The belief in the macro-explanatory power of divine providence occurs on a different level in the narrative to the *kaiserkritik*. See Harris, 'Distortion, Divine Providence and Genre', p. 28.

[156] For the only substantial treatment of this question see Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 54-5.

[157] Akropolites §85.

[158] Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana* §18.

divine providence to close and justify his account of the capture of Constantinople.[159] Villehardouin similarly projects divine providence back onto the enterprise of the crusade.[160] Noah Guynn overstated the case when he argued that:

> For medieval chroniclers (including Villehardouin), the truth of temporal events derives not from factual reporting but from the instantiation of universal, theological paradigms.[161]

Divine providence was an element in a far more complex and diverse system of causative attribution than Guynn's monolithic explanation suggests. Divine providence constituted a flexible explanatory mode, interchangeably macro- and microscopic. For example, Jeanette Beer has convincingly demonstrated that Villehardouin's depictions of skirmishes and battles, in providential terms that imitate the Psalms, demonstrate this microscopic use of divine providence.[162] Its complexity however should not lead divine providence to be ignored or misrepresented. Robert of Clari also involves divine providence slightly differently, at its most conspicuous, using it to explain why the Latins were punished by the defeat at Adrianople in 1205.[163] This penchant went beyond the narrative chroniclers. Baldwin of Flanders, for example, after the conquest of Constantinople couched a full report to the papal court in lofty terms of divine sanction and predestination.[164] Not only does he

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[159] For the careful narrative composition of the *Hystoria Constantinopolitana* see Andrea, A. J., *The "Hystoria Constantinopolitana" of Gunther of Pairis* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 3-62.

[160] Morris, 'Geoffroy de Villehardouin' (1968), pp. 27; 36: "He had a simple theology of his own, consisting principally in an uncritical belief in divine providence. Several times we are told that, whatever the original intentions of the human actors, 'events turn out as God wills'. While he does not argue the case, it seems clear that he thought that the supreme instance of providential over-ruling of human purposes was the fourth Crusade itself. It was a marvel that an operation designed for an attack on Egypt should end by attacking Constantinople; a greater marvel still that so small a force should overcome so great a city."

[161] Guynn, 'Rhetoric and Historiography', p. 107.

[162] For example: Villehardouin §140; 408; 415. Beer, *Villehardouin*, p. 16. Psalm §27 (NIV).

[163] Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, p. 126.

[164] Andrea, *Contemporary Sources*, 'Registers of Innocent III': §7:152, pp. 98-112.

cite the prophecy of martial victory from Leviticus, but incorporates god into his narrative influencing events as he had decreed that they should happen.[165] Through the intervention of god, Baldwin, with great propagandistic value, is able to explicitly remove the causative blame from himself and his men.[166] Whether or not these writers truly believed that god genuinely controlled events, as they claim, is uncertain. However, the impact that this penchant for the causative power of divine providence has opened another avenue through which teleology has permeated the discourse.

The importance of divine predestination, although vital as a passive cultural guiding principle for most medieval historians, has also been actively co-opted into supporting the Nicaean narrative of exile and 're'-conquest. Nicaean orators, who provide a large amount of the evidence for the thirteenth century, deploy a variety of biblical metaphors, similes and exemplars, through the analogy of which audience expectations are prefigured.[167] Choniates, whose evidence is important for the early period, depicts Theodore 'I' Laskaris, as Moses (once), Zorobabel (twice) and David (four times), the person with whom he is most often compared.[168] For his audience this array of biblical exiles, each of whom famously led God's chosen people out of exile, was intended to maintain events within a divine schema. Importantly these analogies prefigure Nicaean 're'-conquest, since all these biblical characters were successful. Theodore (*theo-doros*) lives up to his name (gift of god), when he

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[165] Leviticus §26.8 (NIV).

[166] Andrea, *Contemporary Sources*, 'Registers of Innocent III': §7.152, p. 107: "Now however, we do not wrongly lay claim to this victory for ourselves because the Lord's own right hand delivered Himself and His powerful arm was revealed in us. This was done by the Lord, and it is a miracle above all miracles in our eyes."

[167] D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology & Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2006), *passim*, esp. ch. 2, tab. 2.

[168] Moses (Nik. Chon. *Orat*. §147.1-2). Zorobabel (Ibid. §147.4-7; 175.32-34). David (Ibid. §134.19-21; 139.16-17; 171.11-19; 173.21).

is depicted as a quasi-miraculous leader, working towards the teleological endpoint of God's chosen people's predestined return. It is unsurprising that Nicaea has been treated preferentially by historians, when their sources couch their descriptions of events and battles in such one-sided comparisons. Manuel Mavrozomes, for example, is depicted as "the new Achitophel" to Laskaris' 'new David' by Choniates.[169] The victory and legitimacy of Laskaris is thus sharply prefigured, when his enemy is the biblical betrayer of David and supporter of his rebellious son Absalom.[170] Interestingly even in his history Akropolites describes Alexios 'III' as David when he fled from Constantinople in July 1203. Although the meaning of this reference is ambiguous, it does point to the ubiquity of this ideologically-laden language.[171] The prevalence of this language continues in imperial panegyrics of John Vatatzes and Michael Palaiologos, both of whom are described not only as Moses, David and Zorobabel, but also appropriately as Joshua, Moses' successor.[172] These panegyric comparisons demonstrate how the Nicaean propagandists co-opted the most basic religious assumptions of their audiences into their positive representations of the Nicaean polity and its rulers. It is unsurprising, given how weighted such evidence is, that it has influenced the modern historiographical record, by teleologically preconceiving divinely predestined 're'-conquest.

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[169] Nik. Chon. *Orat.* 136.33: "τὸν νέον…Ἀχιτόφελ".

[170] For biblical references see 2 Samuel §2.15 (NIV). See also Psalms §41; 55 (NIV).

[171] For example, see above, pp. 19-21.

[172] Vatatzes is described: as Moses twice (once by Theodore 'II' Laskaris and once by Jacob of Bulgaria); as David six times (once by Theodore 'II' Laskaris, four times by Jacob of Bulgaria and once by Akropolites); as Zorobabel once (by Jacob of Bulgaria); as Joshua once (by Jacob of Bulgaria). Michael Palaiologos is described: as Moses six times (four times by Manuel Holobolos and once by Gregory of Cyprus); as David ten times (seven times by Manuel Holobolos and thrice by Gregory of Cyprus); as Zorobabel four times (by Manuel Holobolos). See Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, pp. 86-88.

Cronon has demonstrated the effect that a postulated teleological endpoint can have on the substance of narratives, since the same events can be interpreted completely differently depending on the projected *telos* they are aiming for.[173] The deterministic effect of a preconceived *telos* on data selection is apparent in the works of the sources: Akropolites, as we have seen, excluded the successes and claims of the Epirot polity, while Choniates, in his b-text, ignored some of the less admirable actions and qualities of the reigning emperor Alexios III, and Villehardouin carefully chose to omit the negative interactions between the papacy and the crusader leadership. The constructed nature of historical sources is not considered often enough as an intrinsic aspect of the 'evidence', especially the religious assumptions of the writers and audience.[174]

Guynn, although writing specifically about historiographical treatments of Villehardouin, summarises the disposition of historians perfectly:

> [Even] those scholars who are attuned to rhetorical techniques in the *Conquête* often dismiss them as extrinsic rather than intrinsic, or as insignificant with respect to the factual information the text contains.[175]

However, the divorce of literary technique from 'historical evidence' is not only impossible but analytically damaging. Although problematic, as Guynn notes, in old French studies, the reluctance to engage with new literary criticism and theory has been even more acute in Byzantine studies. The literary awareness of Byzantine historians has improved vastly since 1990, when Margaret Mullett chastised Byzantine historians for ignoring the literary quality

[173] His context is the American dust bowl of the 1930s, but examples abound in almost all areas of historical inquiry, see Cronon, 'A Place for Stories', pp. 1347-76.
[174] Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 14-5.
[175] Guynn, 'Rhetoric and Historiography', p. 103.

of their sources while "plundering" texts.[176] However, there has been surprisingly little movement towards an accepted awareness of the way in which the narrative form conditions the presentation of 'events' in historical texts.[177] Only Ingela Nilsson has engaged in any depth with the abstract problem from a historiographical perspective.[178] This is because, as Macrides has argued, historiography has been removed from literature (in the minimal capacity that it has been studied in its own right in Byzantine studies), and as a consequence also from the theoretical advances brought from literary criticism.[179] Only the semantic distinction between chronicles, annals and histories has been seriously affected in medieval historiography by the study of 'narratology'.[180] Yet an engagement with the literary and, in particular, the narrative nature of all texts, 'primary' or not, is essential, because any persuasive writing narrativises, using logical steps strung together in the form of an argument, leading to a conclusion. Even the most assiduously 'problem-based'

[176] M. Mullett, 'Dancing with Deconstructionists in the Gardens of the Muses: New Literary History vs?', *BMGS* 14 (1990), pp. 268: "they charge through with card indexes and databases plundering for historical facts and complaining when the text's complexity or vacuity eludes their rape."

[177] Ibid., pp. 266-7: "A literature in which narrative has in practice been privileged by modern readers could have gained more from the stream of Genette-inspired works on narrative."

[178] E. C. Bourbouhakis & I. Nilsson, 'Byzantine Narrative: the Form of Storytelling in Byzantium' in L. James (ed.), *Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, 2010), pp. 263-74. Nilsson, 'To Narrate the Events of the Past', pp. 47-58.

[179] R. Macrides, 'Introduction' in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2010b), p. x. *Contra* L. Neville, 'Review of R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium*', *Speculum* 87 (2012), pp. 1223-5, esp. 1223. Neville argued that in fact Byzantinists were fully up to date on literary theory well before Macrides' conference on *History as Literature*. In this she is mistaken. As the survey of literature in this thesis makes evident, there are many areas in which scholars are yet to make even minimal advances. On the state of Byzantine historiography see B. Croke, 'Tradition and Originality in Photius' Historical Reading', in J. Burke, *et al.* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006), p. 59. For the only large work dedicated to narrative in Byzantium see the rest of J. Burke *et al* (eds.), *Byzantine Narrative* (Melbourne, 2006).

[180] White, 'The Value of Narrativity', pp. 5-27. *Contra* M. R. Waldman, '"The Otherwise Unnoteworthy Year 711": A Reply to Hayden White', *CI* 7 (1981), pp. 784-92. *Contra* H. White, 'The Narrativization of Real Events' *CI* 7 (1981), pp. 793-8. S. Foot, 'Finding the Meaning of Form: Narrative in Annals and Chronicles', in N. Partner (ed.), *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), pp. 88-108, esp. pp. 90-1. Beck, 'Byzantine Chronicles', pp. 188-97.

histories exist within a combination of the author and audience's conceptual chronological framework, whether it be Jacob Burckhardt's Renaissance or Johan Huzinga's 'middle ages'.[181] This thesis is no exception, because the requirements of the contemporary higher education system require the production of a narrative product.[182]

Steven Runciman, it seems, was right, if you accept his narrow view of what history 'is', when he wrote that "History-writing to-day [1951] has passed into an Alexandrian age, where criticism has overpowered creation", since there have been few examples of the narrative history writing that he believed to be "the supreme duty of the historian".[183] For the thirteenth century Gardner's history of *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, published in 1912 remains the only continuous narrative history of the Nicaean polity; as does William Miller's for Trebizond, published in 1926, which only superficially covers the early years; and Donald Nicol's for Epiros in 1957.[184] In addition to Jean Longnon and Miller's histories of the Latin 'empire' these works constitute the main, if not the only, continuous narrative histories for

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[181] These two famous historians stand as examples of the active rejection of 'narrative history' *per se* J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay*, (trans.) S. G. C. Middlemore (London, 1965). J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, (trans.) F. Hopman (Oxford, 2009). On the question of 'problem-based' history see F. Furet, 'From Narrative History to Problem-Oriented History', in G. Roberts (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader* (London, 2001), pp. 269-80.

[182] Hopefully this thesis constitutes a progression of logical steps towards a teleological endpoint, conceived before the start of composition. Read in any order other than from start to finish this thesis would not have the intended affect. Moreover, without prior knowledge of academic and historical techniques and literary style, it could not be judged accurately. The meaning of this text then is bound up in its form as much as in the thought of the author. Furthermore, arguably even a selection of 'events', arranged anarchically, were that truly possible, would form a narrative through the selection of the events and their very anarchic arrangement.

[183] S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades: Volume I: The First Crusade* (London, 1990a), p. xiii.

[184] Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*. W. Miller, *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire* (London, 1926). Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*.

the period under investigation.[185] These works took a dominant role in forming the chronological framework within which more recent scholarship has been created. Angold, for example, writing about the study of the Nicaean polity, said that: "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."[186] With this comment Angold implicitly justifies his use of the established chronological framework of these narrative histories. However, not only are these narratives firmly out-of-date, but they conform to the linear metanarrative outlined above. Gardner's preface is illustrative of the type of story she is trying to tell:

> 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.[187]

Thus Gardner not only spells out her conception of the task of the historian as one of storytelling, but also recognises the influence of Gibbon in the formation of her conception of her narrative. Moreover, her understanding of the period illustrates perfectly the metanarrative which dominates the period, linking the great conquests of Constantinople together in a (divinely) predestined chain, a resurgence from 1204-61, subsumed into a continuity from 1204-1453 and beyond. The narrative form produces such compelling reading that even observably outdated narrative histories, such as those of Gibbon, Runciman and the authors mentioned above, exert a great influence on historiography, because they condition the way students approach their sources.

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[185] W. Miller, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)* (Cambridge, 1908). J. Longnon, *L'Empire Latin de Constantinople* (Paris, 1949).

[186] Angold, *Government in Exile*, pp. 2-3.

[187] Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, p. vii.

Two main responses are required of historians to deal with this edifice. The first involves an increased historiographical focus on the narrative form, not for the creation of a 'newer' 'truer' narrative, as is the empiricists' dream, but in order to be able to deconstruct the 'semiotic myth' created by the narrativisation of the 'events' we study.[188] The form, not just the 'fact' must be part of the process of historical analysis. Hayden White has described the method best:

> I will consider the historical work as what it most manifestly is – that is to say, a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of explaining what they were by representing them.[189]

However, although deconstruction is interesting in and of itself, an attempt must be made to return agency from the form to the 'events', while acknowledging that this is impossible to truly accomplish. A complexity of causation must be introduced to replace the linearity and narrativity which historiography has imposed and the penchant towards simplification and signification, must be reversed.

The past, unlike the narratives created by those who purport to represent it, does not have a 'true' form that can be separated from the sources. Yet, the concern of Byzantine historians with telling the 'truth', especially as a corrective to some other narrative about the same events, suggests a singular conception of 'history'.[190] That is, they believed that there was one true past that could be related, albeit imperfectly, as both Akropolites and Clari accept:

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[188] For the semiotic myth see R. Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, (trans.) A. Lavers & C. Smith (London, 1967).

[189] H. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (London, 1973a), p. 2.

[190] Scott's argument needs to be expanded to include the Old French chroniclers of the period too. See Scott, 'Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography', pp. 64-5.

> 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.[191]
>
> And he has made the truth to be put in writing, how it was conquered…he has told the very truth, and there are so many true things that he cannot remember them all.[192]

This approach must be rejected by modern historians, because it relies on the concept of narrative, and the premise that 'true reality' can only be represented through narrative.[193] Although the narrative form is able to convert "*knowing* into *telling*", facilitating the transfer of knowledge, and even allows the knower to control the past – hence the ubiquity of the narrative form – narrativisation requires simplification.[194] It would be impossible to record everything that happened in a place during a period of time, so that which is written down not only represents a narrative, but also a decision about what elements or 'events' were 'important enough' to include. Historians are often misled by the belief that if they identify the biases of their sources and attenuate them, then they can 'objectively' examine the 'events' in their pure form.[195] However, this approach ignores the assumed significance of events that are selected, both by Byzantine and modern historians.

Historians tend to measure historical significance by connectedness, that is an event's relationship to other events both after and, as demonstrated above, before. This is obvious from the manner in which historians evaluate events, such as the fall of Constantinople in

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[191] Akropolites §1.24-7.
[192] Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, p. 128.
[193] White, 'The Value of Narrativity', p. 10.
[194] Original emphasis, White, 'The Value of Narrativity', p. 5. For the problem of inclusion see Cronon, 'A Place for Stories', p. 1351.
[195] On the subject of medieval truth claims generally (including in Clari and Villehardouin) see the old, yet still illuminating: J. M. A. Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages* (Geneva, 1981), *passim*.

