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SELF AND OTHER IN THE RENAISSANCE:

LAONIKOS CHALKOKONDYLES AND LATE BYZANTINE INTELLECTUALS

A dissertation presented

by

ASLIHAN AKISIK

to

The Committee on Middle Eastern Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History and Middle Eastern Studies

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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Professor PAUL MAGDALINO

Self and Other in the Renaissance:

Laonikos Chalkokondyles and Late Byzantine Intellectuals

Abstract

The capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman armies of Mehmed II in 1453 was a cataclysmic event that reverberated throughout Renaissance Europe. This event intensified the exodus of Byzantines to Italy and beyond and they brought along with them the heritage of Greek antiquity. Laonikos Chalkokondyles contributed to the Renaissance with his detailed application of Herodotos to the fifteenth century, *Apodeixis Historion,* and made sense of the rise of the Ottomans with the lens of ancient history. The *Apodeixis* was printed in Latin, French, and Greek and was widely successful. The historian restored Herodotean categories of ethnicity, political rule, language, and geography to make sense of contemporary events and peoples. This was a thorough study of ancient historiography and Laonikos thus parted ways with previous Byzantine historians. I refer to Laonikos' method as "revolutionary classicizing", to describe the ways in which he abandoned the ideal of lawful imperium and restored the model of oriental tyranny when he described the nascent Ottoman state. What appears to be emulation of the ancient classics was radical revival of political concepts such as city-states as ethnic units, freedom defined as independence from foreign rule, law-giving as fundamental aspect of Hellenic tradition which did not encompass the Christian period.

Laonikos has often been studied in the context of proto-nationalist historiography as he had composed a universal history, wherein he had related extensive information on various ethnic and political units in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, such proto-nationalist application does not fully capture Laonikos' classicizing interests. Laonikos referred to his contemporaries as Hellenes, not because he was a nationalist who defined political identity only by recourse to language and common history. Rather, Laonikos believed that Hellenic identity, both referring to paganism as

well as ethnicity, was relevant and not bankrupt. Importantly, we introduce manuscripts that have not yet been utilized to argue that Hellenism as paganism was living reality for Laonikos, his Platonist teacher Plethon, and their circle of intellectuals in the fifteenth century.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

I benefitted from the unpublished dissertation of F. K. Mollaoğlu, a fine translation of Books 5, 6, 7 of the *Apodeixis* into Turkish with extensive commentary. I was also lucky to collaborate with Anthony Kaldellis, albeit after a great portion of my own research and writing was finished. He shared with me his work-in-progress, a gifted rendition of the entire Apodeixis into English. This allowed me to check the veracity of my own translations, as well as to rely on Kaldellis' translations for some of the quotations. I use my own translations as well as Kaldellis' and distinguish the former from the latter by noting the following: Tr. AA.

Sevgili Duygu, Vural ve Melih için

INTRODUCTION

Laonikos Chalkokondyles, born ca. 1430 to an aristocratic Athenian family, witnessed great change in the political map of his patris after his family was exiled from their hometown Athens to Mistra in the 1430's, when Constantinople was captured by the Ottomans in 1453, Athens was conquered by Mehmed II in 1456, Mistra and the Despotate of the Peloponnese was incorporated into the Ottoman state in 1460, and the final remaining independent Byzantine principality, the Empire of Trebizond, surrendered to Mehmed II in 1461. Laonikos Chalkokondyles, who called himself Laonikos the Athenian, was named Nikolaos at birth but had adopted the ancient sounding anagram to emphasize his classical Greek training and interests. Laonikos had the good luck to study with the famous Platonist philosopher George Gemistos Plethon (d. 1452). Plethon taught a loyal group of students, was the holder of hereditary *pronoia*/"grant of tax revenues", advised the Despots of the Peloponnese to reform the Byzantine state, and was Judge General of the Byzantine Empire. As student of George Gemistos, Laonikos was introduced to pre-Christian Greek literature and philosophy by the most important Platonist of the day. Plethon and his students in Constantinople and later in Mistra, including the youthful Laonikos, the future Cardinal of the Catholic Church Bessarion (d. 1472), Mark Eugenikos (d. 1444) the leader of the anti-Unionist party in the Byzantine Empire, his brother John Eugenikos (d. after 1454/5), Demetrios Raoul Kabakes (d. before 1520), chose to emphasize different aspects of their rich Hellenic and Byzantine heritage. Plethon, however, was posthumously accused of being a "Hellene", that is a pagan, and his culminating work *Nomoi* was burned by George Scholarios Gennadios (d. ca. 1472), the first Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans.

In the thesis, I propose to study the manners in which these and other fifteenth-century intellectuals responded to the challenges of a rapidly changing world and offered new formulations of "self". Engaging with questions of identity, I seek answers to such questions as: How did they interpret Hellenism, as religious and political identity? What were the various ways in which these intellectuals understood their Christian heritage? The legacy of the Eastern Roman Empire? What weight did each assign to their classical Greek education? To their hometowns? Whom did each consider as the ultimate "other"? Why? How did each understand and explain the final collapse of the Byzantine State? In what ways did these events (the Council of Florence-Ferrara, the fall of Constantinople, of Mistra), influence their allegiances? What was their understanding of Islam? How did each configure the world at large? How did they position themselves in this larger context? What were the building blocks of their universal vision?

In sketching the varied responses of the fifteenth-century intellectuals to these demanding questions, I first focus on the Athenian historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles and on his *Apodeixis Historion*/ *The Result of the Inquiries*. A universal Herodotean style history, *Apodeixis* documented the rise of the Ottomans and the demise of the Byzantine state in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The *Apodeixis*, a major source for the late medieval/early modern east and west, has been extensively utilized since its first publication in Latin translation in 1556.[1] If publishing history is in any way a record for the popular appeal of a work, the fifteenth-century *Apodeixis* should rank as a bestseller of the times. Translated into Latin and French by the sixteenth century, Chalkokondyles' History went through numerous reprints. Today, it is well represented in libraries with its early editions. In a dizzying effort

[1] Laonicus Chalcondylas, *De origine et rebus gestis Turcorum libri X* , tr. Conradus Clauserus (Basileae, 1556). For further information concerning the publication history of the *Apodeixis*, see infra Chapter 2. The *Apodeixis* was first printed in Latin translation before its publication in the original Greek.

undertaken by the Ottoman intellectual Kâtib Çelebi (1609-1657), portions of the *Apodeixis*, a History of the Ottomans in classicizing Greek, were translated into Ottoman Turkish from the Latin version in the seventeenth century.[2]

In adopting Herodotos as model, Chalkokondyles offered a revolutionary classicizing idiom which would be later used in Europe to depict the Ottoman Empire as oriental tyranny. For generations of Byzantine intellectuals and historians the subject matter for their political tracts, *enkomia*, and historical works had remained the Roman Christian Empire with its capital in Constantinople established by the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine in 324. Laonikos, however, composed the *Apodeixis* as a History of the Ottomans, similar in structure to Herodotos' History of the Persians. While the portrayal of the Ottomans as oriental tyranny does not sound original or revolutionary today, in the fifteenth century it was a groundbreaking way of conceptualizing the barbarian antagonists - pagan, Muslim, or Christian - of the Roman Empire. Comparing and contrasting Laonikos' vision with his contemporaries such as Plethon, Cardinal Bessarion, the historian and Ottoman governor of Imbros Kritoboulos (d. ca. 1470), the Genoese bureaucrat and Byzantine historian Doukas (d. ca. 1462), as well as with contemporary western sources, such as the works of the Florentine Leonardo Bruni (d. 1444), the chansons de geste, texts associated with the Donation of Constantine, I hope to replicate, explain, and analyze the universal range of the *Apodeixis*.

Composing the *Apodeixis* c. 1464[3], Laonikos sought to explain the political and military failure of the Byzantines as well as the new world order with the emergence of numerous proto-nation states all across Europe, independent city-states, as well as the

[2] Kâtib Çelebi, *Târih-i Kostantiniyye ve Kayâsıre*, ed. Ibrahim Solak (Konya, 2009). Existing in a single manuscript in the Konya İzzet Koyunoğlu Library, portions of Laonikos' *Apodeixis* were included with works by John Zonaras, Niketas Choniates, and Nikephoras Gregoras.

[3] A. Kaldellis, "The Date of Laonikos Chalkokondyles' *Histories*", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies,* 52.1 (2012): 111-136.

Ottomans. As such Laonikos applied the Herodotean categories of geography, language, ethnicity, and customs not only to the Ottomans but also to the non-barbarian world, and presented his audience a new longue durée vision.

In trying to make sense of the myriad different information Laonikos concocted and of his revolutionary classicizing, the theoretical framework remains the transition from the late Byzantine period (when humanists, east and west, increasingly read, interpreted, and discussed pre-Christian Hellenic literature and philosophy in addition to the Latin classics), into the early modern era (when the "European" intellectual looked onto the universe and attempted to explain it, he increasingly confined himself to a desacralized sphere). I hope to show that Laonikos Chalkokondyles held a privileged position in making this transition: He both revived the pre-Christian Herodotean model and he also referred to religion (that is the three religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) as only one of numerous frameworks/systems that define and regulate human societies. However, we shall also discuss the role Hellenism as religious/political identity, played in Laonikos' and in Plethon's understanding of the world and the ways in which this Hellenic and sacralized gaze set them apart from later generations.

Who was Laonikos Chalkokondyles?

Laonikos Chalkokondyles gives no precise year but some suggestive information on his date of birth in the *Apodeixis*.[4] Laonikos wrote:

> that by the barbarians who drove them out of their remaining territories, so that only a small territory was left to them, namely Byzantion and the lower coast of

[4] Also discussed in Akdes Nimet, *Die türkische Prosopographie bei Laonikos Chalkokandyles,* unpublished PhD dissertation (Hamburg, 1933), 16-18. N. Nicoloudis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Translation and Commentary of the 'Demonstrations of Histories (Books I-III)*, (Athens, 1996), 43-44. F. Mollaoğlu, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles'in Kroniği ve Değerlendirilmesi (V.- VII. Bölümler),* unpublished PhD dissertation (Ankara, 2005), 34-36.

> Byzantion as far as the city of Herakleia; the upper coast by the Black Sea as far as the city of Mesembria; the entire Peloponnese excepting only three or four cities of the Venetians; and Lemnos, Imbros, and other inhabited islands of the Aegean in that area.[5]

According to this description, the Byzantines no longer had any extended territory in northern Greece and Asia Minor except for the limited coastland around Byzantion. It is well-known that Thessaloniki was under Venetian rule from 1423 until 1430 when it was captured by the Ottomans.[6] Further, the inhabitants of Ioannina handed over the city to Murad II in 1430 and the city's Despot Carlo Tocco II continued to rule under the suzerainty of the Ottomans.[7] Thus, Laonikos must have been born after 1430 when the Ottomans had either reduced the inhabitants of Thrace, Epiros, and the Peloponnese to vassalage or brought them under direct Ottoman rule. This date correlates with a certain passage from Cyriac of Ancona's writings.

The earliest source on Laonikos is a diary fragment from 1447, composed by Cyriac of Ancona (1391-1452).[8] Cyriac of Ancona, considered by many to be the founding father of modern archeology, undertook numerous trips in the eastern Mediterranean, initially as a merchant but eventually to document the Greek and Latin remains of classical antiquity. In late July-early August 1447, we find Cyriac in Mistra when he was visiting the philosopher and Judge General of the Byzantine Empire George Gemistos Plethon:

> the most learned of the Greeks in our time, and, if I may say so, [a man who] in his life, character and teaching [is] a brilliant and highly influential philosopher in the Platonic

---

[5] Darkó, **I**, 6-7. "παραγενόμενος μὲν οὖν αὐτὸς ἔγωγε ἐπὶ τόνδε τὸν βίον κατέλαβον Ἕλληνάς τε καὶἙλλήνων βασιλέα ὑπό τε τῶν ἐν Θράκῃ γενῶν πρῶτα, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν γε δὴ τῶν βαρβάρων τῆς ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἀπεληλαμένους, ἀρχὴν τήνδε βραχεῖάν τινα περιέπειν, Βυζάντιον καὶ Βυζαντίου τὴν κάτω παραλίαν ἄχρις Ἡρακλείας πόλεως, κατὰ δὲ Εὔξεινον πόντον τὴν ἄνω παραλίαν ἄχρι Μεσημβρίας πόλεως, Πελοπόννησόν τε αὖ ξύμπασαν πλὴν ἢ τριῶν ἢ τεττάρων πόλεων τῶν Ἑνετῶν, ὡσαύτως Λῆμνον, Ἴμβρον καὶ νήσους τὰς αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ ἐν τῷ Αἰγαίῳ ᾠκημένας."

[6] Darkó, **II**, 14.

[7] Mollaoğlu, 122-123.

[8] Cyriac of Ancona, *Later Travels,* ed. and tr. Edward W. Bodnar with Clive Foss, (Cambridge, MA and London, 2003), 298-301.

> tradition. Also, I saw rushing to meet me in the palace itself the gifted young Athenian, Nikolaos Chalkokondyles, the son of my good friend, the learned George, in no way unworthy of his father, and furthermore, remarkably learned in both Latin and Greek literature.[9]

On the 2nd of August Nikolaos Chalkokondyles, "dearly beloved Athenian youth", guided Cyriac around the remains of Sparta.[10]

As for George Chalkokondyles, information on this Athenian aristocrat who was exiled to Mistra with his family, is provided in the *Apodeixis*.[11] George Chalkokondyles was a relative of the wife of Antonio I Acciajuoli, the Florentine Duke of Athens. Following Antonio I's murder, George attempted to succeed the Florentine Duke and travelled to the Ottoman ruler Murad II's court in order that Murad II recognize him as the rightful ruler of Athens. George Chalkokondyles was unsuccessful, exiled from Athens, and relocated in Mistra, the capital of the Byzantine Despotate of the Peloponnese.[12]

According to the sixteenth-century historian Theodore Spandounes, Laonikos Chalkokondyles was not only an eye-witness to Murad II's Varna campaign in 1444 but he also worked as a secretary in the Ottoman court.[13] This information has been rightly criticized by subsequent authors because Laonikos was too young to be appointed at this time.

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[9] Ibid. Bodnar emended the Greek text of Cyriac to "Laonikos Chalkokondyles" rather than retaining the original, "Nikolaos Chalkokondyles." The emendation is both unnecessary and also conceals Laonikos' later name change, from "Nikolaos" to "Laonikos".

[10] Ibid.

[11] See infra. Chapter 2.

[12] See Chapter 2 for an extended exposition concerning the exile of George Chalkokondyles and his family.

[13] Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors,* tr. and ed. D. M. Nicol, (Cambridge, 1997), 145.

Laonikos provided information on a member of the Chalkokondyli family of Athens in the context of Murad II's campaign in 1446 in the Peloponnese.[14] Numerous scholars suggested that the narrative of these events comes across as an eye-witness account and I hold their interpretation to be valid.[15]

Laonikos provided an extended account of the 1446 campaign. When Murad II was preparing for a campaign in the Peloponnese in 1446, Constantine, the Despot of the Peloponnese, sent a spy to the Ottoman camp in order to gather information. The spy returned to Mistra and advised the Despot to make peace with the Ottomans. Constantine was enraged by the spy's report and ordered him to be sent to prison. Constantine, then, sent a member of the Athenian Chalkokondyli family on a diplomatic mission to the Ottoman Sultan Murad II. Murad II mistreated the Chalkokondyles, did not allow him to return to Mistra, and imprisoned him in Serres before undertaking the campaign in the Peloponnese. Laonikos did not provide his readers with the identity of this member of the Chalkokondyli family. Krumbacher erroneously believed that the Historian was referring to himself in this passage.[16] However, as we have seen, Laonikos was merely a youth when Cyriac visited Mistra in

[14] Darkó**, II**, 113. Darkó**,** "Zum Leben des Laonikos Chalkokandyles", 31-32; Kampouroglou*,* 101-102; Moravcsik**,** *Byzantinoturcica I,* 391-392; Baştav**,** "Laonikos Halkondilas", *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları, Prof. Dr. İbrahim Kafesoğlu'nun Anısına Armağan,* 22 (1985): 128; Nicoloudis**,** *Laonikos Chalkokondyles,* 41; F. K. Mollaoğlu, 27-28.

[15] Darkó, **II**, 115. F. K. Mollaoğlu, "Laonikos Chalkokondyles'in Hayatı ve "Tarih'i", *OTAM,* 21 (2007): 46. A. N. Kurat, "Bizans'ın Son Osmanlıların İlk Tarihçileri", *Türkiyat Mecmuası,* III (1926–1935): 199; W. Miller, "The Last Athenian Historian", *JHS*, 42 (1922): 37; Darkó, "Zum Leben des Laonikos Chalkokandyles": 31; Kampouroglou, 134; Baştav, "Laonikos Halkondilas: 128; Nicoloudis, 45.

[16] K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der Byzantinische Literatur,* (Munich, 1897), 302.

1447. Thus, students of Laonikos Chalkokondyles generally agree that Laonikos was referring to his father George Chalkokondyles in this passage.[17]

Cyriac's diary fragment is not the only source, documenting Laonikos the Athenian's connection with Plethon. We find Laonikos' inscription in a Herodotos manuscript, now Plut. Gr. 70.06 in the Laurenziana Library, Florence.[18] (Figure: 1)

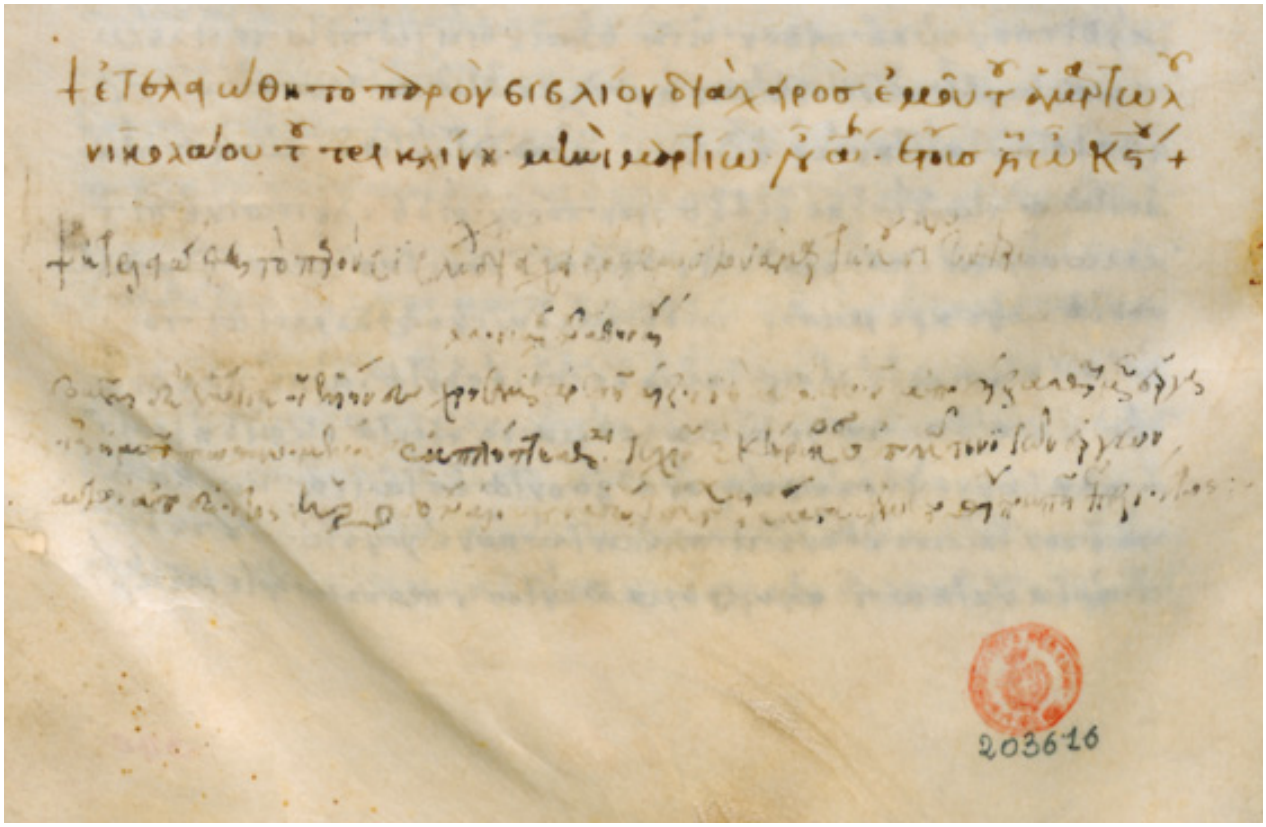


Figure 1 : Laonikos' inscription. fol. 340v, Plut. 70.06.

This fourteenth-century manuscript, copied by Nikolaos Triklines in 1318, was later owned by Plethon[19] (Figure: 2) as well as his student Laonikos.

[17] Darkó, "Zum Leben": 31-32. N. Nicouloudis, 45. F. K. Mollaoğlu, 27-28, 226-227.

[18] For further information on this manuscript see infra Chapter 1.

[19] Folios of this manuscript were copied and inserted by Plethon. D. Bianconi, "La Biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora Una Questione di Mani", *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005): 403.

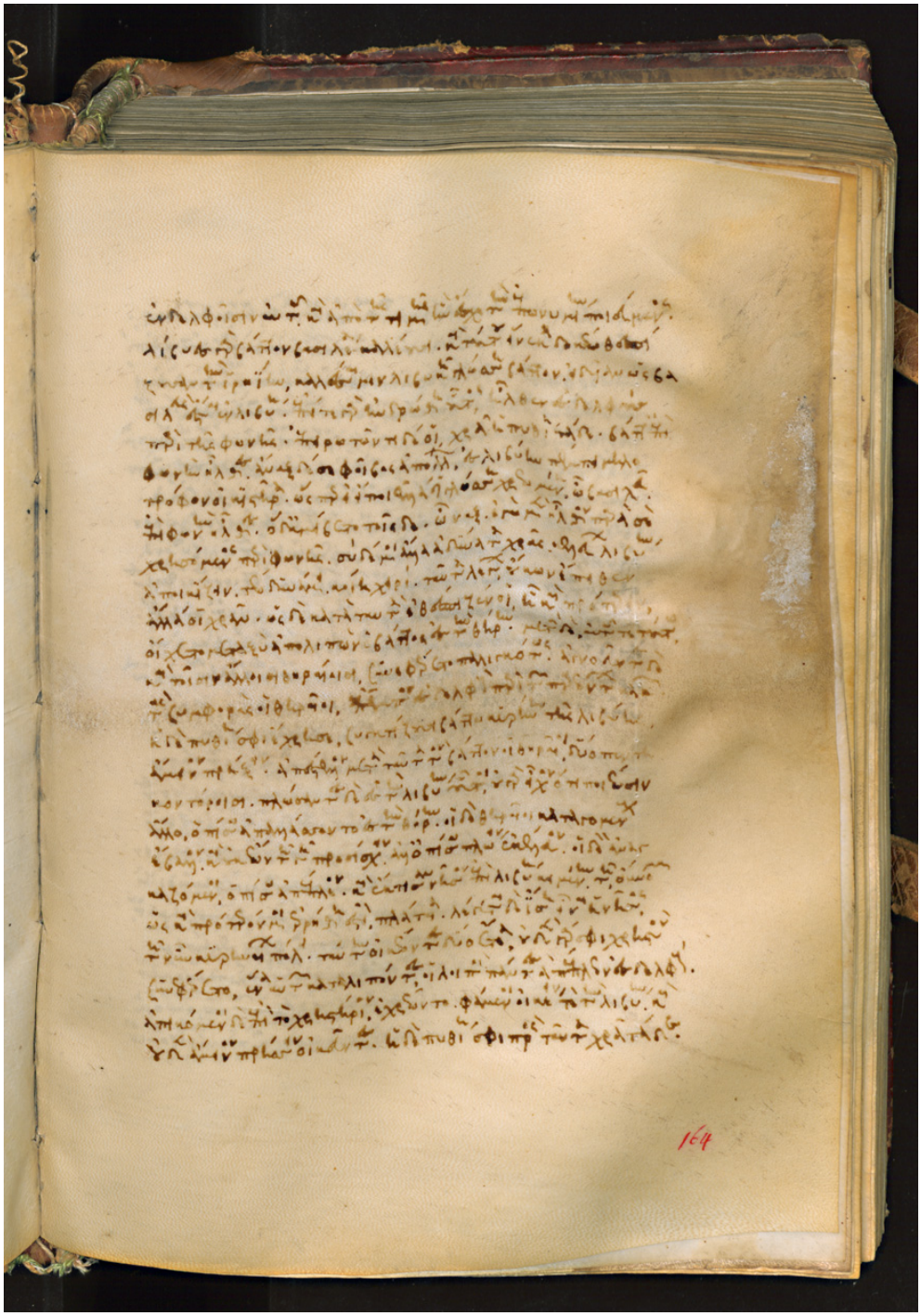


Figure 2: Plethon's handwriting. fol. 164r, Plut. 70.06.

On fol. 340v, the last folio of the manuscript, Nikolaos Triklines inserted an inscription in 1318, which is in the same hand as the text of Herodotos, Plut. 70.06: "The present

book was completed by my hand, the sinner Nikolaos Triklines."[20] Immediately below this inscription, we find another inscription in a different hand.[21] (Figure: 1) Turyn recognized that this latter inscription was inserted by Laonikos the Athenian (Chalkokondyles), based on the concurrence of its grammar and vocabulary with Laonikos Chalkokondyles' *Apodeixis*. When I drew Kaldellis' attention to this inscription, he agreed with Turyn regarding the author of this short epigram on Herodotos.

This inscription, which has not been discussed in the context of literature on Laonikos Chalkokondyles or elsewhere for that matter, makes clear that Laonikos formally chose Herodotos as model and viewed the events of his time through the lens of Hellenic antiquity. Further, as we shall see in Chapter 1, Laonikos Chalkokondyles' gaze was not merely classicizing in a secular sense but rather he referred to the events of ancient history to have occurred "in a manner akin to divine procession" and to the events of his own time to be "no less worthy."