1453, via their causes and consequences.[196] However, as the French mathematician Noël Bonneuil has pointed out, historiographical conceptions of time are based on outdated physical and mathematical principles, which connect 'events' to each other in a point-to-point trajectory, a mathematical term equivalent to narrative in history.[197] The preoccupation with connectedness in historical time is not itself problematic. However, the linearity and narrativity of the way in which connectedness is manufactured is, because it relies on continuity, acting as a "covering-law mechanism".[198] However, rather than continuity "we require a history that will educate us to discontinuity more than ever before; for discontinuity, disruption, and chaos is our lot."[199] White's conception of history seems to be far closer to the evidence provided by the fragmentary source record, which tells a variety of different stories and "attest to a plurality of histories", rather than a prefabricated singular metanarrative.[200] Bonneuil by applying 'set-valued', 'viability' and 'dynamical system' theories, attempts to formulate a method for consistently revealing the discontinuous and the non-deterministic.[201] Unfortunately his approach requires far better and more easily categorical data than is available for the thirteenth-century Byzantine world. However,

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[196] The subtitle of David Stacton and Michael Angold's histories of 1453 illustrate this point perfectly: D. Stacton, *The World on the Last Day: The Sack of Constantinople by the Turks May 29, 1453, its Causes and Consequences* (London, 1965). Angold, *Fall of Constantinople*, p. 1: goes further spelling out his conception of significance: "The focus of my interest will be on the historical significance of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans. Was it one of history's turning points? Such an approach will necessarily highlight its prehistory and its consequences, at the expense of the event itself." See also J. R. Melville-Jones, *The Siege of Constantinople 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts* (Amsterdam, 1972), p. vii: "It would be easy to exaggerate the importance which the fall of Constantinople had in the history of the Western world."

[197] Bonneuil, 'Mathematics of Time in History', pp. 29-30.

[198] Ibid., pp. 30-1.

[199] H. White, 'The Burden of History', *History and Theory* 5 (1966), p. 134.

[200] Bonneuil, 'Mathematics of Time in History', p. 35: "The attempted correspondence between past reality and narrative virtuality is rendered equivocal by the scarcity, incompleteness and ambiguity of the sources, which can attest to a plurality of histories."

[201] Ibid., *passim*, esp. 44-6.

although the construction of meaningful sets might be beyond our data, the deconstruction of narrative, at least partially, is not.[202] This thesis, instead of treating 'events' as points on a linear narrative, will seek to understand each event as sitting at the heart of a web-like network of connections. An ideal historical study would consider all the possible antecedents and all the possible consequences which connect each node-like event to any other.[203] Although there is neither the data, nor the space in this thesis, for such an exhaustive examination, here each event will be approached in this manner, as far as possible. Effort has been made to de-linearise 'events' and even time, since Runciman's conception of time and event, in which "the stream of history flows on relentlessly and there is never a barrier across it", not even 1453, must be discarded.[204] A more accurate metaphor for the relationship would see events as an archipelago, between which there are many connections some above and some below the water, but each sits in an unpredictable position surrounded by the sea of time, which is not linear but simply all around.[205]

* * *

This chapter has sought to identify the features and origins of the metanarrative that has so heavily influenced the study of 'late' Byzantine history, by examining the historians and 'events' around which it has formed. By isolating the trends leading up to and continuing after the nodal events of 1204 and 1261, it has suggested that the simplification and signification that comes with narrativisation has allowed teleology and anachronism to

[202] Mathematically sets are collections of distinct objects, anything from numbers to people, grouped together in a unit.
[203] It would also, contrary to Bonneuil, treat each event as if it had no connections whatsoever.
[204] Runciman, *Fall of Constantinople*, p. xi.
[205] Bonneuil, 'Mathematics of Time in History', p. 45. Originally adapted from: H. White, 'Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground', *History and Theory* 12 (1973b), p. 28.

distort historiographical representations of the period. Then, through a close examination of contemporary theory, this thesis has proposed potential ways to reduce the causative power of the metanarrative.

CHAPTER II - Anatolian Anarchy: Deconstructing Nicaean 'Primacy' (*c.* 1204-14)

The second chapter of this thesis tests the macro-historical claims of the first, by examining in detail the historiography of the years 1204-14 in Byzantine Anatolia, a period the representation of which has been heavily distorted by the metanarrative. It identifies the core elements of the orthodox historiographical narrative that has been created to describe the period and the events to which significance has been attributed. It then tests the assumptions of the orthodox historiographical narrative against the available evidence, in an attempt to (re)complicate the period. In so doing it challenges Nicaea's unquestioned historiographical supremacy, treating Theodore Laskaris' polity at length, but also analysing polities that often remain overlooked.[206] When treated outside the confines of the metanarrative unquestioned orthodoxies are often shown to be fallible. Sometimes their dismantlement opens the way for new interpretations, yet often there are no adequate answers to fill the void left behind by the metanarrative. Although often unsatisfying, a lacuna-filled historiography represents, not only an advance, but also the anarchic landscape of thirteenth-century Byzantium far better than the smooth (meta)narrative, which has successfully sucked out much of the unappetising chaos, which this thesis has sought to restore.

The Orthodox Historiographical Narrative

The metanarrative, while constrictive, resembles a framework more than a box. Historiography is far from uniform, so generalising statements often cannot exactly describe

[206] The prominence of Nicaea, aided by this thesis' geographical scope (Byzantine Anatolia, see Map I), appears hypocritical. However, since the effects of the metanarrative revolve around Nicaea, its over-treatment is essential to exposing the problem.

all historiography. However, as with 1204, 1261 and 1453 at a macro-level, there are identifiable nodal points around which interpretations of the period 1204-14 revolve, which reflect on a smaller scale the metanarrative implications of 'key-events' and project them onto surrounding periods. Michael Angold's article, entitled "The Greek Rump States and the Recovery of Byzantium", in Jonathan Shepard's seminal *History of the Byzantine Empire* is broadly representative of historiographical orthodoxy, concerning 1204-14, which he briefly outlines as part his summary of the "period of exile".[207] Angold selects only seven events for his narrative of this early period: the conquest of Constantinople itself (1204); the battle of Adrianople (1205); the election/ordination of "a new orthodox patriarch of Constantinople" (1208); the consequent crowning and anointing of Theodore Laskaris (1208); the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander (1211); the Latin campaign in north-western Asia Minor (1211/2); and finally the death of David and the Nicaean annexation of Paphlagonia (1212).[208] The subtitle, "Aftermath of the Sack of Constantinople", under which these events are gathered and the one which they precede, "The Rise of Nicaea", are indicative of Angold's narrative goal.[209] He bridges the gap between the two and even prefigures his second subtitle through his selection of material and his attribution of significance.[210]

Angold's narrative starts by proclaiming the profundity of 1204. Next the Latins are removed as 'serious' contenders through the agency of the battle of Adrianople.[211] However,

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[207] J. Shepard (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500-1492* (Cambridge, 2008a). Angold, 'Greek Rump States', pp. 731-58, esp. 737.

[208] Ibid., pp. 731-7.

[209] Ibid., pp. 735; 737.

[210] The events he selects are representative of, although not identical to, those emphasised in the majority of literature concerning the period. See for comparison: Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, pp. 52-86.

[211] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 731.

the result is hailed as important, not for the Bulgarian polity which won the battle, but for the Byzantine polity which was successful later.[212] Thus teleology has permitted the historian to endow Adrianople with more significance as "breathing space" for Nicaea than for heralding a period of Bulgarian dominance.[213] Angold then bolsters Nicaean claims to ideological 'legitimacy', by narrating the twin events of 1208, a pair of events which he believes "demonstrated that the twin pillars upon which the Byzantine Empire was built, the imperial office and the patriarchate, had been re-erected, if only in exile."[214] Then with a debatable reading of the sources for the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander he demonstrates Nicaean dominance over the Seljuks. Angold does mention vaguely the advance of the Latins, but gives neither event nor date around which to build significance. This one brief anomaly in the narrative is immediately followed by the death of David Komnenos in 1212 and the Nicaean conquest of Paphlagonia, which is understood as the end of Trebizond's importance. Thus Angold essentially removes all of Nicaea's proximate rivals. However, perhaps even more important is what is omitted. The plethora of Byzantine polities in Anatolia is ignored completely, but for Nicaea and Trebizond. This omission means Nicaea appears as the sole representative of the Byzantine empire, especially after Trebizond is dismissed, fighting Turks and Latins, but not Byzantines.[215] The focus of Angold's narrative is illustrated by a statistical analysis of frequency with which he refers to the names of the various polities throughout the article (see Figure I).

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[212] The Bulgarian polity features only rarely in this thesis. This does not reflect its importance in Anatolian affairs, since the Aegean world was closely connected politically, culturally and economically, but rather a lack of space and the scope of this thesis.

[213] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 12.

[214] Ibid., p. 13.

[215] Particularly apparent in the narrative of G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, (trans.) J. Hussey (New Brunswick, 1957), pp. 379-82.

Figure I:

'Key-Word'	Frequency
Nicaea/Nicaean(s)	69
Epiros/Epirot(s)	21
Bulgaria/Bulgarian(s)	18
Seljuk(s)	8
Trebizond	3

The statistical overrepresentation of Nicaea accurately reflects a preponderance of signification.[216] Nicaea and its upward trajectory is Angold's story, as it was Gardner's, and other polities feature as asides.[217] However, reducing the study of the period to this story violates the available evidence. Historiography, in the form of Angold's narrative, must be challenged and Nicaea's position *vis-à-vis* her rivals must be reviewed.

The Latin 'Empire' and Nicaea: North-West Anatolia

In the orthodox historical narrative the new Latin 'empire' is presented as weak from its genesis in Latin sources and Byzantine sources are hostile and reductive, since authors represented either the pre-1204 or post-1261 elite.[218] Akropolites, writing with the knowledge that in 1261 Nicaea would conquer Constantinople, anachronistically dismissed the Latin 'empire' as "an aberration".[219] He mentions Latins only occasionally and refuses to use the term emperor to describe their leader, except for Baldwin just before his death at Adrianople.[220] Baldwin's imperial status thus serves not to promote Latin sovereignty but rather to exacerbate the scale of Latin defeat and loss.[221] Niketas Choniates, having suffered

[216] Latin(s) cannot be included in this analysis because it is mostly used to refer, not to the polity but to religious matters or periodisation.
[217] See above, p. 43, n. 187.
[218] The presence of this phenomenon in Latin sources has already been touched on, see above, pp. 14-8. Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, p. 25.
[219] Angold, *Fourth Crusade*, p. 117.
[220] Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 89-90, esp. n. 578.
[221] Akropolites §13; 17; 37; 78.

personally from the Latin sack of Constantinople was hostile to the Latins and the Latin chroniclers of the fourth crusade, by focusing on 1204, consigned the Latin polity to secondary importance.[222] The second half of Villehardouin's representative account of the Latin 'empire' reads like an epilogue, both in its narrative trajectory and gloomy outlook. *La Conquête* changes decisively in its second half, as the quasi-epic and divinely sanctioned crusade transforms into an individualistic farrago, culminating in Boniface's death.[223] Beer has argued that the change in presentation reflects a change in Villehardouin's attitude to the events he is describing.[224] In doing so she assumes that Villehardouin considered the post-conquest 'crusade' less worthy, yet her expectations are teleological. Villehardouin's conviction in the innate value of his subject-matter did not change, as can be seen from his reaction to those he describes as 'deserters'. He is as indignant concerning the crusaders who left in 1205 after Adrianople, as with those, such as Simon de Montfort, who left the army earlier.[225] For Villehardouin there seems to be no qualitative difference between the desertions, both of which he considered to be betrayals. If anything his condemnation of the 1205 deserters is more damning.[226]

Villehardouin's anger at the desertions tallies with his comments on the paucity of Latin troops, which becomes a trope throughout *La Conquête*. Lack of manpower appears to

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[222] For the epilogic treatment of Latin sources, see above, pp. 16-7.

[223] Villehardouin §499-500.

[224] Beer, *Villehardouin*, p. 94: "The second half of the narrative shows a decrease in direct speech (and other vivid devices) because it reflects Villehardouin's attitude to the whole crusade. The beginning was alive with idealism, dramatic in conception. The difficulties of the Crusading army and its diffusion over the territory for isolated conquests undermine the epic vision, and, with it, the appropriate epic style."

[225] Villehardouin §109-10; 379.

[226] Ibid. §379: "…they say a man behaves most wickedly who through fear of death does something for which he is ever after reproved."

have been a major problem for all the Latin polities established after 1204.[227] For example, in 1205 the Latin troops outside Adrianople were too few men to properly besiege the city, and were massively outnumbered by the Bulgarians.[228] The lack of manpower is also repeated by Henry of Hainaut, in a letter to the west in 1212, which he ended with a plea for reinforcements.[229] However, although it was probably present at times it should not be accorded the causative dominance with which it has been endowed by scholars. Being outnumbered is a literary device, which owes something both to biblical and epic exemplars and serves to boost the prestige of the outnumbered fighters.[230] Scholars have only emphasised Villehardouin's comments on manpower when it complements their narrative goals, emphasising them after 1204, but not before, for example during the first siege of Constantinople when he comments that the crusaders were outnumbered.[231]

Illustrative of the large number of small quasi-epic set-pieces which have contributed towards an impression of the Latin 'empire' as desperate for manpower, but that are rarely accorded enough 'significance' to appear in a narrative such as Angold's, is the defence of Kyzikos by Peter of Bracieux and a force of forty knights in March 1207. When attacked by "the largest force" Theodore Laskaris could muster, Peter's "meagre force" was hard pressed:

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[227] Not unlike the Latin polities of the Levant.

[228] Villehardouin §349-53; 362.

[229] G. Prinzing, 'Der Brief Kaiser Heinrichs von Konstantinopel vom 13. Januar 1212', *Byzantion* 43 (1973), pp. 417-8.

[230] For biblical examples see Beer, *Villehardouin*, p. 16, n. 7. Psalm xxxvii, 20 (NIV). For an example from contemporary epic see Anonymous, *La Chanson de Roland*, (trans.) J. Crosland, The Song of Roland (Cambridge, Ontario, 1999), §81, p. 22: "He cannot even count their formations, for there are so many that one cannot number them."

[231] Villehardouin §165; 179.

> …no forty knights ever had to protect themselves against so many men in so perilous circumstances.[232]

However, in the battle only one knight actually died.[233] This engagement was little more than a skirmish, yet its carefully constructed description conjures an impression of glorious martial valour against tough odds. This was Villehardouin's goal, but his account should not be accepted obediently. Villehardouin's numbers mislead, because he only bothers to mention how many knights were present, when these would only have accounted for a fraction of any contemporary Latin army, with other combatants contributing approximately six times as many men as actual knights.[234] Furthermore, following the capture of Constantinople the soldiers of the fourth crusade were highly successful, despite relatively small numbers. Choniates' report of their advances approaches hysteria:

> …the barbarians have outdistanced my narration, flying faster than the quill of my history, and there is no adversary to repulse them.[235]

The Latins were so confident that Clari wrote that they left Constantinople not to conquer territory, but simply "to view their lands".[236] Similarly the confidence of the Latins in their martial power is potentially demonstrated by their "arrogance", according to Choniates, in partitioning the Byzantine 'empire' before they had even captured Constantinople.

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[232] Villehardouin §462-4.

[233] Ibid.

[234] For example, the contract between the crusaders and Venetians stipulated that there would be two squires for every knight (9,000 squires for 4,500 knights) as well as more than four times as many foot sergeants (20,000), who would have included crossbowmen and men-at-arms. From this contract it is possible to suggest that a crusader army would have approximately six 'non-knights' for every knight. Thus at Kyzikos Villehardouin's 40 men were probably closer to 280. See Villehardouin §21.

[235] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §610. For specific conquests see Lock, *Franks in the Aegean,* pp. 68-75.

[236] Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, p. 107.

> …as though they had already been installed as kings of kings and held the whole terrestrial globe in their hands, they commissioned tax assessors to register the taxable Roman lands…before apportioning these by lot.[237]

Immediately after the capture of Constantinople, Latin forces conquered large swathes of north-western Anatolia, including much of Mesothynia and the Opsikion, as well as Thrace , central and southern Greece.[238] However, the 'feudal' hierarchy which organised the crusaders meant that these various and largely successful campaigns were generally the work of relatively small contingents. As Angold has pointed out, the successful Venetian settlement of Crete required an initial plantation of only 94 knights and 26 sergeants.[239] The armies of Henry of Hainaut and Peter of Bracieux, which invaded Anatolia comprised 120 and 100 knights respectively.[240]

Guynn has compellingly argued Villehardouin's manner of "narrating the past" had more to do with "imagining, if not actually securing, the future".[241] Guynn's conclusions, which plausibly sought to contextualise *La Conquête* in the power struggle between baronial power and the centralising tendencies of the early thirteenth-century French monarchy, must be expanded.[242] Villehardouin's emotional portrayal of the struggles of the Latin 'empire', the weight he gives to the lack of manpower and his carefully chosen finale with the death of Boniface, suggest that perhaps *La Conquête* was in part written in the hope that

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[237] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §595.

[238] Akropolites §7: "The entire theme of Opsikion and Aigaion, and even Atramytion itself became Italian possessions. Baris and Aulonia, Poimanenon, and Lentiana up to and including Lopadion recognized the Italians as masters, but also all of Thynia up to and including Nikomedeia." See also Villehardouin §310; 312-13.

[239] Angold, *Fourth Crusade*, p. 133. For what these numbers actually mean see above, p. 55, n. 234.

[240] Villehardouin §310; 312.

[241] Guynn, 'Rhetoric and Historiography', p. 110.

[242] Ibid., pp. 109-10; of particular interest for this line of argument is Villehardouin §16; 143.

it might galvanise reinforcement from new crusaders.[243] Only Caroline Smith appears to have considered this, writing that: "Villehardouin may have hoped that his work would rouse those who heard it to unite in support of the hard-won empire."[244] However, she leaves the point unsubstantiated, as if it were self-evident, and immediately subordinates the statement to a teleological conception of the Latin 'empire' as 'doomed to failure'.[245] The objectives of Villehardouin's text must be considered alongside Henry's letter to the west, a far more explicit piece of recruitment propaganda, which ends with a plea for reinforcements.[246] However, written as it was after a successful campaign, which resulted in Henry dictating a peace to Laskaris at Nymphaion, Henry's words must not be taken at face value.[247] Henry was probably underplaying his hand in order to galvanise sympathy and support in the west. The work of both Henry and Villehardouin fit the pattern of earlier crusade literature, which sought to promote political agendas, and particularly recruitment. Most notably Bohemond used the *Gesta Francorum*, which constitutes a highly partisan, pro-Norman and anti-Byzantine account of the first crusade, to promote his personal 'anti-Greek crusade' in 1104-5.[248] Although the propagandistic elements of Henry's letter have been noticed, Villehardouin's account has been assumed to be too trustworthy for this kind of device, which patently does the text an injustice. Villehardouin claims that his book is the

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[243] It has been argued by Benjamin Kedar that the Latin polities of Greece did not distract as much manpower from the Levant as had been assumed. See B. Z. Kedar, 'The Fourth Crusade's Second Front', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e Croisade et ses Conséquences* (Paris, 2005), pp. 89-110.

[244] See C. Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades* (Harmondsworth, 2008), p. xxxi.

[245] Ibid.: "As it transpired, the Latin empire never attracted the material or human resources it needed; after several wearying decades for the Latins, Constantinople was returned to Byzantine control in 1261."

[246] Hen. *Epist*. §168-71.

[247] Henry's campaign was between 1211 and 1214, but precise dating is unclear, see Akropolites §15. Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 151, nn. 9-10.

[248] C. Tyerman, *Chronicles of the First Crusade* (London, 2011), pp. xxiv-xxv.

audience's "faithful witness" of the skirmish at Kyzikos, yet it bears testimony only to Villehardouin's truth.[249]

In Angold's abridged narrative the defeat of Adrianople is the defining event in which the Latins take part, while the campaign of 1211/2 is sandwiched between two other Nicaean success stories.[250] This presentation is misleading, owing more to metanarrative assumptions than the evidence, since a host of Latin successes is simply ignored. The Latin victories over Theodore and Constantine Laskaris in battles at Poimanenon and Atramytion and their successful alliance with the Armenians of the Troad, are attributed little or no significance, because they were succeeded by the battle of Adrianople.[251] The source responsible for this presentation is Akropolites' history, which despite admitting that Theodore Laskaris was "hard-pressed" by the Latins and other Byzantines, tellingly ignores events in the east between 1206 and 1211.[252] Akropolites, who skates over these important early confrontations and a succession of Latin victories, eschews detail by noting that Laskaris "engaged in no small number of fierce battles".[253] In contrast Villehardouin reports, in perhaps a suspicious amount of detail, a series of indecisive skirmishes, during which the Latins were hampered, not so much by the strength of Nicaean resistance but by the pressure of the Bulgarians in Thrace. Negotiations between Henry and Laskaris in 1207 are indicative of the insecurity of the early Nicaean polity. Laskaris under pressure from the Latins under Peter of Bracieux at Kyzikos and Dietrich of Loos in Thynia, was forced to

[249] Villehardouin §464: "Et bien tesmoingne li livres que onques a plus grant meschief ne se combatirent xl chevaliers."
[250] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 737.
[251] Late 1204 and early 1205. Villehardouin §319-23. For the Armenians of the Troad see Ibid. §310.
[252] Akropolites §7.25: "κατεβιάζετο". *c.* 1205/6, although it is difficult to be certain of dating because Akropolites' chronology is highly problematic, see Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 83.
[253] Akropolites §7.16-7.

appeal to the Bulgarians for a Thracian campaign to distract the Latins.[254] This alone is not surprising and might be considered simply good tactics, rather than military weakness. However, after the Bulgarian campaign comes to fruition and the Latins are largely forced to withdraw across the Hellespont, the Nicaeans failed to make any gains, and did not take any cities.[255] Nicaean weakness seems apparent from their fear of committing to any large-scale battle, instead withdrawing when confronted with any sizable Latin force, although it is difficult to determine the extent to which cowardly 'Greeks' refusing to fight like 'proper men' is a literary invention of Villehardouin's, or an accurate representation of events.[256] Finally Laskaris opened negotiations with Henry and agreed to a two-year truce and the destruction of fortifications in Kyzikos and Nikomeidia.[257] That Nikomeidia, only a day's ride from Nicaea, could not be taken by the Nicaeans does not support the sentiment projected by focusing on the defeat at Adrianople in the chronology.[258] At the end of the period under discussion, the Latins had defeated the Nicaeans at the Rhyndakos river (October 1211) and, having captured vast swathes of land in Lydia, dictated terms to the Nicaeans in the so-called treaty of Nymphaion.[259] The predisposition to construct the Latin 'empire' as in decline from its genesis is promoted by the selective signification of events, but distorts the evidence. The fluidity of historical action defies the rigidity of narrativisation. The subordination of the Latin 'empire' to the rising trajectory of Nicaea contradicts the

[254] Villehardouin §453-5; 459.
[255] Ibid. §463.
[256] For example see ibid. §476; 481; 486.
[257] Ibid. §487-9.
[258] Ibid. §455: "That town [Nikomedia] is one day away from Nicaea, the chief city in Theodore Laskaris' lands."
[259] Hen. *Epist*. *passim*. Akropolites §15. MM IV.35. Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 151-2, n. 10.

available evidence, in which Nicaea appears roughly comparable to its rivals rather than superior.

The Battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander: 'Victory' over the Seljuks?

Angold's treatment of the Seljuk sultanate in his narrative is strikingly similar to that of the Latin 'empire'.[260] The battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander (1211) has come to be presented as the defining 'Seljuk event' for 1204-14, functioning like Adrianople in removing the Seljuks as a threat. This Seljuk 'defeat' has been attributed particular significance as a 'turning-point', especially in Seljuk historiography, because the sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I died during the battle, as did Baldwin at Adrianople.[261] The deaths of rulers have a particularly important function in historical narratives of this period because notions of historical causation are so heavily focused on the individual and the ruler.[262] Alexis Savvides attributes the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander significance on a scale of Manzikert and Myriokephalon, both of which have been used by historians as epoch defining 'turning-points'.[263] Historical conceptions of Nicaean-Seljuk relations have thus come to revolve

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[260] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 737. It is highly relevant that the Seljuks only penetrate 'the mainstream' of Byzantine historiography in this period with relation to Nicaea. 'Internal' Seljuk history is largely ignored, which serves to unbalance the narrative.

[261] 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), p. 83.

[262] For Niketas Choniates and classical historians' focus on the individual and rulers, see above, pp. 12-14. The most obvious examples in Byzantine historiography include the deaths of Justinian, Basil II and Manuel Komnenos. For examples in this period, see Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean*, p. 55: who examines together the deaths of Baldwin I (1205), Kalojan (1207), Kay-Khusraw (1211), Peter de Courtenay (1217) and Theodore Komnenon-Doukas (1230). Lock's selection prefigures Nicaean dominance, since none of the moments of Nicaean weakness are mentioned, for example the succession crisis after the death of Theodore 'I' Laskaris (1222), when John Vatatzes took power amidst a political controversy and Laskarid defections to the Latins resulted in the confrontation at Poimanenon (1224).

[263] A. G. C. 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), p.

around the one-sided interpretation – that is totalising Nicaean victory – of a battle, for which the source record is known to be ambiguous.[264] This orthodox conception of the battle is an artificial construction, which functions as a staging-post on a pre-conceived trajectory of Nicaean growth.

Savvides, the scholar who has written most extensively on the battle, noted in 1981 that scholars, depending on their field of specialisation, had favoured either the Persian or Greek sources, however modern descriptions of the battle remain dichotomised.[265] Despite noticing this problem Savvides himself effectively ignores the Seljuk accounts. His justification is inadequate:

> 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…[266]

Savvides mentions some of the points where Ibn Bibi's *Seljukname* differs from the 'main' Byzantine sources of Akropolites and Nikephoros Gregoras, before writing a 'true' narrative

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93, describes it thus: "the battle of Antiochad-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…" See also A. G. C. 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), p. 97. For the use of Manzikert as an epoch defining event in terms of periodisation see the titles of 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), *passim*. A. Fromherz, 'Making 'Great Battles' Great: Christian and Muslim views of Las Navas de Tolosa', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 4 (2012), pp. 33-8. For a more accurate impression of the importance of Myriokephalon see Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 98-9.

[264] The title of Savvides' chapter title is indicative of the two fundamental outcomes attributed to the event and the importance it has been accorded: "The Counter-Attack of Lascaris: Victory over the Seljuks in Antioch on the Maeander and Long-Term Peace-Treaty", see Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East*, p. 91.

[265] Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East*, p. 99. This is unsurprising considering the staggering number of languages required to study accurately the sources and secondary literature from both traditions.

[266] Ibid., p. 99, n. 1.

of the battle, based on Akropolites and supplemented by Gregoras.[267] He treats Ibn Bibi's evidence as biased but fails to recognise that Akropolites and Gregoras were no more 'objective'. Ibn Bibi's *Seljukname* at times approaches the fantastical, portraying Kay-Khusraw as an epic hero, but these mythologising tendencies feature heavily in Byzantine accounts which Savvides takes more seriously.[268] 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.[269] A clear hierarchy of evidence has been established for the examination of this event, in which the narrative history of Akropolites, supported by the 'lesser' Byzantine sources, including Gregoras, has come to dominate historiography, while elements are plucked from Ibn Bibi only when absent from the Greek sources.[270] The generally accepted date of 1211, which appears only in the *Muhtasar* version of Ibn Bibi's text, is a prime example of this selective adoption.[271]

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[267] Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East*, p. 101.

[268] For Ibn Bibi's epic style see the portrayal of Kay-Khusraw's confrontation with a Latin knight in Constantinople. Ibn Bibi §27-30. D. Korobeinikov, 'A Sultan in Constantinople: The Feasts of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay-Khusraw I', in L. Brubaker & K. Linardou (eds.), *Eat, Drink and Be Merry (Luke 12: 19): Food and Wine in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 98-9.

[269] Nik. Chon. *Orat*. §132. Mich. Chon. *Epist*. §179.354-5. That being said Ibn Bibi's *Seljukname* 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 S. N. Yıldız, *Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Seljuk Anatolia: The Politics of Conquest and History Writing, 1243-1282* (Leiden, 2013). C. Melville, 'The Early Persian Historiography of Anatolia', in J. Pfeiffer & S. A. Quinn (eds.), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honour of John E. Woods* (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 135-66.

[270] See above, pp. 26-7.

[271] Ibn Bibi §50. It does not appear in the AS version, see H. W. Duda, *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bibi* (Copenhagen, 1959), p. 328, n. 31. Accepted by Savvides but not explained, see 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', p. 93: "Modern research has conclusively established that the battle of Antiochad-

More than the date, everything from the location of the battle, the sizes of the armies and what actually happened on the field are ambiguous. Ibn Bibi does not specifically state where the battle occurred, but implies that it was in the region of Alaşehir (Philadelphia).[272] Contrary to this Akropolites and Gregoras, place the battle near Antioch-on-the-Maeander, which lies in an adjacent valley 105km south of Philadelphia.[273] However, historians have either not noticed or deemed unworthy the evidence of two Armenian sources, which both place the battle at Honaz (Chonai), 75km to the east of Antioch-on-the-Maeander.[274] The

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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." I have been unable to consult the Russian texts cited by Savvides, so will refrain from staking a position better defined than one of healthy scepticism. Ibn Bibi's account says that the battle happened after the conquest of Antalya (Attaleia) which occurred in 1207 and was narrated in the passage preceding the description of the battle. Moreover, the Armenian tradition clearly places the battle in 1209, see below, pp. 63-4, n. 274.

[272] Ibn Bibi §48. Savvides notes twice that Ibn al-Athīr also places the battle at Alaşehir. However, Al-Athīr does not appear to have actually mentioned the battle at all. Certainly it does not appear in the text translated by Donald Richards: Ibn Al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, (trans.) D. S. Richards, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period: Part 3* (Aldershot, 2008), *passim*.

[273] The modern village of Başaran. Akropolites §10. Gregoras §18.13. A specific location is not given by George of Pelagonia in his hagiographical *Life of Vatatzes*, Niketas or Michael Choniates' account. For the hagiography see A. Heisenberg, 'Kaiser Johannes Batatzes der Barmherzige: Eine Mittelgriechische Legende', *BZ* 14 (1905), pp. 160-233, esp. 215-6. The distance between Philadelphia and Antioch is 55km in a direct line south or 105km by modern road.

[274] Sambat Sparapet [the Constable], *Chronicle*, (trans.) R. Bedrosian, *Smbat Sparapet's Chronicle* (Long Branch, 2005), http://rbedrosian.com/Downloads/Chronicle_Smbat_Sparapet.pdf (accessed 30.07.14), §100: "This man, called Lascari, was courageous and warlike and he ruled over them. He bordered on [the territory of] Sultan Xosrov-Shah. Due to friction between them, they went to war in the district of Xonas. The sultan was slain by Lascari's forces. Then his son, 'Izz ad-din Kay-Kaus (Aze"tin Gagayuz), ruled in his stead. This occurred in 658 A.E. [1209]." Although Sirarpie der Nersessian noticed this in 1959 she appears to have been completely unaware of its significance, see S. Nersessian, 'The Armenian Chronicle of the Constable Smpad or of the "Royal Historian"', *DOP* 13 (1959), p. 157. Noted but ignored by Savvides who wrote that "his chronicle has several other chronological errors", Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East*, p. 100, n. 3. While it is true that the *Chronicle* records that Constantinople was captured by "the counts of Venice and Flandre" in 1207 (Sambat Sparapet, *Chronicle* §100), this is not the case with the chronicle generally attributed to Het'um III, which correctly places the capture of Constantinople in 1204. See Anonymous [Attributed to King Het'um II], *Chronicle*, (trans.) R. Bedrosian, *Smbat Sparapet's Chronicle* (Long Branch, 2005), http://rbedrosian.com/chetint.htm (accessed 30.07.14), §5: "In 658 A.E. [1209] battled against the sultan

vagueness of Ibn Bibi can be co-opted into agreement with the other two options, since both Antioch-on-the-Maeander and Chonai could possibly be considered to be within the region of Philadelphia, which was the most important city in the area, having been designated as capital of the whole Thrakesion theme, before being made capital of its own separate theme, as evidenced in the 1198 privilege given by Alexios III to the Venetians.[275] However, since neither Michael nor Niketas Choniates, who given that they originated from Chonai and were politicised adults at the time of the confrontation might be expected to be more reliable guides to the geography of the region, refer specifically to either Antioch or Chonai, the location of the battle is not beyond doubt.[276]

Despite the wildly varying claims by different sources and the acknowledged problems of army sizes in medieval chronicles, Savvides dismisses George of Pelagonia's 60,000, in favour of Gregoras' 20,000.[277] Since Akropolites, Gregoras and Theodore Skoutariotes agree that the Nicaean army numbered 2,000 (including 800 Latins) this 'fact' is

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of Iconium in Xonas, and the sultan was killed. KayKawus (Aze"tin Gagazuz) occupied his place." The distance is 65km in a direct line or 75km by modern road.