Debate Concerning Laonikos' Identity

Michael Apostolis (ca. 1420- ca. 1480), who was a disciple of Plethon, a teacher, and a copyist of manuscripts for Cardinal Bessarion, was originally from Constantinople but had escaped to Crete in the aftermath of 1453. Apostolis was an avid composer of letters and we find a certain Laonikos among his addressees. Legrand edited some of Apostolis' letters in 1885 as part of Bibliographie hellénique des XVe et XVIe siècles.[22] Noiret edited seventy-six letters of Michael Apostolis[23] in addition to

[20] Herodotos, Plut. 70.06, fol. 340v. "†ἐτελειώθη τὸ παρὸν βιβλίον διὰ χειρὸς ἐμοῦ τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ νικολάου τουῦ τρικλίνη." Alexander Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides,* (Urbana, 1957), 229-230.

[21] For the epigram and its translation, see Chapter 1.

[22] E. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique des XVe et XVIe siècles,* (Paris, 1885), vol. 2, 234-259.

Legrand's edition of forty-eight letters. Apostolis addressed a total of seven letters to Laonikos and one to a certain Chalkokandyles in the extant and edited corpora. These edited letters were available to the Hungarian editor of the *Apodeixis*. Eugen Darkó, Laonikos' editor, was convinced that the addressee of the letters and the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles were the same person and communicated his results in the Second International Byzantine Congress which convened in Belgrade in 1927.[24]

Legrand, however, suggested that the addressee of Letter no. 40 to Chalkokandyles was to Laonikos' cousin Demetrios Chalkokondyles, teacher of Greek to generations of scholars in Padua. Darkó disagreed with Legrand, arguing that this letter was also addressed to Laonikos.[25] In Letter no. 40, Apostolis had written to a certain Chalkokandyles who was his student. Both Demetrios as well as Apostolis were born ca. 1420. Darkó pointed out that the age difference between the two scholars was so minimal that it was not possible for one to have been the teacher of the other. Further, Apostolis had started teaching in Constantinople in 1452 at which time Demetrios had already moved to Italy.[26] Demetrios and Apostolis are known to have had a substantial disagreement concerning Plato and Aristotle that degenerated into name-calling. Thus, Darkó argued that the addressee of letter no. 40 must have been Laonikos, the only other member of the Chalkokondyli family, known in intellectual circles of the Renaissance. Kaldellis, who has shared his findings on the identity of Laonikos, points out that the letter no. 40 to Chalkokandyles could have been written to

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[23] H. Noiret, *Lettres inédites de Michel Apostolis* (Paris, 1889).

[24] Darkó, "Neue Beiträge": 276-285.

[25] Legrand, vol. 2, 255. Darkó, "Neue Beiträge": 278-281. D. Kampouroglou, *Οἱ Χαλκοκονδύλαι*, (Athens, 1926), 137. Nicolaos Nicoloudis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles: A Translation and Commentary of the "Demonstrations of Histories" (Books I-III)*, (Athens, 1996), 51-52. Ferhan Kırlıdökme Mollaoğlu *Laonikos Chalkokondyles'in Kroniği ve Değerlendirilmesi (V.-VII. Bölümler)* unpublished PhD dissertation, (Ankara, 2005), 28-37.

[26] Geanakoplos, *Byzantium and the Renaissance,* 77. For the dating of these events, I follow more recent publications than when Darkó was writing his article.

Demetrios long before or after Apostolis had a clash with Demetrios in 1467.[27] The dispute between the two men does not necessarily prove that the letter's recipient was Laonikos rather than his cousin. However, even when one accepts that the recipient of letter no. 40 was Demetrios Chalkokondyles, this does not prove that the rest of the letters to Laonikos were addressed to someone other than Laonikos Chalkokondyles.

There is, indeed, intriguing information to be learned from the manuscript tradition of Apostolis' letters and manuscripts of the *Apodeixis*. In the sixteenth century, three Cretan scholars, Nicolas de la Torre[28] (Νικόλαος Τουρριανός), Andreas Darmarios, and Antonios Calosynas found employment at the court of the Spanish monarch Philip II (r. 1556-1598). De la Torre and Darmarios copied, in addition to Laonikos Chalkokondyles' *Apodeixis*, Apostolis' letters. In Escorial gr. 87 and Vindobonensis phil. gr. 85, we find Apostolis' letter no. 22 addressed to a Nikolaos that commences with the following: "To Nikolaos, Dearest Laonikos".[29]

Legrand had not offered a critical edition and for letters no. 1-18 he had relied on the Escorial, Parisinus, and the Ambrosian manuscripts but for letters. no. 19-48 he only utilized the Parisinus and the Ambrosian manuscripts.[30] Thus, Legrand did not have access to letter no. 22 from the Escorial and the Vindobonensis Libraries and edited the opening clause to

[27] For the clash between Demetrios and Apostolis see Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*, 91-92.

[28] Eva Nyström, *Containing Multitudes: Codex Upsaliensis Graecus 8 in Perspective*, unpublished PhD dissertation, (Uppsala, 2009), 55-56.

[29] A. Revilla, *Catálogo de los Códices de la Biblioteca de El Escorial*, (Madrid, 1936), vol. 1, 274. "Νικολάῳ Οὗ σοι προεῖπον, Λαόνικε φίλτατε." The Escorial manuscript also contains the proceedings of the Fifth Ecumenical Church Council. These were probably copied into this manuscript because this was the last Church Council that was recognized both in Rome and in Constantinople. Apostolis, in his capacity as a unionate Greek priest on the island of Crete, would be interested in having access to the proceedings of the council. H. Hunger, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek 1: Codices historici, codices philosophici et philologici* (Wien, 1961), 197.

[30] Eugen Darkó, "Neue Beiträge zur Biographie des Laonikos Chalkokandyles," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 27 (1927): 276.

Letter no. 22 as "To Laonikos, Dearest Laonikos."[31] Who was Laonikos and why did Apostolis address him as Nikolaos in letter no. 22 in the manuscripts from the Escorial and Vindobonensis libraries? Was this a simple scribal error or did the Cretans Nicolas de la Torre and Andreas Darmarios have access to further information concerning Laonikos, the addressee of the letter?

The interest of these Cretan intellectuals in Apostolis and Laonikos Chalkokondyles is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Darmarios[32] and Calosynas separately copied manuscripts of the *Apodeixis*. Calosynas, in fact, included a brief vita of Laonikos Chalkokondyles alongside a copy of the *Apodeixis* and this manuscript, Monac. Gr. 150, is still extant.[33] Further, Calosynas documented the name change from Nikolaos to Laonikos in the brief vita.[34]

One finds no person with the name Laonikos in a quick search on the *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*. Trapp, editor of the series, only included the birth name "Nikolaos", to refer to the addressee of Apostolis' letters among documented individuals in the late Byzantine period.[35] Thus, no person was named Laonikos at birth and the addressee of Apostolis' letters, Nikolaos, was the only person who used the anagram according to the prosopographic work of Trapp. A similar search on *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, the electronic database for Greek literature from antiquity to the present era, reveals that the name Laonikos is so rare that it was only used by the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles and by the addressee of

[31] E. Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique des XVe et XVIe siècles,* (Paris, 1885), vol. 2, 245.

[32] Andreas Darmarios copied a manuscript of the *Apodeixis*: Parisinus reg. gr. 1779. Darkó, xxiii.

[33] Ed. C. Hopf, "Antoine Calosynas vies des Chalcocondylas d'Athènes", *Chroniques gréco-romanes,* (Berlin, 1873), 243-245. C. Graux, *Essai sur les origins du fonds Grec de l'Escurial,* (Paris, 1880), 343-344. Darkó, xxii.

[34] Hopf, 243. "Νικόλαος Χαλκόδηλος, Ἀθηναῖος, ὃς ἐπικληθεὶς Λαοδικεὺς..''

[35] Ed. E. Trapp, *Prosopographisches Lexicon Der Palaiologenzeit,* (Wien, 1986), vol. 8, 147.

Apostolis' letters. Thus, both the historian and the addressee of the letters were named Nikolaos at birth in the first half of the fifteenth century and changed their names to Laonikos ca. 1460. The name change was documented in the Herodotos manuscript Plut.gr.70.06, in Calosynas' Vita of Laonikos, as well as in the Escorial gr.78, and in Vindobonensis cod.gr.85 containing Apostolis' letters. Kaldellis, however, has noted that this is not conclusive evidence but I find it suggestive.

One must further remark that Nikolaos is not only a very common Christian name and is not to be found in classical antiquity but also that its anagram, Laonikos, is more classical sounding than the original. Further, Laonikos Chalkokondyles was not the only person in his circle of intellectuals to change his name in the fifteenth century. Laonikos' teacher, the preeminent Hellenic philosopher George Gemistos, changed his name to the more classical-sounding Plethon. Similarly, Bessarion, the Greek Cardinal of the Catholic Church who was also a student of Plethon, had a name change and his birth name is unknown.

If Laonikos. addressee of Apostolis, was indeed Laonikos Chalkokondyles, what information can we deduce from the extant letter collection? Firstly Apostolis' Laonikos lived on Crete for an extended period of time. From Apostolis' letter no. 51, wherein Apostolis greeted Laonikos as Λαονίκῳ ἱερεῖ, we learn that Laonikos was a priest on Crete. This information may come as a surprise to students of Laonikos the Athenian, whose narrative in the *Apodeixis* was exceptionally gracious to the ways in which Islam was practiced among the Ottomans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[36] However, we should note that Apostolis' correspondent was not the conventional Orthodox priest that one comes across in the numerous archival documents from the later Byzantine period and he was certainly not ordained in the

[36] For Laonikos Chalkokondyles' account of Islam and the Ottomans, see infra Chapter 2.

Orthodox Church. What type of Cretan priest was Apostolis' Laonikos? The answer does not only require knowledge of Cretan history in the late medieval and early modern period but also a certain openness to study and formulate questions of religious identity during this time.

Crete had been a Venetian colony since the advent of the Fourth Crusade in 1204 and would remain as such until its conquest by the Ottomans in 1669. The majority of this large island's inhabitants were ethnically Orthodox Greeks but without established ties to the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade.[37] Indeed, Venice sought to sever all ties to the Orthodox Patriarchate while allowing native Orthodox Cretans to perform their religious obligations in relative freedom in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In the aftermath of the Council of Florence-Ferrara in 1438-1439, Venetian authorities sought to implement the Council's decree of Union but met with great resistance and were largely unsuccessful in assuaging the local revolts. The Venetians created the position of *protopapades*, on payroll of the Venetian State. This office was created in lieu of the archbishopric of Crete but did not constitute a genuine hierarchy.[38] Thus, Cretan Orthodox priests had to travel outside of Crete to adjoining bishoprics in the eastern Mediterranean, such as Methoni, Monemvasia, Koroni, Kefalonia to be ordained since there were no high-level clergy on the island.[39]

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[37] S. Xanthoudides, *Ἡ Ἐνετοκρατία ἐν Κρήτῃ καὶ οἱ κατὰ τῶν Ἐνετῶν ἀγῶνες τῶν Κρητῶν,* (Athens, 1939), 152-155; D. J. Geanakoplos, "Crete and Venice", *Greek Scholars in Venice,* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), 44; Chryssa Maltezou, "The Historical and Social Context", *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete,* ed. D. Holton, (Cambridge, 1991), 26-29; N. B. Tomadakis, "Οι ορθόδοξοι παπάδες επί Ενετοκρατίας και η χειροτονία αυτῶν," *Kretika Chronika,* 13 (1959): 45-49.

[38] Tomadakis.

[39] Ibid.: 46.

With the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453, Crete became a major destination for Greeks who escaped the capital on route to the west. It was during this time of increased and intense contact between the island, Venice, and further western locations we find the Venetians making use of a caste of uniate priests who were supported by the Venetians and largely independent of both the Orthodox as well as the Catholic Churches.[40] This caste of priesthood was initially created to ameliorate the tense relations between the Venetian Latin colonists and the ethnic Greek Orthodox islanders. However, we learn from the Registers of the Venetian Senate that the uniate priests were molested by the "schismatic Greeks" in 1461 and at later dates.[41] Who were these uniate priests and what were their activities?

The Venetian Senate decided to refer the incident to the Papacy and Pius II was quick to respond with a papal bull on 27 May 1462 to the Bishop of Mylopotamos, wherein the Papacy invested these uniate priests with the income from the holdings of the Monastery of Mount Sinai on Crete, amounting to the sum of 400 ducats annually.[42] Luckily the names of some of these priests were preserved for posterity in three papal bulls.[43] According to the papal bull in 1462 the following twelve individuals were uniate priests:

Isaiah the monk,
John Plousiadenos,
John Rossos,
George Alexandros,
Nicholas Kabadatos,

[40] Ibid.: 49-50.

[41] H. Noiret, *Documents inédits pour server a l'histoire de la domination Vénitienne en Crète de 1380 a 1485,* (Paris, 1892), 461, 462, 465.

[42] H. D. Saffrey, "Pie II et les prêtres uniates en Crète au XV siècle", *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1981), 515-524 .

[43] G. Hofmann, "Wie stand es mit der Frage der Kircheneinheit auf Kreta im XV. Jahrhundert?", *OCP,* 10 (1944): 97-100.

Nicholas Plousiadenos,
Nicholas Maurommati,
George Chrysoloras,
Marc Epiphanios,
Manuel Synadinos,
George Bisoulas,
George Vrana.[44]

Two later papal bulls, one of Pius II to Isidore of Kiev on 11 April 1463 and another one to Cardinal Bessarion on 11 May 1463 further dignified the position of these priests on Crete. While the earlier bull to Cardinal Isidore reproduced the one to Bishop Mylopotamos, the papal bull to Bessarion replaced Isaiah the monk with Niketas Lagos.

After the passing away of Cardinal Isidore of Kiev in 1463, Bessarion, now titular Latin Patriarch of Constantinople, intervened to become the direct authority overseeing these uniate Cretan priests. The Greek Cardinal envisaged the ideal of a college of uniate priests who would not only contribute to his efforts at establishing further contact between Rome and the eastern Mediterranean in the face of Ottoman expansionist policies but who would also educate a new cadre of Cretan intellectuals, preserving the classical Greek heritage. Thus, these uniate priests, originally appointed by the Venetian Senate, and later recognized by Pius II and by Bessarion, should be evaluated in the context of cross-cultural fertilization between the eastern and western Mediterranean and in the context of humanist interests in classical Greek literature.[45] The question that remains is whether Laonikos Chalkokondyles belonged among these uniate priests.

[44] Ibid., Tomadakis: 48.

[45] D. J. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice*.

Three of the uniate priests were later mentioned in Apostolis' letter of 1474 to the Venetian Senate.[46] This letter was written after the passing away of Cardinal and Patriarch Bessarion in 1472 and asked for Venetian help in the face of local Orthodox resistance.[47] According to Apostolis' letter to the Venetian Senate, three uniate priests were burdened with the aggression of the Orthodox Cretan subjects. One recognizes these names from the Papal bull to Bessarion on 11 May 1463: Nicholas Kabadatos, Niketas Lagos, and Alexander. Whereas in the papal bull of 1463, Pius II had not included any titles, Apostolis referred to Kabadatos as "first priest"/ "πρωτοϊερεὺς" of Kydonia[48], and to Lagos and Alexander as "priest"/ "ἱερεὺς". This was in keeping with the original Venetian policy of conferring titles on the uniate priests.[49] In the papal bull of 1463, Bessarion was invested with treating the uniate priests with the honors appropriate to their dignity.[50] Tomadakis, and later Tsirpanlis, suggested that Nikolaos Kabadates was Apostolis' Laonikos but did not offer any arguments to support the identification.[51]

On 22 April of 1486, a certain Laonikos, "first priest of the Chanians"/"πρωτοθύτος Χανίων" and student of Michael Apostolis, printed the first Venetian copy of the pseudo-Homeric poem *Batrachomyomachia*. Legrand suggested

[46] Michael Apostolis, *Lettres inédites de Michel Apostolis*, ed. Hippolyte Noiret, (Paris, 1889), 136-141.

[47] Ibid., 139.

[48] Ibid. "Νικόλαος πρωτοϊερεὺς Καββαδάτος Κυδωνιάτης".

[49] Ibid. 137. Landi became titular Patriarch of Constantinople, succeeding Bessarion in 1474 until 1483. Saffrey, 519-520.

[50] Saffrey, 519.

[51] N. B. Tomadakis, "Οι ορθόδοξοι παπάδες επί Ενετοκρατίας και η χειροτονία αυτῶν,": 45-49.

that Laonikos, the printer and "first priest of the Chanians", was no other than the recipient of Apostolis' letters and this suggestion has been universally accepted.

Darkó, as we have reviewed in the beginning of this section, suggested a second round of association. According to Darkó, Laonikos of Chania, student of Michael Apostolis and editor of the pseudo-Homeric poem, was Laonikos Chalkokondyles. Darkó, however, was not as successful as Legrand in convincing his audience.[52] Geanakoplos, by way of example, argued that Laonikos of Chania could not have been Laonikos Chalkokondyles since the former was a priest. Still, it does not seem impossible that Laonikos Chalkokondyles, a historian who referred to Islam as law-giving and Mohammed as law-giver, could have been a uniate priest on Crete. Bessarion, after all, had envisaged a college on Crete that provided classical education and helped salvage the classical Greek heritage. Thus, it is probable that Laonikos Chalkokondyles belonged among these classically trained uniate priests, especially because the historian had provided a pro-unionist account of the Council of Florence-Ferrara in the 1460's and depicted Venice as the protagonist of the *Apodeixis* in the face of Ottoman aggression.[53]

One also finds information on Laonikos Chalkokondyles from the Cretan Calosynas' vita of the historian. According to the Cretan Calosynas (who as we have remarked found employment at Philipp II's court in the sixteenth century), Laonikos composed the *Apodeixis* in a high register of Attic Greek, imitating Thucydides in his use of language. Calosynas also wrote that Laonikos, along with many of his compatriots, departed from his native Greece in the aftermath of the Turkish onslaught and the establishment of the Turkish tyrannical government. Seeing his native land

[52] See infra.

[53] See infra Chapter 4. For the dating of the *Apodeixis*.

oppressed by injustice, rashness, lawlessness, and love of money, Laonikos travelled west. There, he did not only teach westerners but also expat Greeks. Thus, Laonikos' life project was to pursue wisdom and also aid Greeks to be well-received in the west.[54] Calosynas, no doubt, had himself in mind, as well as his colleagues Nicolas de la Torre and Andreas Darmarios, when he inserted this brief comment concerning the reception of a later generation of Cretans in the courts and libraries across the west.

Thus, we learn from Calosynas' vita of Laonikos Chalkokondyles that the historian travelled west after the fall of his native Greece to the Ottoman Turks and engaged in scholarly activities, becoming an authority in classical literature. Similarly, we learn from the 1486 edition of *Batrachomyomachia* that Laonikos of Chania was in Venice in the closing decades of the fifteenth century. Laonikos of Chania was not only a printer in Venice but also the editor of classical verse, demanding thorough competence in ancient literature. This correlates with Calosynas' description of Laonikos' activities in the west. Unfortunately, Calosynas' vita has been largely regarded as spurious[55] and Tomadakis' identification of Laonikos of Chania with Nikolaos Kabadatos accepted by Tsirpanlis and in later literature. Thus, numerous monographs on the history of printing reproduce Tomadakis' and Tsirpanlis' suggestion which however demands further inquiry.[56]

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[54] Hopf, 243-244. "Πρὸς ἣν τὸ καιρὸν τοῦ βίου αὐτοῦ προηρῆται ἐπιτήδευμα τὸ πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν βιωτεύειν καὶ αὐτο δέδοκται οἰκοδόμημα, ὥστε λυτελῶς πᾶσι τοῖς μεταγενεστέροις ξενιεῖσθαι."

[55] Calosynas confused the identity of Laonikos Chalkokondyles' cousin Demetrios Chalkokondyles, writing that they were brothers. On account of this misleading information, Calosynas' account is now considered unreliable.

[56] N. Panagiotakes, *El Greco: The Cretan Years,* (Farnham, 2009), 5. ed. Frédéric Barbier *Le Livre et l'historien: études offertes en l'honneur du Professeur Henri-Jean Martin* (Geneva, 1997), 330. K. S. Staikos, Triantaphyllos, E. Sklavenitis, *The publishing centres of the Greeks: from the Renaissance to the Neohellenic Englightenment* (Athens, 2001), 3, 16. Luckily, cautious and thorough scholars of early modern printing repeat the information provided in the print edition of 1486 and do not venture to identify Laonicus first priest of the Chanians with Nikolaos Kabadatos. Nicolas and Barker, *Aldus*

In conclusion, Laonikos Chalkokondyles was born in Athens in the 1430's to an aristocratic Greek family. His birth name was Nikolaos but similar to his teacher George Gemistos who called himself Plethon, Chalkokondyles adopted the unusual classical sounding name of Laonikos. In 1435 George Chalkokondyles, Laonikos' father, travelled to the court of Murad II to enlist Ottoman help against the Florentine rulers of Athens but was unsuccessful. Along with his family, George Chalkokondyles was exiled to Mistra, the court of the Despots of the Peloponnese. George Chalkokondyles was at the court of Murad II a second time in 1446, on ambassadorial duty representing the Despots of the Peloponnese. Laonikos Chalkokondyles left an eyewitness account of the events in 1446 when the future historian was in Corinth and the Ottomans campaigned into the Peloponnese. We find Laonikos in Mistra and studying with the famous Byzantine philosopher Plethon in 1447. During this time, he started working on his life project of applying a Herodotean method to the events of the fifteenth century. Laonikos left his mark on a fourteenth-century Herodotos manuscript, Plut.gr.70.06, studying it in detail and inserting an original epigram to praise Herodotos. It is generally agreed that Laonikos was not present in Constantinople in 1453. It is possible but not certain that Laonikos was a uniate priest on Crete and was in Venice in 1486, editing and publishing one of the earliest printed specimens of classical Greek literature, the pseudo-Homeric verse *Batrachomyomachia*.

Literature Review

The topic of this dissertation requires one to navigate between the Byzantine, Renaissance, and Ottoman fields. Further, I believe that historical truth is reconstructed and imagined presently and that the dividing lines between fields (such as Byzantine,

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Manutius and the Development of Greek Script and Type in the 15th Century, (Lunenburg, 1992), 35-37.

European, and Islamic) are currently for organizational purposes and are not entirely substantive. Thus, I made extensive use of secondary literature on the late Byzantine period, the Renaissance[57], as well as early Ottoman history.[58] This is particularly pertinent as Laonikos Chalkokondyles included political, ethnographic, geographic,

[57] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West : Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Robert Black, "Italian Renaissance Education: Changing Perspectives and Continuing Controversies" *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 52.2 (1991): 315-334. F. L. Borchardt German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth (Baltimore 1971). E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1985). Robert Finlay, "The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494-1530) *The Sixteenth Century Journal* vol. 30 no.4 (1999): 931-944. E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983). Felix Gilbert, "Biondo, Sabellico, and the beginnings of Venetian official historiography", *Florilegium historiale, Essays presented to Wallace K. Ferguson* ed. J. G. Rowe and W. H. Stockdale (Toronto, 1971). James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance,* (Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1990). James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusading Literature in the Age of Mehmed II", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49 (1995), 111-207. Hiro Hirai, "Semence, vertu formatrice et intellect agent chez Nicolo Leoniceno entre la tradition arabo-latine et la renaissance des commentateurs grecs," *Early Science and Medicine* 12 (2007): 134-165. Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains,* (New York, Evanston and London, 1961). Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, (Harvard, 2008). J. Monfrin, "La figure de Charlemagne dans l'historiographie du XVe siècle," *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Societe de l'Histoire de France*, (1964-1965): 67-78. David Robey, John Law, "The Venetian Myth and the <De Rpublica Veneta> of Pier Paolo Vergerio" *Rinascimento (1975): 3-59.* Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art,* (Princeton, 1981). Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, (Cambridge, 1978).

[58] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds : The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, 1995). Dimitris J. Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413* (Leiden, Boston, 2007). Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, "Anadolu'da İslamiyet," *Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* (1922). Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Etnik Menşei Mes'eleleri," *Belleten* 7(1943). Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu* (Ankara1959). Rudi Paul Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington, 1983). Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York, 2003). Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople", *Muqarnas*, 29 (2012): 1-81. Gülru Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye: Creation of a Cosmopolitan Capital and Visual Culture under Sultan Mehmed II" *From Byzantion to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital* (Istanbul, 2010). Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge and London, 1991). Ahmet Yaşar Ocak *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15. – 17. yüzyıllar)* (İstanbul, 1998). Julian Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37(1983): 15-34. Mubahat Türker, *Üç Tehafüt bakımından Felsefe ve Din Münasebeti*, (Ankara, 1956).

linguistic information on the west and the east in the Renaissance. Certain seminal debates that have informed the study of Byzantine, Renaissance, and Ottoman historiography in the last century, further, allow us to see the ways in which Laonikos Chalkokondyles is still relevant in the early twenty-first century. I engage with the following questions: orientalism and the study of the "other"; military and administrative capacities of the early Ottoman State; nomadism; paganism; the continuity of the Hellenic tradition in the Byzantine period; the use and reuse of the Greek and Latin classics in the Renaissance; the theological, philosophical, scholarly, and textual interaction between the late Byzantines and the Renaissance humanists. Thus, in order to provide the proper context for the *Apodeixis*, one must cast the net wide.