[275] Its elevation within the Thrakesion theme would place its importance above the previous capital of Ephesos. However, the attribution is uncertain. See Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 247. For the relevant section of the privilege of the Venetians see TT I.271. Philadelphia is absent from the *Partitio Romaniae*: A. Carile, 'Partitio Terrarum Imperii Romanie', *Studi Veneziani* 7(1965), p. 217-22. N. Oikonomides, 'La Décomposition de l'Empire Byzantin a la Veille de 1204 et les Origines de l'Empire de Nicée: A propos de la *Partitio Romaniae*', in N. Oikonomides (ed.), *Byzantium from the Ninth Century to the Fourth Crusade: Studies, Texts, Monuments* (London, 1992b), XX, p. 20.

[276] George of Pelagonia refers to the Maeander but not Antioch. Heisenberg, 'Kaiser Johannes Batatzes', p. 215, §27. Admittedly the site of Antioch-on-the-Maeander seems to be the more probable location, since both Armenian sources comment on Byzantine events as asides rather than the focus of their narratives. However, the ambiguity of the event must be reintroduced or historians are following a narrative rather than analysing the events of the past.

[277] On army sizes see above, p. 55, n. 234. Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East*, pp. 100-1; 'Antioch-on-the-Maeander', pp. 96, n. 7; 99, nn. 14-5.

put beyond doubt for Savvides.[278] However, these twin assumptions are unjustified, because they do not take into account the nature and purpose of the texts from which they seek to extract 'data'. The Byzantine sources, by reducing their own numbers and increasing those of the enemy magnify Nicaean 'victory' in an example of standard medieval (and indeed classical and modern) practise. The exaggeration by Ibn Bibi, who breaks from his prose Persian narrative, requiring an Arabic proverb, to describe the Nicaean army "as numerous as sand, ants, rain and pebbles, which cannot be calculated or counted", is indistinguishable from that of the Byzantine sources.[279] Since Ibn Bibi provides only similes and not numbers, his evidence has been assumed to be more biased. Yet historians fail to notice that exaggeration is present in both modes of expression. 20,000 is no different to 60,000, since both, like sand, ants, rain or pebbles, are literary metaphors for the vast and incalculable.[280] It is telling of the function of the two events and the reasons for which they are being narrated that one of the few comparable armies is recorded by Villehardouin at the battle of Adrianople, in which unnumbered Bulgarians and Vlachs are accompanied by 14,000 Cumans.[281]

Despite the apparently vast armies, the sources focus on the confrontation between Kay-Khusraw and Laskaris, whose epic duel is explained differently by various sources, but all accounts end with Kay-Khusraw's death and the consequent Seljuk defeat.[282] This

[278] In this case George of Pelagonia's account, which argues that there were 3,000 is deemed more accurate. Heisenberg, 'Kaiser Johannes Batatzes', p. 215, §25.
[279] Ibn Bibi §48.
[280] Thus 20,000 men would have constituted a surprisingly large army in the thirteenth-century Aegean polities.
[281] Villehardouin §352.
[282] Here is a summary of the sources' descriptions of the battle: Akropolites §10: The sultan, who is winning the battle, finds and defeats Laskaris knocking him on the head and off his horse with a mace. As Kay-Khusraw orders him to be taken away, Laskaris strikes the hind legs of the Sultan's

construction is a literary topos dating back to Homeric epic, not necessarily an actual event as historians have assumed.[283] None of the elements of the duel are unique, each owing more to the literary artifice of epic and historiography than what happened in the Maeander valley. Parallels are innumerable varying from the biblical story of David and Goliath to the duels of tenth-century Byzantine warlords.[284] A comparison with Pseudo-Callisthenes' narration of Alexander's duel with the Indian king Porus at the battle of the Hydaspes river turns up a plethora of common features, particularly startling since Niketas Choniates compares Laskaris to Alexander.[285] Highly standardised descriptions, such as Plutarch's narration of the victory of the consul Marcus Cladius Marcellus over the Gaesatae chieftain

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horse, who falls from his horse and is decapitated by an unseen entity. Gregoras I §17-21: Very similar to Akropolites, differs in that Laskaris strikes the forlegs of the sultan's horse and kills the sultan himself. Nik. Chon. *Orat*. §16.170-5: reports that although unhorsed Laskaris struck Kay-Khusraw from his horse, and although he notes that Kay-Khusraw was decapitated does not mention by whom. Heisenberg, 'Kaiser Johannes Batatzes', pp. 215-6: Geroge of Pelagonia imagines the Byzantines to be winning the battle before the duel. Ibn Bibi §47-50: reports that the victorious sultan, after his army had defeated the Nicaeans, and he had unhorsed Laskaris, was killed by a fleeing Frank almost by accident, because his guards were busy looting.

[283] The duels of Homeric (and later) epic, particularly between Achilles and Hector (Homer, *Iliad*, (trans.) E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth, 2003), §22) and Aeneas and Turnus (Virgil, *Aeneid*, (trans.) D. West (Harmondsworth, 1990), §12) constitute the most obvious examples in which the fates of hosts are determined by individuals. Concerning epic there is a huge amount of secondary literature. See for example: D. West, 'The Deaths of Hector and Turnus', *Greece and Rome* 21 (1974), pp. 21-31. R. Colaizzi, 'Homer, Pietas, and the Cycle of Duels in Aeneid 10 and 12' in W. S. Anderson & L. N. Quartarone (eds.), *Approaches to Teaching Vergil's Aeneid* (New York, 2002), pp. 99-113.

[284] This literary device is present in many forms of literature, which would have been influential for Byzantine historians. The story of David and Goliath, although by no means the only biblical example, is the most famous. I Samuel §17-18 (NIV). In Byzantine historiography perhaps the most noteworthy is the duel between Bardas Phocas and Bardas Sclerus at the battle of Pankaleia. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, (trans.) J. Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 2012), §13.9. P. A. Blaum, *The Days of the Warlords: A History of the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 969-991* (Lanham, 1994), pp. 37-9.

[285] Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Alexander Romance*, (trans.) R. Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (Harmondsworth, 1991), §3.4. It even includes the death of Alexander's horse Bucephalus. Compare with Nik. Chon. *Orat*. §129-47.

Britomatus, include most of the formulae of the duel.[286] Scholars disputing which source presents the 'most accurate' account forget that it is impossible to say much about the event with any certainty, since both of the well-represented perspectives are biased and literary.[287] The duel might be a Nicaean victory but even the pro-Nicaean accounts demonstrate that this was at best a Pyrrhic victory. Laskaris' 800-strong Latin contingent and presumably a large part of the rest of his army, which had been routed before Kay-Kusraw's death secured Nicaean 'victory', died in the battle.[288] Akropolites even admits that the result was ambiguous:

> So, in this way, the emperor was victorious, although he was largely defeated for, left with meagre forces, he could not advance at all.[289]

Furthermore Akropolites notes that:

> …when Henry heard about the emperor's victory, he remarked, "Laskaris was vanquished, not victorious."[290]

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[286] Plutarch, *Life of Marcellus*, (trans.) B. Perrin, *Plutarch Lives V: Agesilaus and Pompey. Pelopidas and Marcellus* (Cambridge: MA, 1917), §6-7: Plutarch in his biography of Marcus Claudius Marcellus gives an example of describing a battle through a duel between generals. When Rome was threatened by the 10,000 strong army of the Gaesatae, led by their giant king Britomatus, the massively outnumbered consul Marcellus succeeded in defeating the army, although initially close to being defeated by slaying the king after knocking him off his horse to the ground. Marcellus then proceeds to strip the armour of his rival in Homeric fashion.

[287] The possibly more neutral Armenian sources, which might have been used to determine which of the two source traditions is more 'reliable' conveniently disagree with both Byzantine and Seljuk sources on the date of the battle and do not include enough detail for a full comparison. See above, p. 63-4, n. 274.

[288] That assumes that the numbers in the Byzantine sources are correct and that these numbers have any basis in 'fact'. These losses represent approximately half the Nicaean army, a huge casualty rate Ibn Bibi §50. Akropolites §10.

[289] Akropolites §10.

[290] Ibid. §15. This statement is somewhat ambiguous since in Henry's own letter to the west he does not frame Laskaris' victory as a defeat. This portrayal in the letter does however support the argument that the letter sought to overstate the precariousness of the Latin position in order to increase the chances of recruiting. Hen. *Epist*. §414.83-90. Akropolites' ambiguous tone suggests that this source needs to be treated with caution, since it is more than just pure propaganda.

Thus the evidence has been analysed with an eye to metanarrative assumptions rather than what the sources are able to confirm. Lock is representative of the way historiography synthesises evidence, describing Antioch-on-the-Maeander as the final culmination of Nicaean-Seljuk relations:

> 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.[291]

The duel, the death and the battle come together to form "one victory" that "lead to significant changes of fortune".[292] For Lock the battle is central. However, this approach robs internal Seljuk disunity, caused by the division of Kilij Arslan's patrimony between eleven relatives, and non-Byzantine threats to the Seljuk sultanate, from Georgia and later the Mongols, of causative power.[293] Antioch-on-the-Maeander has come to mark the start of an "inviolable truce" that secured Nicaea's eastern border 'permanently'.[294] However, the reduction of what appear to be a complex collection of different treaties to one event, is concerned with telling the 'story' of this period, rather than determining what occurred.[295] Such a treatment of 'the Seljuks' overstates the control of the Konya sultanate over its various nomadic Turkmen groups, by suggesting that the sultan could control his

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[291] Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, p. 55: the word led is misspelt as lead in the original.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, p. 111. For example, the battle of Basiani, which resulted in an important Georgian victory, probably in 1203, was vitally important, if historians are fully to understand Seljuk reactions to Byzantium See Ibn Bibi §33-4. For other examples of Georgian pressure see Ibn al-Athīr §183-4; 204-5; 240-1; 255-6. The Mongol victory at Köse Dağ (1243) effectively ended the power of Konya, see A. C. S. Peacock, 'Georgia and the Anatolian Turks in the 12th and 13th Centuries', *Anatolian Studies* 56 (2006), *passim*, esp. p. 128. J. S. Langdon, 'Byzantium's Initial Encounter with the Chinggisids: An Introduction to the Byzantino-Mongolica', *Viator* 29 (1998), pp. 95-140.
[294] Akropolites §10.35. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, p. 120. Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 93; 132, n. 8. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, p. 83.
[295] On the various treaties and potential treaties see Korobeinikov, 'A Sultan in Constantinople', pp. 93-108. Also see Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 92-4.

borderlands absolutely.[296] John Langdon has even argued that there were also major centrally run campaigns (even "crusades"), which may push the hagiographical evidence of George of Pelagonia to its limits, but does suggest continuous tension.[297] Moreover the lands of the upper Maeander valley over which this battle was literally fought, although probably set up as some sort of 'buffer-state' between Konya and Nicaea, seem to have been annexed after Manuel Mavrozomes' death *c*. 1230.[298]

Thus the surviving evidence, particularly concerning the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander, has been read with expectations conditioned by the metanarrative, and distorted because Nicaean expansion to the west requires a passive sultanate to the east. Most

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[296] This is an equally valid point for Nicaean central control, which has generally been attributed too strong a presence in local administration. This is because the majority of documentary evidence, which comes from the region of Smyrna, near the Nicaean palace at Nymphaion, and therefore shows strong bonds between the central government and local institutions, such as the Lembiotissa monastery. See 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), pp. 2-204. Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 3. The often quoted passage of Pachymeres concerning Byzantine and Turkoman border issues is worth considering here for the separation between central control and border provinces, see Pachymeres §1.6. C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkley, 1995), *passim*, esp. 60-117. See also J. S. 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), p. 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), pp. 87-118. R. P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington, 1983).

[297] Langdon, *Byzantium's Last Imperial Offensive*, esp. p. 9, n. 21. Ibn Natif a chronicler who lived in Homs reports frequent fighting between 1211 and 1230 according to I. Booth, 'The Sangarios Frontier: The History and Strategic Role of Paphlagonia in Byzantine Defence in the 13th Century', *BF* 28 (2004), p. 53; 'Theodore Laskaris and Paphlagonia, 1204-1214: Towards a Chronological Description', *ΑΠ* 50 (2003-4), pp. 159. However, in both of these references Booth cites no source for this evidence, only the same unhelpful footnote: "As it was on the constantly moving 19th Century American frontier."

[298] On Manuel Mavrozomes and his polity, see below, pp. 90-2. S. N. 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), pp. 55-77. S. Métivier, 'Les Maurozômai, Byzance et le Sultanat de Rūm: Note sur le Sceau de Jean Comnène Maurozômès', *REB* 67 (2009), pp. 197-207. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, p. 116.

illustratively the evidence of the historians Makrizi and Abu'l-Fida, who both suggest that Theodore Laskaris was captured by the Seljuks and ransomed, has been interpreted through the lens of the metanarrative or ignored.[299] Byzantinists have simply assumed that the "al-Ashkari" referred to must have been Alexios Komnenos, known through other sources to have been captured in this period.[300] More exhaustive examination is required if this problem is to be fully understood.[301] At present the possibility of Nicaean defeat and Laskaris' capture is imagined to be so absurd as to be impossible, because it would contradict Akropolites' carefully embedded pro-Nicaean narrative. Ian Booth's interesting argument that Laskaris was indeed captured has been less dismissed than ignored.[302] The Seljuks in Byzantine historiography (1204-14) have been used to promote the Nicaean polity, the weakness of which has been excised from debate.

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[299] See Al-Makrizi, *Histoire*, (trans.) E. Blochet, *Histoire d'Egypte de Makrizi* (Paris, 1908), p. 305: "Cette année, le sultan du· pays de Roum, Izz ad-Din Kaï-Kaoûs ibn Kaï-Khosrav ibn Kilidj-Arslan, le Seldjoukide, remporta une victoire complète sur Lascaris, empereur des Grecs." Abu'l-Fida, 'Des Annals d'Abou 'L-Fedâ'', (trans.) *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades: Historiens Orientaux* (Paris, 1872), vol. 1, p. 87: "An 611 de l'hégire (1214-1215 de J. C.)…Les Turcomans ayant fait prisonnier le roi Lascaris…"

[300] Vasiliev, 'Foundation of Trebizond', p. 29. Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, p. 87, n. 1.

[301] Makrizi wrote in Egyptian in the early fifteenth century and Abu'l-Fida was a Kurdish historian of the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century. Both therefore wrote at a considerable distance in time and space from the event they describe. However, this must not predetermine analysis. At the very least the question needs to be examined in greater depth by a specialist in all the languages required.

[302] Ian Booth is the only historian to have taken the evidence of these historians seriously. However, unfortunately he follows them uncritically, see: Booth, 'The Sangarios Frontier', p. 64: "We know for certain Laskaris was captured." Although contagiously enthusiastic, Booth is undoubtedly an old-fashioned positivist, convinced that it is possible to precisely reconstruct an exact narrative chronology of events. He is therefore prone to make unsubstantiated claims and assumptions. His methodology is most obvious in his article on the Paphlagonia, in which he ranges well beyond the limitations of his rhetorical evidence, see: I. Booth, 'Theodore Laskaris and Paphlagonia, 1204-1214: Towards a Chronological Description', *AΠ* 50 (2003-4), pp. 151-224.