1) Laonikos Chalkokondyles

There is extensive secondary literature on Laonikos Chalkokondyles. A great portion of this literature, that is dated to the last hundred years, reflects the nationalist agendas of modern historians. Thus, Turkish scholars have been interested in Laonikos Chalkokondyles to the extent that he provided information on the early Ottomans and the Turks.[59] Similarly, modern Greek scholars have been greatly interested in Laonikos Chalkokondyles' use of the concept of Hellenic identity to refer to the late medieval/early modern Greek inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire. Vakalapoulos, in particular, argued that Chalkokondyles' narrative betrayed proto-

[59] Nimet Akdes Kurat, *Die Turkische Prosopographie bei Laonikos Chalkokandyles,* unpublished PhD dissertation, (Hamburg, 1933). Idem, "Bizansın Son ve Osmanlılarin İlk Tarihçileri", *Türkiyat Mecmuası,* 3 (1935): 185-236. Şerif Baştav, "Laonikos Halkondilas"", *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları,* 23 (1985): 127-134. Ibid. Die Türkischen Quellen des Laonikos Chalkondylas" *Akten des XI Internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses,* ed. Beck and Dölger, (Munich, 1958), 34-42. Hasan Çolak, "Bizans tarihyazıcılığında "dönüşüm": Laonikos Chalkokondyles'te Osmanlı imajı (1299-1402)"", *Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,* 9.15 (2008): 333-352. F. K. Mollaoğlu "Bir Tarihi Olayın Açıklanması ile İlgili Sorunlar: Gelibolu'nun Fethi ve Laonikos Chalkokondyles"", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi 27.44* (2008): 205-213.

nationalist concerns.[60] English and French scholars were interested in the ways in which Chalkokondyles depicted the English and French peoples, related the Hundred Years War, as well as the figure of Joan of Arc as national heroine.[61]

The most insightful and comprehensive student of Laonikos Chalkokondyles was the east German Hans Ditten. Ditten wrote concerning Chalkokondyles' exposition on German[62] and Slavic[63] history but he was also interested in the narrative on Venice, Genoa, Spain, barbarians, and Hellenes.[64] Further, Ditten contextualized Laonikos' narrative within the context of the contemporary historians, Sphrantzes, Doukas, and Kritoboulos, reaching some of the same conclusions that I do in this dissertation (such as Laonikos' classicizing narrative that parts ways with the Christian discourse of Doukas).[65] Thus, Ditten went above and beyond the nationalist narrative of his contemporaries, and attained the universal vision of Laonikos in his own exposition on

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[60] A. Vacalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek nation: the Byzantine period, 1204-1461,* (New Brunswick, 1970).

[61] Alain Ducellier, "La France et les iles Britanniques vue par un Byzantine du XVe siècle: Laonikos Chalkokondylis", *Économies et Sociétés Médiévales au Moyen Age* ed. E. Perroy, 439-445 (Paris, 1973). Ibid. "L'Europe Occidentale vue par les Historiens Grecs des XIVème Siecle"", *Byzantinische Forschungen* (1996): 119-159. S. Moraitis, "Sur un passage de Chalcondyle relatif aux Anglais"", *Revue des Etudes Grecques,* 1 (1888): 94-98.

[62] Hans Ditten, "Bemerkungen zu Laonikos Chalkokondyles' Deutschland Exkurs"", *Byzantinische Forschungen* 1 (1966): 49-75. Ibid. ""Bemerkungen zu Laonikos Chalkokondyles Nachrichten über die Lander und Völker an den Europaischen Küsten des Shwarzen Meeres (15. Jahrhundert)"", *Klio*, 43-45 (1965): 185-246.

[63] Hans Ditten, *Der Russland-Exkurs des Laonikos Chalkokondyles,* (Berlin, 1968). Ibid. "Η Περί Ρωσίας παρέκβασις τοῦ Λαόνικου Χαλκοκονδύλου΄΄, *Παρνασσός,* 3 (1961): 89-99. Ibid, "Der Byzantinische Historiker Laonikos Chalkokondyles über die slawichen und baltischen Völker Osteuropas", *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 11 (1966): 594-608.

[64] Hans Ditten, "Die Namen fur Venedig und Genua bei den letzten byzantinische Geschichtschreiber (15. Jahrhundert)" *Helikon* 6 (1966): 51-70. Ibid., "Spanien und die Spanier im spiegel der geschichtsschreibung des byzantinischen historikers Laonikos Chalkokondyles"" *Helikon* 3 (1963): 170-195. Ibid. "Βάρβαροι Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den Letzten Byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern", *Acts of the XIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* vol. 2 (Belgrade, 1964), 273-299.

[65] Ibid. "Βάρβαροι".

the historian. Furthermore Ditten was able to give a structural overview of the *Apodeixis*, paying attention to the building blocks of Laonikos' narrative (such as ethnography, geography, language, political structures etc.)

2) George Gemistos Plethon

Plethon's political philosophy, Hellenic identity, classicizing vision, and utopian program to reform the Byzantine state have been exhaustively studied.[66] However, scholars have largely failed to note the connections between Plethon's

[66] Milton V. Anastos, "Pletho's Calendar and Liturgy", *DOP* vol. 4 (1948): 183-305. P. Athanassiadi, "Byzantine Commentators on the Chaldean Oracles: Psellos and Plethon", *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources,* (Oxford, 2002): 237-252. L. Bargeliotes, "Fate or Heimarmene according to Pletho", *Diotima,* 3 (1975): 137-149. L. C. Bargeliotes, "Plethon's Conception of Justice and Law". *Phronimon,* vol. 2 (2000): 23-29. Aubrey Diller, "A Geographical Treatise by Georgius Gemistus Pletho", *Isis*, vol. 27. 3 (Nov., 1937). Aubrey Diller, "Pletho and Plutarch", *Scriptorium,* 8 (1954): 123-127. Aubrey Diller, "The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Plethon", *Scriptorium,* 10 (1956): 27-41. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance,* (Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1990). Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, New York 2007). G. Karamanolis, "Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle", *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources,* (Oxford, 2002), 253-283. A. Keller, "Two Byzantine Scholars and their Reception in Italy", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* vol. 20 (1957): 363-370. François Masai, *Pléthon et le Platonisme de Mistra,* (Paris, 1956). François Masai, "L'Oeuvre de Georges Gemiste Plethon", *Bulletin de l'Academie royale de Belgique* (1954): 536-555. Raymond Mercier, "The Sources of the Astronomy of Gemistos Plethon", *Proceedings of the International Congress of Plethon and His Time, Mystras, 26-29 June 2002,* (Athens, Mystras, 2003), 195-210. John Monfasani, "Pletho's Date of Death and the Burning of His *Laws"* BZ 98 (2006): 459-463. Jean Nicolet and Michel Tardieu, "Pletho Arabicus Identification et Contenu du Manuscrit Arabe d'Istanbul, *Topkapı Serāı, Ahmet III 1896*", *Journal Asiatique* 268 (1980): 35-57. Niketas Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in the Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon* (University of Cambridge, 2011). Franz Täschner, "Georgios Gemistos Plethon, ein Beitrag zur Frage der übertragung von islamischem geitesgut nach dem Abendlande", *Der Islam*, 18 (1929): 236-243. Franz Täschner,, "Georgios Gemistos Plethon ein Vermittler zwischen Morgenland und Abendland zu Beginn der Renaissance", *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 8 (1929-1930): 100-113. Speros Vryonis, Jr. 'The "Freedom of Expression" in Fifteenth Century Byzantium', *La notion de liberté au Moyen Age: Islam, Byzance, Occident:* Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia, IV, session des 12-15 octobre 1982, organisée par George Makdisi, Dominique Sourdel et Janine Sourdel-Thomine (1985), 261-273. R. Webb, "The Nomoi of Gemistos Plethon in the Light of Plato's Laws." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52, (1989): 219-249. C. M. Woodhouse, *Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes,* (Oxford, 1986).

thought-world and his student Laonikos Chalkokondyles' understanding of Hellenism, Islam, law-making, political philosophy, fate, and virtue. Thus, I aim to present Laonikos' philosophy within the context of that of Plethon, his teacher.

Synopsis of the Dissertation

Students of Laonikos Chalkokondyles invested much energy into researching the biography of the Historian. In a life filled with books and having garnered the close attention of Plethon, one of the most remarkable philosophers of the Renaissance, Laonikos Chalkokondyles' ideas are just as compelling as his life. Indeed, it is the thesis of this dissertation that one cannot study Laonikos' novel interpretation of the rise of the Ottomans without paying due respect to the classical education that he received from Plethon.

Chapter 1, "Apollo, Artemis, and Hellenic Philosophy in the Renaissance" is devoted to the ways in which Plethon and his circle of intellectuals, redefined Byzantine/Roman/Hellenic identity, reviving late antique debates between Christians and pagans. The Mistra Circle redefined Hellenism as belief in the philosophical Gods of Apollo and Artemis and applied their findings from classical and late antique history to arrive at unchanging truth. Plethon, Judge General of the Byzantine State, and his students lived at a time and place when there was relative freedom of thought. Admired in the court of the Despots in Mistra, Plethon's life project was to present a durable constitution, fixing what he considered to be the blatant errors of the current Christian state. In order to support the thesis that Plethon was a Hellene, that is a pagan, rather than Christian, I present new evidence in the guise of a fourteenth-century Herodotos manuscript that was owned by both Plethon and Laonikos Chalkokondyles. Plethon and Laonikos left their mark on the manuscript, literally as well as figuratively. Laonikos

inserted an inscription on the last folio as well as astronomical signs throughout the manuscript that point to divination with text. Plethon, a polymath, was a philosopher, historian, and astronomer and did not distinguish between the celestial and sub-lunar spheres in either his philosophy or in the range of his interests. Subscribing to Stoic philosophy, Plethon envisaged the universe, the celestial spheres, the human souls, nature, and ethics as one undivided whole. Laonikos, too, followed his teacher. However, Laonikos was not as forthcoming as Plethon, possibly due to the status of Plethon's philosophy after 1453 when Plethon's culminating work, the Laws, was proclaimed as anathema by the Ottoman Patriarch of Constantinople, Gennadios Scholarios.

In Chapter 2, "The Fifteenth-Century Barbarians in Classicizing Garb", we investigate the revolutionary classicizing of Laonikos. Engaging with Herodotos and reapplying Herodotean categories such as nomadism, tyrannical monarchy, the barbarian to the fifteenth century and to the emerging Ottoman Empire, Laonikos offered a new classicizing model. Comparing and contrasting Laonikos with his contemporary Byzantine historians, Kritoboulos and Doukas, we demonstrate that Laonikos departed from a traditional Byzantine model of historiography. In lieu of applying the lawful Roman imperium model to the Ottoman state under Mehmed II, Laonikos breathed life into the ancient Herodotean model of tyrannical Empire. Kritoboulos had viewed the Ottoman state under Mehmed II as the new Romans. Doukas, thoroughly Christian and traditional, explained the fall of the Byzantine/Roman Empire by recourse to an eschatological argument. Thus, according to Doukas the Byzantines/Romans were punished by God because of their sins. Both Kritoboulos as well as Doukas continued to function within a thoroughly Byzantine tradition. Laonikos, on the other hand, applied Plethon's ideas about law-making and

constitutional reform to the Byzantine and Ottoman states and argued that Ottoman success was due to their successful combination of virtue and chance. Referring to Islam as law-giving and to its Prophet as the law-giver, Chalkokondyles significantly parted ways with medieval tradition. However, Laonikos did not praise the Ottoman state and the historian viewed the conquests of Mehmed II as tyranny. Finally, Laonikos parted ways with classical Byzantine historiographical tradition in the ways in which he presented information, organizing the narrative around geography, ethnicity, language, and customs.

In Chapter 3, "The Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk? Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography", we are concerned with drawing the contours of identity, distinguishing between a radical understanding of "other", as exemplified in the classical category of the barbarian, and of kinsfolk. Similar to Herodotos who envisioned a common Hellenic identity, constructed out of rememberings of the past, a common linguistic family, religious and other customs, Laonikos, too, presented a family of non-barbarian peoples and states that were drawn together by sharing a lounge durée history, the universality of the Christian religion, and geography. Thus, Laonikos revived the genre of universal history in a Herodotean guise that was different from historians writing under the aegis of the Roman Empire, such as Polybios and Prokopios. Nevertheless, Laonikos benefitted from the pan-European vision of a shared Roman heritage and made recourse to the past in order to describe the present. Unlike Herodotos, Laonikos presented the geography of the non-barbarian peoples as a connected whole. When describing a certain people and state, Laonikos inserted information on geography and on bordering polities. In this way, Laonikos' presentation was quite different from that of Herodotos. Laonikos' narrative betrays a certain apprehension in clearly delineating the antagonists and the protagonists of the

Apodeixis. One finds the historian referring to Frederick I Barbarossa (1122-1190) as "Frederick the Barbarian", and Pope Pius II referring to the Italian city-state of Rimini as the "small barbarian". Mindful of the revolutions in history when a monarchy degenerates into tyranny or when a republic degenerates into democracy, Laonikos applied classical Greek categories of political rule in order to study the fifteenth-century polities. Engaging with the myth of Venice in significant manner, Laonikos portrayed this Italian city-state as most durable and just. Also describing other Italian city-states, such as Florence and Genoa, Laonikos understood their success to be grounded in constitutional rule. In this manner, Laonikos contrasted the Ottoman state with the western polities, arguing that Ottoman monarchs rule without a proper constitution.[67] Applying classical Greek political categories to the fifteenth century, Laonikos paved the way for later conceptualizations, such as Machiavelli's depiction of the Ottoman state as a one-man rule.

In Chapter 4, "Relinquishing the Claim to Roman Inheritance", we study the novel formulation of Laonikos, parting ways with classical Byzantine formulations of Roman identity. Applying the term Hellene to Orthodox Greek subjects of the Byzantine/Roman Empire of the medieval period, Laonikos offers a new understanding of Hellenic identity. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the term "Hellene" referred both to religious identity, i.e. pagan, as well as to ethnic identity. In this concluding chapter, we turn our gaze once again to the ways in which Laonikos described self and other in the fifteenth century. In the *Apodeixis*, Laonikos commences the narrative with a summary of the Donation of Constantine. According to the Historian, Roman identity belonged in the west, historically until the fifteenth century. Further, according to Chalkokondyles

[67] One should, however, note that both Plethon and Laonikos considered Islam to be law-giving, albeit a degenerate form of law-giving, and attributed the current success of the Ottomans to the application of Islamic law. See Chapter 2 for extended discussion.

the Byzantines did not traditionally engage with the linguistic and cultural aspects of their Roman self identification. We study the Roman designation under three distinct categories: religious, imperial, and cultural.

Laonikos perused and retained the classical distinction between Roman and barbarian. In this narrative (western) Roman Emperors, starting with Charlemagne and including Sigismund in the fifteenth century, were invested with the authority to wage holy warfare against the barbarian Ottomans. In this manner, Chalkokondyles' narrative closely follows that of Renaissance propagandists of Crusade. Laonikos was also careful to include Byzantine pro-unionists, in particular Bessarion and Isidore, among these theoreticians of holy warfare. In conclusion, Laonikos' understanding of Roman identity is closely aligned with fifteenth-century western conceptualizations. Furthermore, Laonikos' pro-western narrative possibly reveals his relocation to the west in the aftermath of Ottoman onslaught in the eastern Mediterranean.

1. Apollo, Artemis, and Hellenic Philosophy in the Renaissance

Introduction

> Next to the Prussians are the Samogitians, a hardy race whose lifestyle has nothing at all in common with that of its neighbors, nor its language. This race believes in the gods Apollo and Artemis. They follow the ancient Greek way of life and customs, but their material goods are similar to those of the Prussians. Next to them are the Bohemians who have the same beliefs as the Samogitians and the Germans who live in this land, but their material culture is similar to that of the Hungarians. They have a capital city that is prosperous and populous; it is called Prague, and it has not been long since many of the inhabitants of this city stopped worshipping fire and the sun. This is the only race in Europe that does not worship one of the three religions that are recognized by us these days, I mean those of Jesus, Mohammed, and Moses; for we know that these account for just about the majority of the world known to us. But there is, so I have learned, an Indian race beyond the Caspian Sea and the Massagetae who practice that same worship of Apollo. That race believes in other gods too, Zeus and Hera, as will be made clear later in the narrative.[68]

> The inhabitants of the land of Khatai believe in the gods Apollo, Artemis, and Hera. They do not all speak the same language as the land is divided among many peoples, but, in its cities and villages, it is the most well governed among all people. They make sacrifices of horses to Apollo and oxen to Hera. To Artemis they sacrifice adolescent children annually.[69]

Intriguing and laconic, Chalkokondyles defined ancient Hellenic religion as the polytheistic ritual belief in the gods Zeus, Hera, Apollo, and Artemis and wrote that it was only recently that the Bohemians stopped worshiping fire and the sun. The ritual worship of

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[68] Darkó, **I**, 124. "Προυσίων δὲ ἔχονται Σαμῶται, γένος ἄλκιμόν τε καὶ οὐδενὶ τῶν περιοίκων ὁμοδίαιτον, οὐδὲ ὁμόγλωσσον. νομίζει δὴ τοῦτο τὸ γένος θεοὺς Ἀπόλλω τε καὶ Ἄρτεμιν· διαίτῃ δὲ χρῶνται τῇ πάλαι Ἑλληνικῇ καὶ ἤθεσι, σκευῇ δὲ τῇ Προυσίων παραπλησίᾳ. Τούτων δὲ ἔχονται Βοέμοι, τῇ τε Σαμωτῶν δόξῃ τιθέμενοι καὶ τῇ Γερμανῶν οἱ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ ταύτῃ ἐνοικοῦντες, σκευῇ τῇ τῶν Παιόνων παραπλησίᾳ ἐσκευασμένοι. ἔνεστι δὲ αὐτοῖς μητρόπολις, πόλις εὐδαίμων τε καὶ πολυάνθρωπος, Βράγα οὑτωσὶ καλουμένη, καὶ πολλοὶ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης οὐ πολὺς χρόνος ἐπεὶ ἐπαύσαντο τῷ πυρὶ καὶ τῷ ἡλίῳ θρησκεύειν. μόνον δὲ τὸ ἔθνος τοῦτο τῶν ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ ἐκτὸς γενόμενον ταῖς ἐγνωσμέναις ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ παρόντι θρησκείαις, τῆς τε τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φημι καὶ τῆς τοῦ Μεχμέτεω καὶ Μωσέως· ταύτας γάρ τοι σχεδόν τι ἴσμεν διακατέχειν τήν τε ἐγνωσμένην ὡς τὰ πολλὰ ἡμῖν οἰκουμένην. ἔστι μέντοι, ᾗ πυνθάνομαι, καὶ τὰ ὑπὲρ τὴν Κασπίαν θάλασσαν καὶ τοὺς Μασσαγέτας ἔθνος Ἰνδικὸν ἐς ταύτην τετραμμένον τὴν θρησκείαν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος. νομίζει δὲ ἐκεῖνο τὸ γένος καὶ θεοὺς ἔτι ἄλλους, Δία τε καὶ Ἥραν, ὡς προϊόντι πρόσω τοῦ λόγου δηλωθήσεται."

[69] Darkó, **I**, 153. "νομίζουσι δὲ οὗτοι θεούς, οἵ τε τὴν Χαταΐην χώραν οἰκοῦντες, Ἀπόλλω τε καὶ Ἄρτεμιν καὶ δὴ καὶ Ἥραν. φωνὴν δὲ οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν σφίσιν ἴενται, ἀλλ' ἐς ἔθνη τε πολλὰ διῃρημένα εὐνομεῖται ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὴ ἀνθρώπων κατά τε πόλεις καὶ κώμας. θυσίας δὲ ἀνάγουσιν ἵππους μὲν τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι, βοῦς δὲ τῇ Ἥρᾳ· τῇ δὲ Ἀρτέμιδι θύουσι παῖδας ἀρτίως ἡβάσκοντας ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος."

fire and the sun brings to mind the Zoroastrian religion, although the Bohemians, to whom Chalkokondyles was referring in the passage quoted above, were a heretical sect of the Catholic Church and followers of Jan Huss. However, there is reason to suspect that Chalkokondyles had the religion of Zoroaster in mind when he referred to the ancient Hellenic belief system. According to Plethon, Laonikos' teacher, Zoroaster was the first lawgiver in history. Zoroaster was a mythic figure rather than a historic persona in Plethon's writings. As such, the study of Zoroaster in the context of Plethon's religious system would help clarify the Byzantine philosopher's legacy as a Hellene and lawgiver rather than add to our knowledge of Zoroastrianism as practiced outside of Hellenic circles in the fifteenth century.

In his Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles, Plethon drew our attention to the divine fire present in the entire cosmos. He further asserted that humans are capable of attaining the highest union with God as they begin to see that fire all around them, a tantalizing reference to Chaldean and Zoroastrian pyrolatry:[70]

> If you insistently address me or invoke me, then you will see everywhere what you have addressed, that it is me whom you invoked. For nothing else will be visible to you but all things as lightning, that is the fire which leaps everywhere over the world.[71]

Thus, Plethon's supreme deity was not inaccessible, and humans may attain unity with the One provided that they follow the correct beliefs and rites. In this way, Plethon diverged from the Neo-Platonists, who emphasize the impossibility of conceiving of God.[72]

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[70] P. Athanassiadi, "Byzantine Commentators on the Chaldean Oracles: Psellos and Plethon", *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources,* (Oxford, 2002), 241-242.

[71] Plethon, ed. B. Tambrun-Krasker, *Oracles Chaldaïques. Recension de Georges Gémiste Pléthon* (Athens, Paris, Brussels, 1995), 24. "Ὡς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ λέγει τὸ λόγιον τῷ τελουμένῳ, ἐὰν πολλάκις λέξῃς μοι, ἤτοι καλέσῃς με, ὄψει πανταχῆ αὐτὸ τὸ λεκτόν, ἐμὲ δηλαδὴ ὃν καλεῖς. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο τότε ὀφθήσεταί σοι ἢ τὰ πάντα κεραυνοί, πῦρ δηλαδὴ πανταχοῦ τοῦ κόσμου ἄττον."

[72] Athanassiadi, 242.

We will be investigating the ways in which Plethon and his students conceptualized Hellenic identity, Hellenic religion, and lawgiving in the fifteenth century and how they referenced ancient wisdom to provide a universal context for their beliefs. What were these religious beliefs? Did Plethon and his students understand Hellenism to be a viable alternative to the three religious systems of Jesus, Mohammed, and Moses? Did Hellenism refer to a national identity, a philosophical system, or a religion for the Mistra intellectuals? In seeking answers to these questions, we will be mindful of a vision of lawgiving that was understood to be operating in a sacralized universe and that itself was no less sacred.

In an attempt to define the contours of a living tradition of a philosophical and religious system of Hellenism in the fifteenth century, we will first investigate the historic framework of Hellenism during this period, focusing on the biographies of Plethon and the Mistra intellectuals. In addition, the following topics will be discussed in relation to Hellenic identity: the interest in using the symbols of Apollo and Artemis, the sun and the moon, respectively, for a philosophical discussion on unity and diversity; the primacy of Plato over Aristotle; and the ancient question regarding the causal generation of the universe rather than its temporal creation. Finally, we hope to understand the fifteenth-century debate on free will, fate, and virtue and the ways in which this debate informed Plethon's and Laonikos' discourse on lawmaking. Finally, this dissertation is primarily concerned with Byzantine identity in the Renaissance. Thus, the study of Hellenism, as a religious/political identity, supports later chapters on the division between barbarian and civilized, on the construction of a pan-European rhetoric in the fifteenth-century, and finally on the uses of Roman ideology in understanding contemporary events and peoples.

The Mistra Intellectuals and Hellenic Identity

Who was Plethon?

The famous Byzantine philosopher George Gemistos Plethon had moved to Mistra from Constantinople c. 1410[73] and had established himself as a teacher in Mistra with close ties to the Despots. Plethon, as a neopagan Hellenic philosopher following Plato, was one of the most enigmatic figures of the fifteenth century, as his philosophy appears to have evolved over a lifetime and precisely because he did not openly circulate his culminating work, Laws.[74] Concerning Plethon's early life, we have only the testimony of his adversary, the Patriarch George Gennadios Scholarios, who burned Plethon's Laws after Plethon's death and preserved only those portions demonstrating the pagan character of Plethon's thinking. The anti-unionist Scholarios was installed as Patriarch by Mehmed II in 1454 and kept that title until 1456.[75] Scholarios was an Aristotelian with a high regard for Thomas Aquinas, whose works he had translated. The Plato-Aristotle debate in the Byzantine world influenced European philosophy with Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis*, published in response to the Aristotelian George of Trebizond's attacks on Plato.[76] During Plethon's lifetime, Scholarios engaged in a discussion with Plethon concerning Aristotle, Plato, free will, and

[73] George Gemistos Plethon, *Georges Gémiste Pléthon Manuel d'Astronomie,* ed. Anne Tihon and Raymond Mercier (Louvain, 1998), 9.

[74] F. Masai, *Pléthon et le Platonisme de Mistra,* (Paris, 1956). C. M. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes,* (Oxford, 1986). Masai and Woodhouse are the two standard texts on Plethon. Most of Plethon's works are edited.

[75] M. H. Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400-vers 1472),* (Paris, 2008) is the definitive biography of Scholarios. Blanchet clarifies many of the points concerning the life of Scholarios that have baffled historians such as the dates of his patriarchate, whether he was patriarch a second time, and the burning of the *Nomoi*.

[76] Woodhouse: 191-267. G. Karamanolis, "Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle", *Byzantine Philosophy and Its Ancient Sources,* (Oxford, 2002), 253-283. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, (Columbia, 1990), 193-217. Masai, 346-366. Christopher Livanos, *Greek Tradition and Latin Influence in the Work of George Scholarios* (New Jersey, 2006), 71-94.

fate, as the extant correspondence demonstrates.[77] Although Scholarios suspected that Plethon might have preferred the pagan philosophers to Christian dogma, he did not slander the philosopher, as he would later do after Plethon's death.