The Grand Komnenoi: 'Exiled' to the 'Periphery'[303]

In Angold's narrative, mention of Trebizond is primarily used to attenuate Nicaean defeat by Henry (1211/12). The removal from power and later death of David Komnenos, the Nicaean annexation of Paphlagonia and the Seljuk conquest of Sinope are effectively conglomerated into a single episode.[304] This narrativised 'combined-event' functions just like the battles of Adrianople and Antioch-on-the-Maeander, starting with the death of their leader and ending with Trebizond ceasing to be a threat to Nicaea.[305] Coverage of events in Paphlagonia during the years 1208-12 is famously vague.[306] David is assumed to have died in 1212, because he has been associated convincingly with Daniel the monk in the marginalia of the psalter of the Vatopedi monastery.[307] Historiographical discussion of the way this came to pass thus demonstrates more about metanarrative concerns than the sources. Consequently Anthony Bryer's suggestion that Laskaris must have defeated, captured and tonsured David epitomises how the metanarrative has subordinated Trebizond to Nicaea, even in the work of Trapezuntine scholars.[308] Rustam Shukurov's argument that David was the victim of his elder brother Alexios, while elaborate, is generally more convincing, since Laskaris would surely have seen fit to commemorate any major victory over David as he

[303] Much information on Trebizond has been incorporated into other sections of this thesis, see below, esp. pp. 76-7.
[304] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 737. Vasiliev also runs together these events in his treatment, see Vasiliev, 'Foundation of Trebizond', pp. 25-30.
[305] Akropolites §11. See also, Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 134, n. 1. See also A. A. Vasiliev, 'Mesarites as a Source', *Speculum*, 13 (1938), pp. 180-82. A. Bryer, 'David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios', *ΑΠ* 42 (1988-9), pp. 161-88.
[306] R. Shukurov, 'The Enigma of David Grand Komnenos', *Mésogeios* 12 (2001), pp. 125-6.
[307] Ibid., p. 125. Bryer, 'David Komnenos', pp. 184-5. Macrides, 'Megas Komnenos', pp. 238-45.
[308] Bryer, 'David Komnenos', p. 185. For another example of this process see above, p. 22, n. 86.

had many less important battles.[309] Laskaris' victory over the Trapezuntine general Synadenos (*c*. 1205/6), for example, was commemorated by Choniates as a resounding victory.[310] Yet Choniates' pro-Nicaean gloss wears thin when he mentions that Synadenos was "a mere lad".[311] Were Synadenos so young it seems unlikely that he would have been put in charge of as important an army as Choniates claims. However, if this language is mere rhetorical device it casts doubt on the rest of Choniates' highly embellished account.[312] The simple sweeping military manoeuvres described by Choniates, and also Akropolites, are more literary than real, bearing little resemblance to the messy events they purport to describe.[313]

It suits a narrative of Nicaean success to combine several years of intensely confusing conflict in Paphlagonia together, since Trebizond's swift departure from the political scene allows Nicaea to monopolise legitimacy and importance.[314] This process can also be seen as consistent downplaying of the importance of Trebizond.[315] The city was economically more important than Nicaea, third only to Constantinople and Thessaloniki in importance.[316] Yet historians are swift to dismiss Trebizond as provincial and peripheral, implicitly assuming that Nicaea was not. For example Angold argues that Trebizond was "the most remote"

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[309] Shukurov, 'The Enigma of David', pp. 125-36.

[310] Nik. Chon. *Orat*. §129-47; *Hist*. §626.

[311] Ibid.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid. Akropolites §11.

[314] The same phenomenon can be clearly identified in the brisk treatment of the polities of the Kaystros and Maeander valleys; see below, pp., 81-98. For Nicaea's monopolisation of legitimacy, see below, pp. 74-81.

[315] Vasiliev, 'Foundation of Trebizond', pp. 3-4. See above, p. 22, n. 86; p. 71, n. 308.

[316] Attaleia has been treated similarly. For the economic prosperity of both, see below, p. 93, n. 411.

Byzantine polity.[317] However, 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.[318] The loss of Sinope to the Seljuks in 1214, an event which has become so enmeshed with earlier events, has been co-opted into functioning as the endpoint for Trapezuntine potential in the 'mainstream' Byzantine narrative.[319] Thus for Angold the loss of Sinope and Paphlagonia resulted in:

> …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.[320]

This divorce has been encouraged by partisan arguments for Pontic distinctiveness, but such separation, although not Pontic distinctiveness, is arbitrary and anachronistic, since it imposes an absolute endpoint on a fluid narrative.[321] Trebizond continued to be closely

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[317] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 731. For another similar comment by Angold, see Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 12: "outside the mainstream of Byzantine history". See above, p. 21, n. 84.

[318] A. Bryer, 'Shipping in the Empire of Trebizond', in A. Bryer (ed.), *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980d), VII, pp. 3-12; 'The Littoral of the Empire of Trebizond in two Fourteenth Century Portolano Maps', *ΑΠ* 24 (1961), pp. 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 Draft for the International Workshop: 'The Reception of Islam in Anatolia and its Neighbours', (University of St. Andrews, Koç Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Istanbul, 6.-7.9.13), http://www.academia.edu/4197258/Liquid_Frontiers._A_relational_analysis_of_maritime_Asia_Minor_as_religious_contact_zone_in_the_13th-15th_century (accessed 18.12.13). A. Avramea, 'Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Washington, 2002), pp. 57-90.

[319] For Sinope generally see Redford, 'Sinop in the Summer of 1215', pp. 124-49, 538. Also S. Redford, *Legends of Authority: The 1215 Seljuk Inscriptions of Sinop Citadel, Turkey* (Istanbul, Forthcoming: 2014).

[320] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', pp. 737.

[321] For Pontic exceptionalism see A. Bryer, 'Greeks and Türkmens: The Pontic Exception', *DOP* 29 (1975), pp. 113-48; 'A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, An Additional Note', in A. Bryer (ed.), *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980c), IIIb, pp. 38-45; 'A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, c.979-c.153', in A. Bryer (ed.), *The Empire of Trebizond and the Pontos* (London, 1980b), IIIa, pp. 164-87.

engaged with 'mainstream' Byzantine politics and only with hindsight can the capture of Sinope be endowed with such significance since the Trapezuntines had already 're'-captured Sinope from the Seljuks once, between 1212-14, so a Trapezuntine 're'-emergence in the west would not have been without precedent.[322] Angold comments that the Trapezuntine polity was "the most dangerous", implying dangerous to Nicaea.[323] The manner in which much evidence has been treated contradicts the obvious fact that Trebizond was an important player in the politics of the period and should not be brushed away as peripheral in the way that it has been.

Nicaean 'Legitimacy': The Imperial and Religious Pillars of Byzantium

Angold has argued that the appointment of an emperor and patriarch in Nicaea in 1208 "demonstrated that the twin pillars upon which the Byzantine Empire was built, the imperial office and the patriarchate, had been re-erected, if only in exile."[324] In so doing he projects the anachronism of the narrative back onto early Nicaean attempts to legitimise itself and fails to acknowledge that its legitimacy was contingent on military success and far from universally acknowledged. Laskaris based his early claims to legitimacy on his status as son-in-law of Alexios III, as attested by Akropolites who mentions that he claimed to "rule…as emperor in the place of his father-in-law Alexios" and Villehardouin who noted that he claimed "the land on that side of the straits…by right of his wife."[325] However, this founding principle of Nicaean legitimacy was undermined by Alexios III both ideologically,

[322] Vasiliev, 'Foundation of Trebizond', pp. 26-7.
[323] Angold, 'Greek Rump States', pp. 734.
[324] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 13. This belief is mirrored in his selection of event in his abridgement of the narrative, see: Angold, 'Greek Rump States', p. 737.
[325] Akropolites §6. Villehardouin §313. Before the fall of Constantinople Alexios III had awarded Laskaris the title of despot. Laskaris would have been the first son-in-law to 'inherit' the imperial throne in Byzantine history. Thus his marital status does not necessarily give him legitimacy.

by conferring legitimacy on other rulers, through marriage to his daughter Eudokia, and militarily, by allying with the Seljuks.[326] Laskaris' uncertainty as to the loyalty of his men, when faced with their 'legitimate' (ex)-emperor before the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander, demonstrates the precariousness of his position well after his coronation in 1208.

> Assembling his men, then, he tested them, asking whether they would stand by him or his father-in-law, the emperor Alexios.[327]

That even Akropolites acknowledges that Alexios was "the emperor", suggests that coronation in 1208 was not a concrete turning-point since it offered Laskaris no more security than his earlier proclamation.[328] Immediately after the fall of Constantinople Alexios 'V', Michael Komnenos-Doukas and possibly even Constantine Laskaris could claim imperial status with comparable claims of 'legitimacy' to Theodore Laskaris.[329] Furthermore, the Latin, Bulgarian and Seljuk rulers all framed their power in terms of Byzantine-Roman

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[326] Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 81: Alexios III actively condoned the power of Leon Sgouros, John Chamaretos and Michael Komnenos-Doukas. How he did this is ambiguous and steeped in problematic terminology. Akropolites and Choniates wrote that Alexios married his daughter Eudokia to Leon Sgouros (Akropolites §8.10. Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §608), while Skoutariotes believes that he also awarded him the title of despot (Skoutariotes §453.27–8). For the position of Chamaretos see Magdalino, 'A Neglected Authority', pp. 316-323. H. Kalligas, *Byzantine Monemvasia: The Sources*, pp. 81–5. According to Talbot-Rice's translation The *Life of Saint Theodore of Arta* records that: "Wherefore the imperial authority was given by the emperor <Alexios III> as a bequest to Michael and his descendants." The Greek here (ἡ…τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἀρχή) is less explicitly imperial than Talbot-Rice's translation (*Life of St Theodora of Arta* §904.C).

[327] Akropolites §9.15-17. Ibn Bibi §48: supports this claim, mentioning that: "When the scouts of Laskaris passed the message to the capital of the land of Rum, that the standards of the Sultanate had moved into the area of Alaşehir, Laskaris sent pleading letters for help to the tribes and the rulers of the countries and islands, and gathered an army…" See also Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 130, n. 6.

[328] This probably occurred in 1205. In the *Life of St Theodora of Arta* Alexios' imperial legitimacy is simply assumed, see §904.C.

[329] Alexios 'V' Murtzouphlos, an anointed emperor survived the fall of Constantinople, although not for long (Villehardouin §307. Akropolites §5. Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §609). According to Niketas Choniates (*Hist*. §572-3), Constantine Laskaris was elected by lot in front of the people of Constantinople before the second fall of the city. Historians have assumed that he was the brother of Theodore, who appears in several texts named and unnamed, as one of Theodore's brothers, (Villehardouin §322; 486. Akropolites §22.21-4).

imperium, with the latter traditionally claiming all Rum (the Roman empire).[330] The Seljuk claim was enhanced by sultanic appropriation of the name Komnenos, which had become synonymous with Byzantine imperial power, through Manuel Mavrozomes, as exhibited on the walls of Konya.[331] Laskaris himself stressed his connection to the Komnenos family by incorporating the name into his title in important documents such as the *tomos* written by Michael Autoreianos in which he is described as "τὸν Κομνηνὸν κῦρ Θεόδωρον τὸν Λάσκαριν".[332] That same *tomos* also demonstrates the threat presented, after 1208, by the Trapezuntine rulers (David and Alexios), who were the only individuals specifically mentioned in a list of enemies that the subjects of Laskaris must not support.[333] The threat posed by the Komnenos brothers was partly because of their close association with the name of Komnenos (as the grandchildren of Andronikos), as opposed to the weaker relationship of Laskaris (as son-in-law of Alexios 'III', originally from the less prominent Philadelphian Angelos family), which placed them above Laskaris in the hierarchy of imperial pedigree.[334] The title of Grand Komnenos which the Trapezuntine rulers adopted and the prominence of

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[330] The Latins argued that in 1204 they had inherited Roman power and *imperium*; see D. Jacoby, 'From Byzantium to Latin Romania: Continuity and Change', in D. Jacoby (ed.), *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean* (London, 2001b), VIII, pp. 1-44. Similarly Bulgarian, and later Serbian, regnal titulature expanded at various times after 1204 to include the title of 'emperor of the Bulgarians and Romans' in imitation of Symeon's claims in the ninth and tenth centuries, see P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 18. For the Seljuks see D. Korbeinikov, ''The King of the East and the West': The Seljuk Dynastic Concept and Titles in the Muslim and Christian Sources', in A. C. S., Peacock & S. N. Yıldız (eds.), *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London, 2013), pp. 68-90, esp. p. 69.

[331] S. Redford, 'Maurozomes in Konya', *Proceedings of the First International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium* (Istanbul, 2010a), pp. 48-50. Yıldız, 'Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes', p. 55.

[332] Autoreianos §4.43.

[333] Ibid. §4.36: They appear in the text as "the little children of *kyrios* Andronikos". Oikonomides also notes that this is the only example of something like this being included in a similar *tomos*, N. Oikonomides, 'Cinq Actes Inédits du Patriarche Michel Autôreianos', *REB* 25 (1967), pp. 140-1.

[334] Moreover it firmly contradicts the presentation of Trebizond as peripheral and weak, see above, pp. 71-4.

the name Komnenos in Trapezuntine sources, such as the *Chronicle* of Michael Panaretos, illustrate the appropriation of Komnenian heritage.[335] Another prominent Byzantine alternative to Nicaean imperial legitimacy came from Theodore Komnenos-Doukas' coronation by an autocephalous archbishop around 1228, after he had captured Thessaloniki.[336] Despite fierce rhetoric from both sides, the Epirot/Thessalonikan rulers were only persuaded to abandon their imperial titulature after 1242.[337] Had the Epirot polity captured Constantinople, as Nicaea did, no doubt 1228 would have taken the place of 1208 as the moment that determined imperial legitimacy. As it is, 1228 is either subordinated to or combined with 1230, the year in which the Epirot polity suffered a heavy defeat by the Bulgarians at Klokotnitsa. This represents one of the most powerful examples of the way the signification of historians can lead them to tell completely different stories.[338] Moreover despite nominal acknowledgement of Constantinopolitan primacy the Trapezuntine Grand

[335] Macrides, 'Megas Komnenos', pp. 238-45; 'Komnenoi to Palaiologoi', pp. 269-82. Michael Panaretos, *Chronica de Imperatoribus Comnenis*, (ed.) O. Lampsides, *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παναρέτου περὶ τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν* (Athens, 1958), *passim*.

[336] See Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, *passim*.

[337] Karpozilos summarises the arguments of both sides: Ibid., pp. 105-6. John Komnenos-Doukas was forced to abandon claims to imperial titulature only when threatened by a Nicaean army and a fleet, under Manuel Kontophre which threatened to blockade Thessaloniki. Only then did the ruler of Epiros/Thessaloniki actually become a despot, see Akropolites §40. Nicol, *Despotate*, pp. 138-9.

[338] It is not coincidental that in 1230 the Epirot leader Theodore Komnenos-Doukas was captured. This formula of the lost leader fits the pattern of Adrianople and Antioch-on-the-Maeander. The geographical scope of this thesis has resulted in the under-treatment of the polity of Epiros/Thessaloniki in this paper. This disregards its importance to the themes engaged with here. For more information on Epiros beyond that already mentioned regarding the question of despotism and ecclesiastical freedoms see: A. Stavridou-Zafraka, 'The Political Ideology of the State of Epiros', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV^e Croisade et ses Conséquences* (Paris, 2005), pp. 311-23. M. Veikou, *Byzantine Epirus: A Topography of Transformation. Settlements of the Seventh-Twelfth Centuries in Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania, Greece* (Leiden, 2012). L. Fundić, 'Art and Political Ideology in the State of Epiros during the Reign of Theodore Doukas (r. 1215-1230)', *BYZANTINA ΣΥΜΜΕΙΚΤΑ* 23 (2013), pp. 217-50. Somewhat tangentially D. Angelov, 'Asia and Europe Commonly Called East and West: Constantinople and Geographical Imagination in Byzantium', in S. Bazzaz, Y. Batsaki & D. Angelov (eds.), *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space* (Cambridge: MA, 2013), pp. 43-68.