After Plethon died in 1452[78] and after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Scholarios, as Patriarch, was approached by Princess Theodora Asanina of the Peloponnese concerning the autograph manuscript of Laws, which was in her possession and which had alarmed her with its formulation of a new religion.[79] Scholarios requested and received the book. He wrote to the Princess:

> Of all the legislators of polytheism and swinish life who lived before the divine dispensation, and of all those who have dared since the divine dispensation to concern themselves with legislation contrary to the true law, Plethon was the most ignorant sophist of all.[80]

However, the Princess was reluctant to destroy the book herself, and Scholarios burned it c. 1455 while he was Patriarch.[81] In addition to his letters to Princess Theodora, Scholarios also wrote to the Exarch Joseph concerning Plethon and his Laws in 1457, after he was no longer Patriarch. In these letters, Scholarios provided information on the early life of Plethon when he had studied at the "court of the barbarians." In the second letter to the Princess, Scholarios wrote:

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[77] George Gemistos Plethon, *Georgii Gemisti Plethonis, Contra Scholarii pro Aristotele Obiectiones*, ed. E.V. Maltese, (Leipzig, 1988), 1-46.

[78] Woodhouse, 3. Monfasani has argued that Plethon died in 1454 mainly based on George of Trebizond's testament. John Monfasani, "Pletho's Date of Death and the Burning of His *Laws"* BZ 98 (2006): 459-463. However, Demetrios Raoul Kabakes had noted in a manuscript, as Monfasani acknowledged, that Plethon died in 1452. Kabakes only left the Peloponnesos for Rome in 1466, and therefore he would have been in Mistra when Plethon died there. Emile Legrand, *Bibliographie Hellénique*, (Paris, 1885-1906) vol. 3, 262. Kabakes' testimony is therefore more reliable than that of George of Trebizond's and other figures in distant Europe.

[79] M. H. Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (Vers 1400-Vers 1472)*, 183-192.

[80] John A. Demetracopoulos, "Georgios Scholarios-Gennadios II's *Florilegium Thomisticum II (De Fato)* and Its Anti-Plethonic Tenor", *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales,* 74.2 (2007): 343. Tr. Woodhouse, 358.

[81] Ibid.

> The climax of his apostasy came later under the influence of a certain Jew with whom he studied, attracted by his skill as an interpreter of Aristotle. This Jew was an adherent of Averroes and other Persian and Arabic interpreters of Aristotle's works, which the Jews had translated into their own language, but he paid little regard to Moses or the beliefs and observances which the Jews received from him. This man also expounded to Gemistos the doctrines of Zoroaster and others. He was ostensibly a Jew but in fact a Hellenist [pagan]. Gemistos stayed with him for a long time, not only as his pupil but also in his service, living at his expense, for he was one of the most influential men at the court of these barbarians. His name was Elissaeus. So Gemistos ended up as he did.[82]

Scholarios also wrote in the same letter that Plethon had been exiled to Mistra from Constantinople by Manuel II because of his concealed pagan beliefs. Mistra, founded by the Frankish crusaders in the aftermath of 1204 on a hilltop overlooking the plain and ancient Sparta, was the capital of the Despotate, where the crown prince of the Byzantine Empire ruled over a substantial territory. In Mistra, Plethon was not only given hereditary pronoia, he was also appointed as Judge General of the Byzantine Empire.[83] However, we only have the testimony of Scholarios concerning Plethon's sojourn in a barbarian city and his instruction by the Jewish/Hellene Elissaeus to support Scholarios' claim that Plethon was exiled to Mistra.

It has also been argued that prior to his instruction by Elissaeus, Plethon had been a student of the Aristotelian Demetrios Kydones in an effort to find the influences on Plethon's philosophy.[84] Täschner, investigating Scholarios' reference to Elissaeus and Plethon's

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[82] Tr. Woodhouse, 24.

[83] I extend thanks to Prof. Smyrlis, who attracted my attention to an Athonite document from the monastery of Vatopedi, which conclusively proves that Plethon was Judge General of the Romans. J. Lefort, V. Kravari, Ch. Giros, K. Smyrlis and R. Estangüi Gómez, eds., *Actes de Vatopédi III, de 1377 à 1500*, Archives de l'Athos 23 (forthcoming), no. 204.

[84] Woodhouse, 22. Indeed, Plethon, in spite of his strong adherence to Plato's philosophy, did not employ the dialogue, with its allegories, as the form of his philosophical works but, rather, followed an Aristotelian method of definitions. Thus, Plethon's tract *On Virtue*, the most popular among his works, as attested by the wide dissemination of manuscript copies, is strictly Aristotelian, which has attracted the attention of scholars. Ed. and tr. B. Tambrun-Krasker, *Georges Gémiste Pléthon Traité des vertus*, (Brill, 1987), 30-32. The same can be said of Plethon's most influential work, *On the Differences of Aristotle from Plato,* in which Plethon begins with premises and employs syllogism to demonstrate Plato's superiority to Aristotle. *PG 160*, 979-1020. Masai, passim. Woodhouse, 191-214.

sojourn at the court of the barbarians, attempted to detect the influence of Islam on the thinking of Plethon, particularly in the all-encompassing nature of the Laws, which fused religion, law, and political structures, as well as in the new calendar, with its lunar months and lunar-solar years, that Plethon had proposed.[85] Anastos, in contrast, demonstrated that Plethon's revolutionary ideas concerning philosophy, religion, politics, and law were firmly grounded in the Platonic philosophical tradition and need not have had any background in Islamic tradition.[86]

Scholars have attempted to detect or deny the influence of Islam on Plethon's thought. However, such an approach appears futile, as Islam was a product of Mediterranean late antiquity and incorporated and synthesized the same complex social and philosophical currents that fueled Byzantine thought and society. Thus, strict monotheism and the fusing of religion and state were common features of late-antique religion and politics, predating both the rise of Islam and Constantine's conversion.[87] Consequently, Anastos, finding ample evidence in Hellenistic philosophy and especially in the late-antique commentators on Plato's corpus, has successfully refuted Täschner's claims, which made recourse to Islam as an atemporal entity. However, in the various instances in which Plethon had pronounced a positive evaluation of Islam, it was in the context of its application under the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk. Chalkokondyles' decision to compose the *Apodeixis* as a history of the Ottomans, which bears a striking resemblance to Herodotos' use of the Persians, should also

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[85] Franz Täschner, "Georgios Gemistos Plethon, ein Beitrag zur Frage der übertragung von islamischem geitesgut nach dem Abendlande", *Der Islam*, 18 (1929): 236-243. Idem, "Georgios Gemistos Plethon ein Vermittler zwischen Morgenland und Abendland zu Beginn der Renaissance", *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 8 (1929-1930): 100-113.

[86] Milton V. Anastos, "Pletho's Calendar and Liturgy", *DOP* 4 (1948): 183-305.

[87] Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris, 2010). Pierre Chuvin, *Chronique des derniers païens: la disparition du paganisme dans l'Empire romain, du règne de Constantin à celui de Justinien* (Paris, 1990).

be evaluated in the same context.[88] Furthermore, to find the roots of the similarly surprising pronouncements on Islam in Chalkokondyles,[89] one should turn to the echoes of the Ottoman system in Plethon's philosophy rather than to the influence of Islam on Plethon.

The mysterious figure of Elissaeus, who was burned for his heretical beliefs, has not yet been identified in Islamic sources, and Masai has suggested that Elissaeus was a follower of the mystical Jewish tradition of Kabala.[90] Tardieu, in contrast, suggested that Plethon's teacher was schooled in the Islamic Falsafa tradition, which builds on the Hellenistic philosophical tradition, and that it would be anachronistic for the Kabala tradition to be present in Asia Minor in the early fifteenth century. Information concerning Plethon's links with Jewish tradition is to be found in the sources to Plethon's astronomy text. Mercier has successfully demonstrated that Plethon used the Jewish version of al-Battānī as source for the parameters for Table II, although we "lack a documented and historical link."[91]

Plethon's philosophy held a great interest for the Ottomans, and Plethon's Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles, Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato, and those portions of the Laws that Scholarios had preserved, were translated into Arabic at the court of Mehmed II.[92] Further, we will see that Plethon held rather unorthodox views

[88] See Chapter 2 for Chalkokondyles' organization of the *Apodeixis* and the use of Herodotos as model.

[89] See Chapter 2 for Chalkokondyles' evaluation of Islam.

[90] Masai, 57.

[91] Raymond Mercier, "The Sources of the Astronomy of Gemistos Plethon", *Proceedings of the International Congress of Plethon and His Time, Mystras, 26-29 June 2002,* (Athens, Mystras, 2003), 206-207.

[92] Jean Nicolet and Michel Tardieu, "Pletho Arabicus Identification et Contenu du Manuscrit Arabe d'Istanbul, Topkapi Serai. Ahmet III 1896" *Journal Asiatique* 268 (1980): 35-57.

concerning the successes of the Islamic states and engaged with Ottoman military success based on a philosophy of virtue and chance.[93]

After burning Plethon's culminating work c. 1455[94], Scholarios wrote to the Exarch Joseph c. 1457-1458, when he was no longer Patriarch, concerning his reasons for burning the book:[95]

> We order all as from God, that if the whole book or a copied part of it should ever be found somewhere in the possession of some Christian, he is to destroy the holding. If someone should hide (the book) and be caught, if he does not burn it after a first and second exhortation, we order such a one to be barred from the entire community of Christians.[96]

Scholarios' pronouncement of Plethon's work as pagan and heretical was replicated in the colophon of the Arabic translation.[97] Plethon, in the Arabic translation, was called "an apostate from religion," which Tardieu and Nicolet interpreted as his conversion to Hellenism.

Plethon's Arabic translation has usually been studied in the context of the Islamic influence on Plethon's thought, and Woodhouse, along with Anastos, dated the translation to

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[93] See Chapter 2.

[94] Monfasani has argued that Scholarios burned the book in 1460, when he was no longer Patriarch. Scholarios wrote to Exarch Joseph referring to the unfortunate times: "ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν καιρῶν τουτὶ κωλυθέντες, ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν αὐτοὶ καὶ παρ' ἐλπίδας ἡμῖν ἦκον φέροντες, καὶ διπλοῦν ἡμῖν ἤνεγκαν πένθος, τὸ μὲν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, ἀποναμένοις τῆς κοινῆς συμφορᾶς, ἐξ ὧν ἄλλοι προπετέστερον βουλευσάμενοι κατεπράξαντο·" Blanchet has successfully demonstrated that this is, indeed, the language Scholarios used to refer to the events of 1453. Blanchet, 185-186. We will therefore follow Blanchet's dating of events, as Monfasani's argument for Plethon's death and the dating of letters primarily relies on Scholarios' language. Demetracopoulos' dating of events correlates with Blanchet's. Demetracopoulos: 343.

[95] Blanchet, 189.

[96] George Gennadios Scholarios, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios* ed. Jugie, Petit, and Siderides (Paris, 1935) vol. 4, 172. "παρακελευόμεθα πᾶσιν ὡς ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, εἴποτε καὶ ὁπουδήποτε εὑρίσκοιτο ἢ ὅλον τὸ βιβλίον. ἢ μέρος ἐκγεγραμμένον ἔν τινι τῶν χριστιανῶν, πυρὶ μὲν φθείρειν αὐτὸ τὸν ἔχοντα· κρύπτοντα δὲ καὶ ἐαλωκότα, μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν παραίνεσιν, εἰ μὴ παρρησίᾳ βούλοιτο καίειν, εἴργειν τὸν τοιοῦτον ἁπάσης τῶν χριστιανῶν κοινωνίας."

[97] Nicolet and Tardieu: 38-43.

Bayezid II's (1481-1512) reign.[98] We propose that this translation is an relevant document regarding the status of Plethon's philosophy in the Ottoman Empire under Mehmed II. Indeed, Nicolet and Tardieu, who studied the Topkapı manuscript Ahmet III 1896 in detail, dated the Arabic manuscript to Mehmed II's (1451-1481) reign based on the close association of the Arabic translation with the text Scholarios preserved, which is different from the manuscripts found in Europe.[99] The autographs of Plethon, along with a different version of the Laws, including On Fate, which was missing in the Arabic translation, were transported to Italy from Mistra by Demetrios Raoul Kabakes in 1466 when he also took Laurenziana 70.6 with him. It is partly due to Kabakes that the Laws became available in Europe, as one finds numerous manuscripts associated with Kabakes containing portions of the Laws.[100] The Arabic translator noted in the colophon that the entire book (Laws) was burned so that the propagation of Plethon's doctrine would not mislead the uneducated.[101] Nicolet and Tardieu suggested that the Arabic translation was made from Scholarios' copy of the autograph, which the Patriarch hypothetically deposited at Mehmed II's court.[102]

It is indeed possible that Mehmed II ordered the translation to pass judgment on the philosopher himself. It is known that Mehmed II was interested in philosophy and had ordered Hocazâde to study and compose a work on the inconsistencies of the philosophers,

[98] Anastos: 271. Woodhouse, 363.