Komnenoi offered an autonomous and explicitly imperial authority until 1461, outlasting the Nicaean (Laskarid-Palaiologian) 'imperial' line.[339] The succession of imperial claims demonstrates that 1208 was not a decisive 'turning-point' outside the anachronistic logic of the metanarrative.[340]

The appointment of Michael Autoreianos as the new so-called patriarch of Constantinople (at Nicaea), was not as often challenged as Laskaris' imperial claims. However, the importance of the date of his appointment has been overemphasised due to metanarrative pressures.[341] The symbolic statement of appointing a patriarch who claimed oecumenical status established Nicaea as a prominent religious authority within the Orthodox world. However, this position was neither absolute nor self-fulfilling. The Cypriot (1209), Serbian (1219) and Kievan (1248/9) churches sought Nicaean ratification after the election of their ecclesiarchs.[342] These examples have been used to support Angold's claim that Nicaea was religiously dominant after 1208. However, in all three cases Nicaean authorities were not engaged with the process of election as a pre-1204 patriarch of Constantinople might have expected to be. Instead Nicaea was simply asked to ratify decisions already made, rather than to exert any power. Moreover each example was largely

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[339] For 'challenges' to Nicaean (Laskarid-Palaiologian) imperial legitimacy see Nicol, *Despotate, 1267-1479*, *passim*. It is worth noting that the term challenge is another example of the subconscious preferment of Nicaea since it problematically assumes that the Nicaean is the existing claim and that others challenge it, rather than placing the Nicaean as one among many equally viable claims.

[340] For a theoretical perspective, see above, p. 35.

[341] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 13.

[342] For Cyprus see M. Angold, 'Greeks and Latins after 1204: The Perspective of Exile', in B. Arbel, D. Jacoby & B. Hamilton (eds.), *Greeks and Latins in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989), p. 72. For Serbia see Chomatenos §86. G. Prinzing, 'A quasi patriarch in the state of Epirus: The autocephalous archbishop of 'Boulgaria' (Ohrid) Demetrios Chomatenos', *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 41 (2004), p. 166. For Kiev see J. Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 40.

determined by short-term political necessity on behalf of the orthodox Cypriots, Serbians and Rus respectively threatened by the Latins, the Epirot church under the quasi-patriarchal see of Ochrid and the Mongols. In fact these three examples potentially highlight Nicaea's inability to project religious authority, since a remote and ineffectual figurehead was exactly what these various clergies wanted. That Nicaea called its chief prelate a patriarch gave it little tangible advantage over other polities, such as Epiros, where the leading clergyman was the autocephalous archbishop of Ochrid, even if his function within and beyond the polity was essentially patriarchal.[343] The military and political success of the polities to which these ecclesiastical hierarchies were attached was more important than ancient ecclesiastical precedent. The power of prelates waxed and waned in symbiosis with their secular partners. As Theodore Komnenos-Doukas conquered Thessaly and Macedonia he expanded the influence of the see of Ochrid, appointing bishops who then sought to legitimise him.[344] Laskaris similarly handpicked his 'patriarch', Michael Autoreianos, and bishops, such as Nicholas Mesarites. Chomatenos argued that only the possession of Constantinople could truly legitimise an emperor, "for who has ever heard of the same person acting as the metropolitan of Nicaea and being called the Patriarch of Constantinople?"[345] In his official correspondences with the Nicaean 'patriarch' Germanos, Chomatenos supplemented 'in Nicaea' (ἐν τῇ Νικαίᾳ) to the title of patriarch.[346] Orthodox historiographical readings of thirteenth-century religious interactions have proved Chomatenos right. The capture of Constantinople in 1261 has served retrospectively to

[343] Prinzing, 'A Quasi Patriarch in Epirus', pp. 165-82.
[344] Chomatenos §112.39-40: "Ἐντεῦθεν τὰ ἱερὰ ἐπισκοπεῖα ποιμέσιν ἐπεκοσμήθησαν…" Prinzing, 'A quasi patriarch', p. 41.
[345] Chomatenos §114.73-75.
[346] For example, ibid. §112.1-2: "Πρὸς τὸν χειροτονηθέντα ἐν τῇ Νικαίᾳ πατριάρχην Κωνσταντινουπόλεως κῦρ Γερμανόν".

validate Nicaean religious supremacy, although at the time its position was ambiguous. The death of John X Kamateros, the patriarch at the time of the fall, provides a detailed example of the way metanarrative preoccupations have co-opted individual events into testifying to Nicaean success, even if the evidence they provide is either ambiguous or contradictory.[347] Some historians have argued, explicitly or implicitly, that Kamateros resigned or abdicated, thus allowing Laskaris to appoint his successor.[348] However, such an interpretation requires the uncommon reading of Akropolites' phrase "ἔγγραφον τὴν παραίτησιν ποιησάμενος" and Xanthopoulos' word "παραιτήσατο" as resign or abdicate, rather than the more common translation, 'to refuse' or 'to excuse' (oneself).[349] The only translation that would agree with the evidence from Nicholas Mesarites' *Epitaphius in Joannem Mesaritem*, which

[347] Four sources record the incident: Akropolites §7. Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §633. Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, *Enarratio de Episcopis Byzantini et de Patriarchis Omnibus Cpolitanis* (ed.), J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, (Paris, 1865), vol. 147: §449-68. Anonymous, *De Patriarchi: Leunclavius*, (ed.) J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca* (Paris, 1864), vol. 119, cols. 921.D-924.A. Contradictions are rife, for example, Xanthopoulos notes that Kamateros died at Adrianople during a Latin siege, whereas the other three agree that he died at Didymoteichon. The manner of death also varies from natural causes to dehydration. For further bibliography see V. Grumel, 'La Chronologie des Patriarches de Constantinople de 1111 à 1206', *Études Byzantines* 1 (1943), pp. 250-70; *Les Regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* (Paris, 1989). V. Laurent, 'La Chronologie des Patriarches de Constantinople au XIIIe s. (1208-1309)', *REB* 27 (1969), pp. 129-50. R. Janin, 'Au Lendemain de la Conquête de Constantinople: Les Tentatives d'Union des Églises (1204-1208)', *Échos d'Orient* 32 (1933), pp. 5-21. L. Paterson, 'Greeks and Latins at the Time of the Fourth Crusade: Patriarch John X Kamateros and a Troubadour *Tenso*', in A. Lambert & H. Nicholson (eds.), *Languages of Love and Hate: Conflict, Communication, and Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 119-39.

[348] Migne appears to have been the first to make this claim, rendering παραιτέομαι as *abdicasset*, 'abdicate' in Latin (Xanthopoulos, *Enarratio de Episcopis*, §463.D.15). Macrides agrees, translating Akropolites' text as "putting his resignation in writing": Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 119. As do mentions of the episode in most secondary literature see for example: V. Puech, ' The Aristocracy of the Empire of Nicaea', in J. Herrin & G. Saint-Guillain (eds.), *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (Farnham, 2011), p. 70. P. Wirth, 'Zur Frage eines politischen Engagements Patriarch Johannes' X. Kamateros nach dem vierten Kreuzzug', *BF* 4 (1972), pp. 250-1.

[349] Akropolites §7.11. Xanthopoulos, *Enarratio de Episcopis*, §464.D.16. H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 1310-11.

states that the monks of Constantinople refused to remember the Latin (Venetian) patriarch Tommaso Morosini in the sacred diptychs, because until recently they had had a patriarch to remember although he had recently died, would be to translate these two accounts as Kamateros refusing to come to Nicaea.[350] Since this section of the epitaph is dated to September 1206, and implies that Kamateros died in office, rather than renouncing his position beforehand, it contradicts the argument that he resigned. Thus Kamateros' stance, rather than demonstrating Laskaris' legitimacy and religious primacy, as translations have suggested, actually implies that Kamateros at least disobeyed him and may even have actively opposed him.[351] In his influential narrative history Ostrogorsky wrote that after 1204 "Theodore Lascaris…proceeded to organise the new Byzantine state with Nicaea as its centre", but this apparent statement of fact is far more ambiguous than he supposed.[352]

Provincial and Ephemeral: Narrating the 'Unsuccessful'

As is apparent from the case of Kamateros, the source record for the formative years immediately following the fourth crusade are patchy and contradictory, refusing simple narrativisation. Choniates' *Orationes* and Akropolites' *Chronike Syngraphe* fail to provide adequate means of reconstructing an exact chronology of events, because vague time expressions are often substituted for 'precise' dates.[353] The lacunae left by the incomplete source record are therefore often filled by assumptions based on the metanarrative. Nowhere has the available evidence been distorted more than in describing the polities of

[350] Mesarites I §41.

[351] A point partly understood by Tricht whose interpretation is unclear due to the unintelligibility of his English translation by Peter Longbottom, see Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio*, p. 352, n. 3.

[352] Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, p. 379.

[353] The writings of Mesarites complement these sources. For the value of using Mesarites as a historical source see Vasiliev, 'Mesarites as a Source', pp. 180-82. On Akropolites' style of chronology see Macrides, *Akropolites*, pp. 42-3. The most relevant example can be seen here: Akropolites §7.1.

Anatolia, which did not survive as autonomous political actors for more than a few years after 1204 and do not appear in Angold's narrative. The potential of these polities is denuded by a combination of anthropomorphic functionalism and adherence to the teleology of the metanarrative, which has allowed them to be dismissed as "ephemeral".[354]

Those polities that appear infrequently in the sources and failed to endure long enough to have had multiple rulers have become indistinguishable from their rulers.[355] Thus, Theodore Mangaphas and the polity he created around Philadelphia, Sabbas Asidenos and the polity based around the city of Sampson (ancient Priene), Manuel Mavrozomes and the polity of the upper Maeander based on Chonai and Laodikeia, Aldebrandinos and an autonomous Attaleia, have become synonymous in the historiography.[356] This phenomenon also affects those polities generally differentiated as 'states', such as Epiros, Trebizond and Nicaea, although the synonymy is less comprehensive.[357] Given that in the Byzantine imperial tradition the person of the emperor is indistinct from the empire, it is unsurprising

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[354] C. Foss, 'Priene', in A. P. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), p. 1717.
[355] For the prominence of individuals and rulers in Byzantine historiography, see above, pp. 11-3.
[356] See respectively J-C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990), pp. 134-5; 150; 146-7; 147. This is also the case for polities, which due to their geographical location lie outside the scope of this thesis, Leon Gabalas, who has been assumed to be the ruler of Rhodes; Leon Sgouros who created a large territorial polity in Greece from his power base in the Argolid; Leon Chamaretos, the ruler of Monemvasia, possibly as well as Lakonia and the south-western Peloponnese. Ibid., pp. 138; 152; 150.
[357] Because these polities went on to have multiple rulers they are treated differently from their genesis. In this thesis the word polity has been used to describe almost all political units, many of which have been described as 'states'. This is not because this paper necessarily believes that they were not 'states', simply that the word brings with it more unhelpful baggage than useful explanatory power. Labelling some polities as states and others not serves to reinforce metanarrative assumptions. The equality implied by a more neutral term, such as polity, seeks to undermine such preformed assumptions. For more on the terminology of states generally see S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe: 900-1300* (Oxford, 1984); 'The Idea of the Nation as a Political Community', in L. Scales & O. Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 54-66. In Byzantium see J. Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production* (London, 1993).

that the roles of rulers and 'great-men' have been overstated.[358] Anthropomorphic functionalisation is rooted in the 'historical' sources, but is imitated by modern historians, such as Jean-Claude Cheynet, whose study of "contestations" and "rébellions" (963-1210), despite allocating each *contestation* a numerical identifier, actually identifies each by their "principal (principaux) protagoniste(s)".[359] The humanisation and personification of polities by Cheynet allows him to clump the construction of large autonomous territorial entities, such as the polities of Leon Sgouros and Theodore Mangaphas, with tiny palace coups under the heading of "rébellion" and the name of an individual.[360] The humanisation of polities has even led Vincent Puech to attempt to explain macro-historical causation through personal ties. Not only has Puech argued that the other autonomous rulers were being disloyal to Laskaris, but also that these conflicts were "internal affairs".[361] Thus from the genesis of these polities he assumes that all other Byzantine rulers ought to be subordinate to Laskaris, teleologically ignoring the fact that they all had the potential to be successful. Puech's expectations distort the evidence he finds in order to support this metanarrative construction. He argues that a seal assumed to have come from the Kaystros valley before 1203, which bore Laskaris' name, connected him to "the East" and therefore demonstrates

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[358] For the Byzantine imperial tradition see: Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, *passim*. J. B. Bury, *The Constitution of the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1910). Kaldellis and Krallis summarise the preoccupation of Byzantine historians perfectly as focusing on individuals rather than "broad geostrategic changes". See A. Kaldellis & D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates: The History* (Cambridge: MA & London, 2012), p. xvi.

[359] See above, pp. 30, esp. n 129. For quotation from Akropolites §7. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance (963-1210),* pp. 19-156. As a prosopographer of the Byzantine aristocracy it is perhaps unsurprising that his conception of historical causation revolves around the actions of great men, and that he presents his *contestations* as the works of individuals regardless of details.

[360] The use of the term "rébellions" is highly problematic for the period after 1204 because there was nothing against which to rebel.

[361] Puech, 'Aristocracy of the Empire of Nicaea', p. 71: "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."

that his rule was somehow natural.[362] Such argumentation ignores not only the suspect attribution of the seal's origin, which assumes that because it depicted St George Diasorites it must have come from the Kaystros valley, the epicentre of his 'cult' and that "the East" was a megalithic block, forgetting that the Kaystros was controlled by Theodore Mangaphas in this period.[363] Thus anthropomorphic functionalism encourages anachronistic interpretations of those characterised as Laskaris' "lesser rivals".[364]

Such functionalism is closely tied with the cursory treatment these polities are accorded in both 'primary' and 'secondary' literature, as demonstrated by Akropolites' description of Laskaris' conquest of the lands of Theodore Mangaphas and Sabbas Asidenos:[365]

> However, he [Laskaris] skilfully pursued Morotheodoros and Sabbas, and henceforth confidently gained control over Kelbianon, all of the Maeander, Philadelphia, and Neokastra.[366]

Although it is often noted that Nicaea "gained control" (ἐδέσποζεν) of hundreds of kilometres of territory, rarely is the magnitude of Mangaphas or Sabbas' polity acknowledged. Moreover, the process that more than doubled the size of the Nicaean polity is reduced for the sake of the narrative to a single event and a single sentence. Nicaea's southern expansion was fundamental to the success of Nicaea, since it had struggled to

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[362] Ibid., p. 70.

[363] Ibid. It is also worthy of note that Laskaris was initially rejected from Nicaea (Akropolites §7), which suggests that his special connection with "the East", at least initially, was clearly not especially helpful.

[364] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61.

[365] With these polities it is very much a case of them receiving treatment from outside, since they have no representatives in the historiography, not even modern representatives in historians of their region, such as Donald Nicol might be considered for Epiros, since the topic is too small even for contemporary scholarly specialisation.

[366] Akropolites §7.38-41: "ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν Μωροθεόδωρον καὶ τὸν Σάββαν εὐχερῶς μετῆλθε κἀντεῦθεν ἐδέσποζεν ἀδεῶς Κελβιανοῦ τε παντός, Μαιάνδρου Φιλαδελφείας καὶ Νεοκάστρων."

expand in any other direction, being hard-pressed on all other sides by Trapezuntines, Seljuks and Latins.[367] However, there is a comparison constantly being made with the 'old Byzantine empire' which denudes even the absorption of vast territories of importance.[368] Such cursory treatment ignores the fact that even following Akropolites' chronology these polities had at least two years to embed themselves in their strongholds.[369] A detailed examination of the sources gives lie to the statement of Charles Brand that "few useful statements can be made about them [Sabbas and Aldebrandinos]", in a review in which he implies that they are not "worthy of consideration", and demonstrates that the strength of their positions and polities has been constantly undermined by the metanarrative.[370]

The position of Theodore Mangaphas must have been particularly strong, since the population of Philadelphia had already supported him in a bid to proclaim himself emperor (1188-91).[371] This ready-made support-base potentially gave Mangaphas an advantage over Laskaris who was initially rejected by the Nicaeans.[372] If Choniates is correct in his account of the battle Mangaphas fought against Henry in 1205 at Atramytion, he was capable of

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[367] Akropolites §7: "The emperor Theodore was therefore greatly confined." For a detailed examination of the historical geography see W. M. Ramsay, *The Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890).

[368] For the problems of comparisons, see above, p. 28-33.

[369] Akropolites §7.1.

[370] C. Brand, 'Review of J. Hoffmann, *Rudimente vin Territorialstaaten im Byzantinischen Reich, 1071-1210: Untersuchungen über Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Kaiser und reich*', *Speculum* 52 (1977), pp. 698-9. J. Hoffmann, *Rudimente vin Territorialstaaten im Byzantinischen Reich, 1071-1210: Untersuchungen über Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Kaiser und reich* (Munich, 1974).

[371] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §399-401. J-C. Cheynet, 'Philadelphie, un quart de siècle de dissidence, 1182-1206', in J-C. Cheynet (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy and its Military Function* (London, 2006b), pp. 39-54; *Pouvoir et Contestations*, p. 123. Mangaphas was so well established that he was able to strike his own coinage, see P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (London, 1982), pp. 235-6.

[372] Akropolites §6.

fielding a competitive army more than 190km from his powerbase in Philadelphia.[373] Furthermore, the city of Philadelphia was a powerful stronghold, as is attested to by both the chroniclers of the third crusade and its surviving walls (Figures II-III).[374] When Mangaphas first proclaimed Philadelphia independent, the ruling emperor Isaak Angelos(-Komnenos) and an imperial army, was unable to dislodge him from Philadelphia despite a prolonged effort, since Mangaphas had "aroused the emperor's ire":[375]

> Although he [Isaak] persisted in his siege for a considerable time, he was unable to compel the Philadelphians to submit. Consequently, he resorted to negotiating peace terms…[376]

This evidence of Mangaphas' ability to defend Philadelphia against a persistent imperial army suggests that having achieved a similar position by 1205/6, Mangaphas would not have lost his lands in martial conflict with Laskaris as easily as Akropolites' one sentence

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[373] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §603-4. The army is shown to be competitive since at the beginning of the battle it appeared to be winning. It is less important that he was defeated, because it still demonstrates the scope of his influence. For comparison Bursa is only 220km and Nicaea 250km from Philadelphia (all measurements are approximate and taken in a direct line). Villehardouin (§323) mentions a battle at Atramytion between Henry and Constantine Laskaris. He thus either refers to a different battle or confuses or conflates Laskaris and Mangaphas. These accounts could be an example, as Angold believes, of the two men cooperating to fight the Latins (Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61, n. 1, Angold appears to have mistakenly referenced Akropolites rather than Villehardouin). However, the accounts of the battle read quite differently, since in Choniates' account Mangaphas surprises Henry's army, while in Villehardouin's text Henry withdraws into the city before Constantine's army arrives and the sallies out to defeat him, which suggests that they were different events, although it is impossible to tell. Moreover, the very specific date given by Villehardouin (19th March 1205) suggests that this battle would have occurred before Mangaphas and Laskaris had come to terms, which following Akropolites', admittedly highly suspect, chronology places the agreement in 1206. There is also a possibility that Choniates intentionally altered the defeat of Laskaris to Mangaphas to make Nicaea look better. However, this seems unlikely since it appears in the critical a-text of the *Historia*.

[374] See Cheynet, 'Philadelphie', p. 47. A. Pralong, 'Les Remparts de Philadelphie', in J-C. Cheynet, *et al.* (eds.), *Philadelphie et Autres Études* (Paris, 1984), pp. 101-26.

[375] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §399.

[376] Ibid.

treatment suggests.[377] Generally historians portray the incorporation of Mangaphas' lands as an act of military conquest by Laskaris.[378] However, even Akropolites' account does not categorically imply military action. Indeed Macrides' translation of μετῆλθε (from μετέρχομαι) as "pursued" is appropriately ambiguous, although it is easy to read as militaristic conquest, the Greek is ambiguous, since it can mean both to "attack" and to "discuss" or "treat".[379] Just as Mangaphas was able to resist the military force of Isaak, who probably had more resources to draw upon, it seems probable that Laskaris would have struggled to defeat Mangaphas, especially in such a swift campaign.[380] Instead Mangaphas was able to negotiate an advantageous position for himself, as he had with Isaak.[381] For these reasons Mangaphas' polity should be attributed more autonomy and complexity than at present.

The fate of Mangaphas' Philadelphian polity cannot be understood in isolation from the polity based around Sampson under Sabbas Asidenos, concerning which there is

[377] Akropolites §7.38-41: "ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν Μωροθεόδωρον καὶ τὸν Σάββαν εὐχερῶς μετῆλθε κἀντεῦθεν ἐδέσποζεν ἀδεῶς Κελβιανοῦ τε παντός, Μαιάνδρου Φιλαδελφείας καὶ Νεοκάστρων."
[378] See for example with added emphasis: Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, p. 75: "Meantime Theodore had had leisure to put down finally two of his *lesser* rivals in Asia…" Korobeinikov, 'A Sultan in Constantinople', p. 105: "Theodore…to subdue his Greek rivals in Anatolia (Theodore Mankaphas, Sabas Asidenos and probably Nikephoros Kontostephanos)". Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, p. 55: "Meanwhile, Theodore Laskaris had extended his influence southwards from Nicaea by defeating various rivals…" *Contra* Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61, although Angold has pointed out that Laskaris appears to have come to some sort of diplomatic resolution with Mangaphas and Sabbas, few historians go into enough detail to mention this fact and the narrative is simpler if vague language is used. Thus martial conquest is normally implied.
[379] G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), p. 864.
[380] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §400: Mangaphas was dislodged from Philadelphia in 1191 by Basil Vatatzes who bribed his "sworn followers", forcing him to take refuge in Konya, thus Mangaphas was never truly defeated in direct military conflict.
[381] Ibid.

substantially less evidence, but which should likewise be accorded greater strength.[382] Akropolites describes Sabbas as ruling Sampson "along with the places neighbouring it."[383] Sampson itself was an important city, not a "town" as Savvides describes it, which expanded down from the highly defensible medieval acropolis into classical Priene, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, fortifying the old temple of Zeus (Figures IV-V).[384] Although strong itself Sampson is not an especially famous city, and this seems to have influenced the impressions of historians who have consequently been dismissive.[385] It is impossible to be certain how to interpret Akropolites' vague words about "places neighbouring it", but some attempt at least should be made to infer the potential range of Sampson's influence. A conservative estimate would put the important cities of Miletos, Didyma, the theme capital and Melanoudion as well as the vast monastic complex of Mount Latmos within Sampson's potential sphere of influence, if not direct control.[386] A less conservative one would also include the theme capitals of Ephesos (Selçuk) and Mylassa (Milas), as well as Tralles (Aydin).[387] Documentary evidence from the archives of the

[382] This polity had been confused with Samsum (Amisos) on Pontic shore see R. P. G. Jerphanion, 'Σαμψών et Ἀμισός, Une Ville à Déplacer de Neuf Cent Kilomètres', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 1 (1935), pp. 257-67. P. Orgles, 'Sabas Asidénos: Dynaste de Sampsôn', *Byzantion* 10 (1935), pp. 67-80.
[383] Akropolites, 7.31-3: "ἕτερος δὲ Σάββας τοὐπίκλην τοῦ ἄστεος ἐδέσποζε τοῦ Σαμψὼν μετὰ καὶ τῶν πλησίον τυγχανόντων αὐτῷ·"
[384] Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East*, p. 60.
[385] Ibid., n. 6: For example places his polity after both Mangaphas and Mavrozomes and alongside the "insurrection of Basil Chotzas", who he incorrectly states was defeated in 1205. However, Basil Chotzas 'rebelled' against Isaak Angelos-Komnenos in 1191-2. See Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §423. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*, p. 125. Savvides cites Brand (*Byzantium Confronts the West*, p. 87) and appears to have confused Mangaphas' first and second autonomous episodes in Philadelphia.
[386] All of these important Byzantine sites are within 30km of Sampson, across the floor of the Maeander valley. Sampson and Miletos are inter-visible.
[387] Although less conservative than the previous estimate this catchment area does not extend the influence of Sampson more than 50% of the distance between any of the cities known to be under the control of another ruler, that is more than 65km towards Philadelphia (controlled by Mangaphas and

monasteries of Latmos, in which the *episkepsis* of Sampson appears frequently, testifies to Sampson's importance both there and in the whole surrounding theme of Mylassa, especially Miletos.[388] Akropolites' evidence suggests that Mangaphas' polity was much larger than just Philadelphia, containing significant cities such as Sardis, which go unnamed.[389] It is therefore highly plausible, if unprovable, that Sabbas' lands were larger than has been assumed. This would also fit the treatment of Leon Sgouros, whose heartland of the Argolid is constantly mentioned despite his territories at one point including most of eastern central Greece.[390] Treated in the same breath as Mangaphas' polity Sampson is assumed to have been absorbed martially by Nicaea. However, for the same reasons as the Philadelphians this seems unlikely.[391] Moreover, a *prostaxis* of Theodore Laskaris for the monastery of Xerochoraphion, near Sampson, mentions Sabbas as a *sevastokrator*, an important court title usually reserved for brothers of the emperor.[392] This suggests that Sabbas was able to maintain a significant amount of local power in the *episkepsis* of Sampson after he and Mangaphas had "treated" with Laskaris.[393] Moreover, another landed member of the elite, Nikephoros Kontostephanos, whose family held enough lands for them to be mentioned separately in the *Partitio Romaniae*, is also seen later bearing the title of

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130km from Sampson) or even close to 80km towards Laodikeia (known to be controlled by Manuel Mavrozomes and 160km from Sampson).

[388] The most important of these involves the case of the grant of estates in Alexandrion: MM IV.290-5.

[389] Akropolites §7.

[390] For example see Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*, pp. 138-9.

[391] See above, p. 87, n. 377.

[392] N. Wilson & J. Darrouzès, 'Restes du Cartulaire de Hiéra-Xérochoraphion', *REB* 26 (1968), p. 14. Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61. Orgles, 'Sabas Asidénos', pp. 67-80, esp. 73-4. It is uncertain who gave this title to Sabbas and Kontostephanos (see below), it has always been assumed to have been Theodore Laskaris. They may have adopted the titles independently.

[393] See above, p. 87.

sevastokrator.[394] On the basis of this evidence, both Korobeinikov and Cheynet have suggested that Kontostephanos ruled another autonomous polity.[395] This is not attested in the sources, but it does further demonstrate the fragmentation of power which followed the fourth crusade, as well as Laskaris' desire to negotiate rather than fight. Although there is no direct evidence for it, it is plausible if not provable, that Mangaphas would have come to at least a similarly beneficial arrangement, since he appears to have ruled the largest area. Angold has pioneered the interpretation of a peaceable settlement between Laskaris and some of his rivals.[396] However, his argument has largely gone unnoticed. Mangaphas and Sabbas' polities are constantly reduced in 'significance' according to the pressures of the metanarrative, yet the available evidence suggests that they were much more powerful than is admitted. Since no military occupation can be determined it is probable that none occurred and that the Nicaean polity might have appeared more like a coalition than an empire to contemporaries.

The evidence for the third ruler that emerged around this time in central western Anatolia, Manuel Mavrozomes, demonstrates the selective and arbitrary nature of the sources, since he is not mentioned by Akropolites at all, just as Sabbas Asidenos is not mentioned by Niketas Choniates, who wrote that "Chonai…Laodikeia and the lands through which the Maeander wends to discharge its waters into the sea" were all controlled by Mavrozomes, thus implying that he also ruled the lands which Akropolites states were occupied by Sabbas, since Sampson sits at the mouth of the Maeander valley.[397] His absence from Akropolites' record has meant that historians either assume that his fate was exactly

[394] MM, IV.291. Carile, 'Partitio Terrarum Imperii Romanie', p.218, 24.
[395] Korobeinikov, 'A Sultan in Constantinople', p. 105. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*, p. 155.
[396] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61.
[397] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §638. Akropolites §7.

the same as or completely separate from that of Mangaphas and Sabbas.[398] Both approaches are problematic. The first denudes Byzantine politics of complexity in an attempt to facilitate narrativisation, while the second combines Mavrozomes with the Seljuks. Angold, for example, distinguishes Mangaphas and Sabbas, Laskaris' "lesser rivals", from David Komnenos and Mavrozomes, his "chief rivals".[399] Angold's elevation of Mavrozomes revolves around his close relationship with the Seljuk sultan Kay-Khusraw, his father-in-law, who helped him militarily and granted him the lands around Chonai and Laodikeia, according to Choniates.[400] Thus Angold makes Mavrozomes essentially synonymous with Kay-Khusraw, in which he is followed by Macrides.[401] Similarly Sara Nur Yıldız, a Seljuk historian, has emphasised the Mavrozomes-Komnenos family's influential position within the Seljuk elite throughout the thirteenth century.[402] She does so because, although she tries, it is impossible to synthesise the accounts provided by Choniates and Ibn Bibi into a single narrative. The 'truth' of the man is lost in Choniates' narrative goals and the panegyric tone of Ibn Bibi's quasi-epic.[403] However, such a close alignment of Mavrozomes with the Seljuks before he was integrated into the Seljuk court elite is teleological. Mangaphas and Laskaris both had similar relationships with the Seljuks at different times.[404] As Alexander Beihammer and Keith Hopwood have demonstrated, the phenomenon of cross-border

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[398] For the first approach see: Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, p. 55. For the second see: Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61. Yıldız, 'Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes', *passim*, esp. 56.

[399] Angold, *Government in Exile*, p. 61.

[400] In both of his appearances in Choniates' text Mavrozomes appears alongside Kay-Khusraw and his Turkish troops. Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §626; 638: The first event Choniates says occurred soon after Kay-Khusraw had taken control in Konya in 1205 and the second from its positioning in the text probably occurred in 1206. However, both dates are provisional.

[401] Macrides, *Akropolites*, p. 129, n. 23.

[402] Yıldız, 'Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes', *passim.*

[403] A point she freely admits: Yıldız, 'Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes', pp. 58-9.

[404] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §400-1. Akropolites §8.

defection was not only common practice but also an essential part of Seljuk-Byzantine relations.[405] Mavrozomes used the cross-border rivalries to his advantage, but so too did Laskaris, Mangaphas, Kay-Khusraw and later even Michael 'VIII' Palaiologos. Mavrozomes must not be reduced to a Seljuk tool in order to simplify the narrative.

The polity ruled by Aldebrandinos in Attaleia (Antalya) *c*. 1204, fails even to feature in Akropolites or most literature by Byzantinists.[406] Brand lamented the lack of sources, but failed to utilise the non-Byzantine sources, which constitute the majority of the evidence.[407] Attaleia was captured by the Seljuks in 1207 and this date has come to be treated as a fixed (meta)narrative point that took south-western Anatolia beyond the control of 'Byzantium'.[408] The uprising (possibly local, possibly organised by the Latins) that resulted in the city gaining independence for the period 1212-6, has been side-lined to a momentary blip rather than an important indicator of political agency.[409] However, the persistence of autonomous propensities in Attaleia demonstrates that this polity had greater potential than is attributed to it. Firstly, having been intermittently isolated from the rest of Byzantium and reduced to the immediate environs of the city, Attaleia as an autonomous city-based polity would not

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[405] A. D. Beihammer, 'Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine-Seljuk Relations', *Speculum* 86 (2011), pp. 597-651. K. Hopwood, 'Nicaea and Her Eastern Neighbours', in E. Kermeli & O. Özel (eds.), *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes'* (Istanbul, 2006), pp. 39-45.

[406] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §639: Attaleia and Rhodes appear at the end of a long list of rulers in the east, including the Komnenoi, Laskaris and Mavrozomes. Aldebrandinos is not mentioned once in Angold, *Government in Exile*, although the later importance of Attaleia at a trade hub is mentioned three times.

[407] Brand, 'Review of Hoffmann, *Rudimente*', pp. 698-9. Brand fails to utilise Ibn Bibi (§44-6), Ibn al-Athir (§252), Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, (trans.) E. A. W. Budge (London, 1932), pp. 420-1, as well as Seljuk epigraphic sources and Cypriot documentary sources.

[408] 1207 has acted in a similar way in the south as the fall of Sinope (1214) in the north and the two events are often treated simultaneously by authors.

[409] This was the only 'revolt' of a conquered city against the Seljuks in Anatolia. See S. Redford & G. Leiser, *Victory Inscribed: The Seljuk Fetihname on the Citadel Walls of Antalya, Turkey/Taşa Yazılan Zafer: Antalya İçkale Surlarındaki Selçuklu Fetihnamesi* (Istanbul, 2008), pp. 77; 89

have involved a major transformation.[410] Moreover, its importance as a trading entrepôt meant that it had the potential to sustain itself economically and its strong fortifications made it viably defensible.[411] Although the accounts of Bar Hebraeus, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Bibi and Niketas Choniates are contradictory it appears probable that there were two initial attacks on Attaleia, one unsuccessful in 1206 and the successful one in 1207.[412] The second autonomous phase from 1212-6, although dominated by the Latin Cypriot presence, highlights the potential of the polity of Antalya to exist autonomously, which refutes the polity's dismissal by modern scholars.[413] This potential is also demonstrated by the tentative manner in which the Seljuks attempted to enforce their authority on the city. Not only did they maintain special privileges for the Orthodox clergy in the city, but also appointed a governor who was probably a local Christian convert, Mubāriz al-Dīn Ertokush, to rule the city both before and after the 1212-6 rebellion.[414] Attaleia's failure to be absorbed by, or to expand into, a larger Byzantine territorial polity understates the potential and achievements of the polity. Attaleia under Aldebrandinos has been cast as a pirate lair, on the evidence of

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[410] C. Foss, 'The Cities of Pamphylia', in C. Foss, 'The Cities of Pamphylia', in C. Foss (ed.), *Cities, Fortresses and Villages of Byzantine Asia Minor* (Aldershot, 1996b), p. 10. Attaleia's isolation has a parallel with Philadelphia in the fourteenth century.

[411] Ibid., p. 8. See especially the reference to Ibn Hawkal's testimony that the customs revenue from Attaleia and Trebizond was the main source of wealth for Byzantium. Late thirteenth-century Monemvasia, for example, survived as an autonomous "city-state" until 1252, with its territories essentially confined to the city itself. See: H. A. Kalligas, *Monemvasia: A Byzantine City State* (London, 2010), pp. 28-9; *Byzantine Monemvasia*; 'Monemvasia, Seventh-Fifteenth Centuries', in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Washington, 2002), pp. 879-97. For the 'linked-ness' of Attaleia see: J. Preiser-Kapeller, 'Liquid Frontiers', *passim*. On the fortifications of Attaleia see Redford & Leiser, *Victory Inscribed*, *passim*.

[412] Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, pp. 420-1. Ibn Bibi §44-6. Ibn al-Athīr §252-3. Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §639-40. Redford & Leiser, *Victory Inscribed*, p. 90. P. W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191-1374* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 42-3.

[413] Ibn Bibi §61-4.

[414] Redford & Leiser, *Victory Inscribed*, p. 92. For the ecclesiastical privileges see the translation of the relevant section of the *Life of Barnabas and Sophronios*, in Redford & Leiser, *Victory Inscribed*, pp. 143-4.

Choniates, who states that Aldebrandinos was "an Italian by birth", ignoring the fact that he was "strictly raised according to Roman traditions (ἔθεσι)".[415] Given the flexibility of identity and the ambiguity of the language this statement is not enough to disqualify Aldebrandinos from being 'Byzantine'.[416] Cheynet and others have used his originally Tuscan name to reinforce Aldebrandinos' piratical credentials, since there were many pirates in the Aegean and Mediterranean at this time, even as close to Attaleia as Phoenix.[417] Pirates are easy to dismiss as transitory but Choniates' account hints at a hierarchical governmental organisation more structured than Cheynet's interpretation implies.[418] The historiographical treatment of Attaleia, which has been simplified and its peripherality emphasised, is consistent with the narrativisation of this period. A strong Attaleia full of potential does not fit within the story historians have been telling and therefore has been anachronistically excised from historiographical orthodoxy.

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[415] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §639: "τὴν δ'Ἀττάλου διώκει τις ἕτερος, τὴν κλῆσιν Ἀλδεβραντῖνος, ἐξ Ἰταλῶν μὲν τὴν γένεσιν ἕλκων, ἀκριβῶς δ' ἐντεθραμμένος τοῖς Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἔθεσι."

[416] The use of the word ἔθος is complex and often contradictory. For three completely different uses see: Akropolites §50. Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §552.16-17; 594.12. Although not having Roman (i.e. Byzantine) customs appears to be enough to disqualify someone from Roman identity, customs alone are not enough to secure it absolutely either. This leaves Aldebrandinos in an uncertain position. See also G. Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge, 2008), *passim*, esp. 41-2. I. Stouraitis, 'Roman identity in Byzantium: A Critical Approach', *BZ* 107 (2014), pp. 175-220.

[417] Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*, p. 147. J. Richard, 'The Establishment of the Latin Church in the Empire of Constantinople (1204-1227)', in B. Arbel, B. Hamilton & D. Jacoby (eds.), *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989), pp. 42-3. P. M. Holt, *The Crusaders States and their Neighbours, 1098-1291* (Edinburgh, 2004), pp. 1-5. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus*, p. 42. Cheynet places perhaps too much weight on the evidence of Roger of Howden's report of pirates at Phoenix in 1191 during the return journey of Philip Augustus from the Levant. Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, (ed.) W. Stubbs, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri De Houedene* (London, 1868), vol. 3, p. 157; (trans.) H. T. Riley, *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden Comprising the History of England and of other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201* (London, 1853), vol. 2, p. 248. On pirates generally see M-L. Favreau, 'Die Italienische Levante-Piraterie und die Sicherheit der Seewege nach Syrien im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 65 (1978), pp. 461-510.

[418] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §639.30-1: "Ἀλδεβραντῖνος καὶ οἳ σὺν αὐτῷ τοῖς κοινοῖς ἐπεστάτουν πράγμασι"

During, and partly before, the period under discussion political agency changed in the Byzantine world. The four so-called 'lesser' polities discussed above were far more dynamic agents than they appear in the orthodox historiographical narrative, as were a plethora of political agents that this thesis has not had space to examine. Cheynet's treatment of some of these political agents illustrates many of the assumptions that historians have made.[419] In his category "objectifs de la rébellion", Cheynet, who is as unable to 'know' the ambitions of these poorly documented men and polities, conflates objective with outcome, anachronistically claiming that those polities that went on to be successful had imperial ambitions from their genesis, while those that were not had only limited provincial ambitions. Thus for Cheynet, Laskaris aimed at imperial power to fight the Latins, while his "chief rivals" – Mavrozomes representing Konya, Trebizond and Epiros – are all found to have initially harboured imperial ambitions but to have soon given them up.[420] In stark contrast Mangaphas, Sabbas and Aldebrandinos are all assumed to have had purely local or provincial ambitions.[421] Similarly Leon Sgouros, Chamaretos and Gabalas, who created polities in Greece and Rhodes, as well as Doxapatres, an unknown Peloponnesian *archon* and Nikephoros Kontostephanos are all considered to have had solely local ambitions.[422] Thus although Choniates explicitly states that "Theodore Mangaphas attempted to usurp the crown" and that he and others, "conferred upon themselves the title of emperor", Cheynet subordinates this evidence to the logic of the metanarrative and a teleological knowledge of the varying success, according to a very specific set of criteria, of

[419] Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*, pp. 19-156. By no means the worst culprit, Cheynet is simply the easiest to interrogate, since he has admirably laid out his 'raw data' and therefore his assumptions.
[420] Ibid., pp. 143; 146; 149; 148.
[421] Ibid., pp. 134-5; 150; 147-8.
[422] Ibid., pp. 138; 152; 150; 154-5.

these polities.[423] The metanarrative distorts the sources when connecting the rulers of the 'chief' polities to the lands they came to rule, for whom it is presented positively, while the same connection for the 'lesser' polities implies provinciality.[424] This is most evident in the work of Cheynet, which projects the 'model' of the so-called 'ethnic revolts' (of the Bulgarians, Armenians and Serbians) forwards, first to Sgouros and Mangaphas and then the post-1204 polities.[425] Here the hint of modern nationalism and concerns with ethnic or racial continuity and statehood merge together with narrativisation to distort the past by narrating it in a manner sufficiently recognisable for the audience to relate to.[426]

Nowhere is this treatment more problematic than in the way the formation of these polities has been treated by historians, since it depends on teleological preconceptions depending on their later perceived success. For example the formation of a polity at Nicaea

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[423] Nik. Chon. *Hist*. §399.12-3; 420-1-3.

[424] For positive connections see Nicaea: Puech, 'Aristocracy of the Empire of Nicaea', p. 70. For Epiros see: John Kantakouzenos, *Historiae*, (ed.) L. Schopen, *Ioannis Cantacuzeni Eximperatoris Historiarum* (Bonn, 1828-32), §1.520.15-21.2. Nicol, *Despotate, 1267-1479*, p. 2. For Trebizond see: Vasiliev, 'Foundation of Trebizond', pp. 4-9. C. Toumanoff, 'On the Relationship between the Founder of the Empire of Trebizond and the Georgian Queen Thamar', *Speculum* 15 (1940), pp. 299-312. Negative connections can be seen in the limitations of ambitions and designation as provincial or local *archons* or magnates. See generally the approach and language of M. Angold, 'Archons and Dynasts: Local aristocracies and the cities of the later Byzantine empire', in M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries British Archaeological Reports* (1984b), pp. 236-53.

[425] Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations*, pp. 450-73. Cheynet clearly understands these polities as part of the same phenomenon, although he does not explicitly describe the polities of either Mangaphas or Sgouros as 'ethnic'.

[426] Nationalism has the capacity to warp historiographical approaches. Nicaea, takes a prominent role here too, being assumed by many to represent the start of the modern Greek nation-state. See for example some of the modern Greek nationalist approaches to Byzantine historiography: A. E. Vacalopolos, *Origins of the Greek Nation: The Byzantine Period, 1204-1461*, (trans.) I. N. Moles (New Brunswick, 1970). I. N. Moles, 'Nationalism and Byzantine Greece', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 10 (1969), pp. 95-107. More reflexively but still problematically see: M. Angold, 'Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire', *BMGS* 1 (1975b), pp. 49-70. A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007).

has been placed earlier than it could feasibly have occurred in order to exaggerate its early success. This has occurred because of Nikos Oikonomides who believed that by finding the areas that were omitted from the *Partitio Romaniae* – which he believes was composed in September 1204 – but that were included in the 1198 trading privilege granted by Alexios III to the Venetians, he could determine which polities formed before September 1204.[427] As Oikonomides argues, because the *Partitio* bore similarities to Byzantine tax registers, it is likely to be based on one and therefore any omissions must be areas that were beyond the control of the Constantinopolitan government for taxation purposes.[428] However, Oikonomides' argument is inconsistent and projects Nicaea's later success backwards towards its genesis. Since Nicaea and a large part of north-western Anatolia is omitted from the *Partitio*, Oikonomides concludes that this area must have been under the control of Laskaris by September 1203 when the tax register on which he believes the *Partitio* is based was taken. However, this would contradict the evidence of the other sources which cover this period. Both Mesarites and Choniates state that Laskaris was imprisoned in the church of the archangel Michael when Constantinople fell for the first time on 17th July 1203.[429] The tax register of September would have taken some considerable time to carry out. Therefore even if it occurred in late September and Laskaris escaped from prison at the earliest possible time (immediately after the first fall of Constantinople), then Laskaris had less than 70 days to gain control over approximately 15,000km^2 of territory attributed to him,

[427] Oikonomides, 'Décomposition de l'Empire Byzantin', pp. 3-28. This article has, over time, become so well established that the article is cited almost as if a 'primary' source.
[428] Ibid., p. 12.
[429] Nik. Chon. *Orat*. §126.33-34. Mesarites II §1.25-31. Only Choniates mentions the church.

according to Oikonomides' reading of the *Partitio*.[430] However, this time must also include Laskaris' initial rejection from Nicaea and the time it took Laskaris to gain control of this area; Akropolites explicitly states that it took him a long time and implies two years.[431] Thus it appears highly improbable that Oikonomides' argument can be correct, since there simply would not have been enough time for Laskaris to achieve these feats. Moreover, when the Latins crossed the Hellespont into these territories no opposition is reported, which hints that Laskaris was not in control of these territories to offer any.[432] In assuming that Nicaea must have been independent so early Oikonomides overstates Nicaean preparedness, complying with a metanarrative that assumes Nicaea was more independent at every turn. The difference between the treatment of Nicaea and the less 'mainstream' polities vividly illustrates how the metanarrative framework has impinged on historiographical analysis. The available evidence is insufficient to accurately reconstruct what occurred within these various polities, even Nicaea. However, there is far more to be said than can fit in the footnotes of the metanarrative, to which the 'minor polities' have been 'exiled'.

[430] The figure 15,000km^2 is a conservative figure based on the area that Oikonomides believed was under Nicaean control (see Map III).

[431] Akropolites §6: "…arriving at the city of Nicaea, he appealed to the Nicaeans to admit him into the city and to accept him as their lord. But they would not admit him. Then Laskaris urged them persistently and, even though he entreated them to admit his wife only, he persuaded them with difficulty. Leaving his wife, he then went about the region of Nicaea, Prousa and the surrounding area, to bring these places under his control and to rule over them as emperor in the place of his father-in-law Alexios. In this, at length, he succeeded. In the meantime he also went to the ruler of the Persians, who was his intimate associate, and he gained an alliance and accomplished his aim." For the implication of two years see Akropolites §7.1.

[432] Akropolites §7.

CONCLUSION

The 'jargon' and 'the facts' must come together if historians are to better understand thirteenth-century Byzantium, which at present has been distorted by historiographical (meta)narrativisation.[433] A 'theory of narrativisation' cannot be tagged onto existing scholarship as an afterthought, but must redefine the way Byzantinists approach their subject. The so-called 'turning-points' of 1204, 1261 and 1453 are neither beginning-like, end-like nor often even 'significant' outside of the stories historians tell. The narratives that have been created to link them together should not be allowed to define entire periods or synthesise multifaceted events, the complexity of which defy simplistic narrativisation. 'Historical events' cannot be forced into a linear model of binary cause and effect without gross simplification.

This thesis has demonstrated that the future 'success' of Nicaea in 1261 has influenced historiographical analyses of the events of 1204-14, more than the sources which describe them. This teleological distortion has separated Nicaea from its rivals from the genesis of the polity. In the process all these polities have been rearranged and simplified to suit the narrative. Historiographical treatment for each of Nicaea's 'main' rivals (Trebizond, the Seljuks and the Latins) focuses on a single battle, represented as catastrophic for each, while its so-called 'lesser' rivals are essentially ignored. Thus polities have been denuded of potential until they fit into the (meta)narrative framework.

This thesis leaves readers with a more fragmentary, piecemeal and even confused picture of the thirteenth century than when they started to read. This might at first seem like

[433] J. Haldon, ''Jargon' vs. 'the Facts'? Byzantine History-Writing and Contemporary Debates', *BMGS* 9 (1984), pp. 95-132.

a step backwards, but the true state of the field must be acknowledged, if 'progress' is to be made. In many ways a conclusion is inappropriate for this excursus, since it has not sought a 'macro-answer'. It has dealt with some small problems in the case-study, but cannot be more than a prelude to large-scale historiographical reappraisal, by the community of scholars. Not only must predestined Nicaean 're'-conquest be reassessed, but so too must the narrative of "the age of insecurity", which has consumed the study of Palaiologian politics, economics, architecture and art in obsessive anticipation of 1453, and the story of the fourth crusade which trudges inevitably towards 1204 with weary resignation.[434] It is not ahistorical to make generalisations nor to identify patterns or trends. Indeed the past cannot be understood in minutiae. However, when such constructs overpower the evidence, rather than complementing it, they cease to serve a useful explanatory function. It may not make satisfactory reading, nor even a good story to say that Aldebrandinos was probably not a pirate but that it is impossible to tell who he 'really' was. However, that lacuna has more substance than the artifice it replaces. Life, whether historical or contemporary, is chaotic and anarchic, not ordered. Hopefully this thesis has added a little chaos back into an excessively ordered thirteenth century.

[434] For the phrase see S. Ćurčić & E. Hadjitryphonos, *Secular Medieval Architecture in the Balkans, 1300-1500, and its Preservation* (Thessaloniki, 1997). See also J. Harris, 'Constantinople as a City-State, *c*. 1360-1453', in J. Harris, C. Holmes, E. Russell (eds.), *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World After 1150* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 119-40.

APPENDIX: IMAGES

Figure II: North-eastern section of the walls of Philadelphia. (31.05.14)

Figure III: Eastern segment of the walls of Philadelphia. (31.05.14)

Figure IV: The acropolis of Sampson/Priene, with classical remains in the foreground. (03.06.14)

Figure V: Part of the fortified temple of Zeus, Sampson/Priene. (03.06.14)

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