[99] This is a correction to Diller's valuable study on Plethon's autographs in which Diller assumed that Kabakes took portions of the destroyed *Nomoi* to Italy in 1466. On a different note, Nicolet and Tardieu follow Jugie and Zakythinos in dating the burning of the book to 1460. However, Blanchet has proposed a more correct dating of events that we follow. Nicolet and Tardieu: 42. Demetracopoulos agrees with Blanchet concerning the date of the burning.

[100] N. A. Bees, "Demetrios Rallis Kabakis und der Marcianus IX 21", *Byz.-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* vol. 15 (1939): 136-140. D. A. Zakythinos, *Le Despotat grec de Morée Vie et institutions,* vol. 2 (London, 1975), 375-376.

[101] Nicolet and Tardieu: 43.

[102] Ibid.: 55-56.

including the controversy surrounding al-Ghazali and his attack on Islamic philosophers, following the Hellenistic tradition. Hocazâde composed his *Tehâfüt ül-Felâsife*, examining and comparing al-Ghazali's (b. 1058) Incoherence of the Philosophers with ibn Rushd's (1126-1198) response to al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Incoherence*.[103] In this work, Hocazâde sided with the anti-Hellenistic al-Ghazali but also corrected him on several points. Al-Ghazali had attacked the Islamic philosophers who incorporated the Hellenistic philosophical tradition and had advocated a return to the Qur'an for true knowledge.[104] Ibn Rushd , in contrast, who was known as Averroes in the West, was one of the most influential commentators on Aristotle and counted himself a member of the school of falasifah, which was attacked by al-Ghazali.[105] Thus, Mehmed II's interest in philosophy as well as the outlawing of Plethon's philosophy under Scholarios' Patriarchate might have prompted the translation of Plethon.

Moreover, Scholarios issued patriarchal encyclical letters concerning Plethon's polytheism and the Laws, indicating that Plethon's philosophy had become anathema[106] in the Orthodox Church.[107] Only the title of one of these encyclical letters remains in a seventeenth-century manuscript in the patriarchal library of Jerusalem.[108] This letter reads:

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[103] Mubahat Türker *Üç Tehafüt Bakımından Felsefe ve Din Münasebeti*, (Ankara, 1956), 53-54.

[104] James Pavlin, "Sunni *kalam* and theological controversies", *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Nasr and Leaman (Routledge, 1996), 105-119.

[105] Dominique Urvoy, "Ibn Rushd", *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Nasr and Leaman (Routledge, 1996), 330-345.

[106] Woodhouse, 363.

[107] Blanchet, 190. Blanchet dates this encyclical letter to Scholarios' Patriarchate, as the title reproduces the ways in which Scholarios signed his patriarchal letters. Thus, Blanchet successfully counters the opposing views of Zakythinos and Fassoulakis, who argue that this letter was the one Scholarios wrote to Despot Manuel Raoul in 1451-1452 concerning the persecuted pagan Juvenal, whom Scholarios had associated with Plethon. D. Zakythinos, *Le Despotat Grec de Morée* vol. 2, 366-367. S. Fassoulakis, *The Byzantine family of Raoul-Ral(l)es,* (Athens, 1973), 76-77.

[108] A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Ἱεροσολυμιτικὴ βιβλιοθήκη,* (St. Petersburg, 1891), vol. 1, 346.

> The letter of Gennadios of Constantinople to the Peloponnesians against the polytheism of Gemistos at the time Manuel Raoul was Despot was read. The signature is present thus. The Humble Monk and Patriarch of Constantinople by the Grace of God.[109]

The issuing of these patriarchal letters indicate that Scholarios as Patriarch was intent on banning Plethon's philosophy in Orthodox communities, especially in the Peloponnese, where Plethon was known to have a following. Scholarios would be able to implement this policy more successfully in the Ottoman Empire, and if Scholarios' policy became Orthodox dogma, subsequent Patriarchs, such as Isidore II and Sophronios I, would be able to impose it in the Peloponnese after its conquest in 1460. Matthew Kamariotes in the late fifteenth century and Manuel of Corinth in the sixteenth, who were both Grand Rhetors of the Church, attacked Plethon as a polytheist, indicating that Scholarios' judgment was adopted in subsequent generations.[110]

Developing Hellenism as a religious identity that broke rank with Christianity, Plethon and his circle were liable to be condemned as heretics. The stark example of Juvenal, who died by drowning after his body was mutilated by order of the Peloponnesian official Manuel Raoul in 1450, stands as a testament to what would happen to an individual when he disclosed his pagan beliefs publicly.[111] Scholarios, who is our only source for the persecution, not only praised Manuel Raoul for killing Juvenal but also gave a detailed account of

[109] Ibid.: "ἀνεγνώσθη Γενναδίου Κωνσταντινουπόλεωσ ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς τοὺς Πελοποννησίους κατὰ τῆς πολυθεΐας τοῦ Γεμιστοῦ, ὄντος δεσπότου Μανοὺλ [sic] Ῥάλη· ἡ ὑπογραφὴ δὲ εἶχεν οὕτως· `ὁ ταπεινὸς μοναχὸς Γεννάδιος καὶ ἐλέω θεοῦ πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως". See Blanchet, 190, for French translation and discussion.

[110] Woodhouse, 362-363.

[111] S. Vryonis, "The "Freedom of Expression" in Fifteenth Century Byzantium". Woodhouse, 315-317. Blanchet, 182-183.

Juvenal's activities in the city of Ainus, in Constantinople, and in the Peloponnese.[112]

Scholarios wrote that:

> Among Jews and Saracens the laymen, those who are attached to the affairs of the world, do not dare utter anything against those who are knowledgeable about and in charge of holy prescriptions. Among us Christians, all of those who are not fitted discuss matters of faith. Among them (Jews and Saracens) no one dares say anything against the patrimonial faith (or rather lack of faith) or to praise any other faith above it, or else he will be stoned and burned. We shamelessly proclaim in the marketplace against the Fathers and their faith, and who does this? Certain of the mob and the ill-bred and sorcerers and those unworthy altogether to utter anything about the holy dogmas, and though it is necessary to impale those daring such things, they praise them.[113]

Scholarios also noted in this letter that polytheism had a following in the Peloponnese and that these individuals propagated their beliefs freely.[114] Thus, the Peloponnese, after its incorporation into the Ottoman Empire in 1460 and at the time that Chalkokondyles was composing the *Apodeixis*, would no longer function as fertile ground for such radical beliefs, being incorporated into a strongly centralized state.[115] Indeed, the Ottoman State, unlike the late Byzantine State, was heavy handed in its persecution of dissidents, particularly among the *ulema* class, who fused their political discontent with a materialistic religiosity from the fifteenth century on.[116]

Plethon and the Council of Florence-Ferrara

In 1438-1439, the Byzantines, in an attempt to reconcile the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, accepted the invitation to attend an ecumenical council in Italy and to resolve the principal dispute over the *filioque*, that is, whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father

[112] *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios* ed. Jugie, Petit, and Siderides (Paris, 1935), vol. 4, 476-489.

[113] Tr. Vryonis: 267.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Vryonis attributed such freedom of expression in the first half of the fifteenth century to the weakening of the state. Vryonis: 271.

[116] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15. – 17. yüzyıllar)* (İstanbul, 1998).

alone (the Orthodox position) or whether it proceeds from the Father and the Son (the Catholic position).[117] Emperor John VIII Palaiologos ordered a large delegation of ecclesiastics and lay members to travel with him to Italy; Plethon, the preeminent philosopher, was one of the lay delegates. The Trapezuntine Bessarion, Plethon's student, was also on the delegation. We do not know Bessarion's birth name, as he was tonsured as a monk in Constantinople prior to his education with Plethon and had changed his name according to the monastic habit.[118] Bessarion, unlike Plethon and the rest of the Byzantine delegation, was one of the two elected members who had the authority to speak during the talks. The Byzantine delegation first arrived in Ferrara, and the council initially convened there until it eventually moved to Florence. Although during the formal council proceedings Plethon did not have authority to speak on behalf of the Byzantine delegation because of his status as a lay member, in Florence, he spoke about Plato to interested parties in the evenings. In these lectures, Plethon reintroduced Plato to the West as interpreted from late antiquity until the fifteenth century by Byzantine tradition. He later published these lecture notes, and they were already in print in the fifteenth century.[119] Plethon's lecture "The Differences between the Philosophies of Aristotle and Plato" became a highly influential tract that was widely used by Platonists in the West.[120] It has also been argued that Marsilio Ficino, who translated the entire Platonic corpus into Latin at the Medici court in Florence, began a

[117] Deno John Geanakoplos, "The Council of Florence (1438-1439) and the Problem of Union between the Byzantine and Latin Churches", *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance,* (New York, 1966).

[118] Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist, und Staatsmann, Funde und Forschungen* (Paderborn, 1923-1942).

[119] George Gemistos Plethon, Περὶ ὧν Ἀριστοτέλης πρὸς Πλάτωνα διαφέρεται – 'On the Differences of Aristotle from Plato' – *De Differentiis,* ed. B. Lagarde, *Byzantion,* 43 (1973), 312-43; earlier ed. by G. Chariander (Basle 1574); also *in PG 160*, 889-934.

[120] James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance,* (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen, Koln, 1990), vol.1, 193-236, vol.2, 436-441.

Platonic academy in Florence inspired by Plethon's lectures. Hankins, however, has argued that the Platonic Academy in Florence never acquired formal status and was only a discussion group for interested parties.[121] Whatever the case may be regarding the Platonic Academy in Florence, it remains that Plethon's introduction of Plato was one of the key elements as Western intellectuals sought to rethink their medieval legacy, the sciences, history, and philosophy more generally.

Plethon's Students and the Introduction of the Platonic Corpus to the West

The rise of Renaissance thought in the West is closely connected to the Mistra Circle's reformulation and study of the ancient Greek classics.[122] As we have mentioned, Plethon was the first in the Renaissance to open the debate on the relative merits of Plato and Aristotle.[123] Moreover, numerous Western humanists were associated with and received instruction from the expat Byzantines in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Furthermore, a substantial number of these Western individuals were educated by Byzantines from Plethon's circle.

Serious study of the Greek language and the Greek classics had only begun in the closing decade of the fourteenth century in Western Europe. Manuel Chrysoloras (1350-1415), Byzantine diplomat to Venice, Padua, Paris, London, Spain, and Bologna and the author of the first tract to be published in Greek, a textbook on Greek grammar, taught Leonardo Bruni, among others, during his three years of tenure in Florence.[124] Lorenzo Valla, the famous Renaissance humanist whose philological study of the Donation of Constantine

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[121] James Hankins, "Cosimo de Medici and the "Platonic Academy"", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 144-162.

[122] François Masai, *Pléthon et le Platonisme de Mistra,* (Paris, 1956).

[123] Aubrey Diller, "The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Plethon", *Scriptorium,* 10 (1956): 29.

[124] James Hankins, "Greek Studies in Italy: From Petrarch to Bruni", *Petrarca e il Mondo Greco Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Reggio Calabria, 26-30 Novembre 2001.* (Firenze, 2007) ed. M. Feo, V. Fero, P. Megna, and A. Rollo, 2 vols., 329-339,

demonstrated that it was a forgery, belonged to the circle of Bessarion in Rome. Bessarion had not only studied with Plethon in Mistra but had also defended his teacher and Plato against the Aristotelian scholar George of Trebizond. Extant correspondence between Bessarion and Valla reveals that the Italian humanist sent his works to Cardinal Bessarion when the latter was in Bonn.[125] Further, it was Valla who coined the famous phrase, "Latinorum Graecissimus, Graecorum Latinissimus" ("the most Greek of the Latins, the most Latin of the Greeks"), to describe Bessarion's extraordinary learning.[126]

George Hermonymos, who was also a student of Plethon, although he was not a member of the Byzantine philosopher's inner circle, taught generations of Western humanists at the Sorbonne. Thus, Reuchlin, Erasmus, William Grocyn, and others studied with Hermonymos in Paris.[127] These scholars also studied under Demetrios Chalkokondyles, who was a cousin of Laonikos Chalkokondyles in Italy. Linacre, Latimer, More, and Lily studied under Demetrios Chalkokondyles and later returned to England to teach.[128] Cyriac of Ancona, in contrast, whose humanist studies earned him the title "father of archaeology," had the good luck to learn from Plethon himself.[129]

Woodhouse has argued that Plethon was not forthcoming about his paganism to all of his students who included the distinguished Mark Eugenikos, Bessarion, and Laonikos

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[125] L. Mohler, *Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis,* (Paderborn, 1942), vol. 3, 471. See Chapter 4 for a brief portrait of Bessarion by Laonikos Chalkokondyles.

[126] L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes & Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek & Latin Literature* (Oxford, 1974), 134.

[127] Maria Kalatzi, *Georgios Hermonymos A 15th Century Scribe and Scholar: an Examination of his Life, Activities and Manuscripts*, unpublished PhD dissertation, (University of London, 1997).

[128] Arthur Tilley, "Greek Studies in England in the Early Sixteenth Century", *The English Historical Review,* 53. 210 (Apr., 1938): 221-239.

[129] Ed. and tr. Edward W. Bodnar, *Cyriac of Ancona Later Travels,* (Cambridge, London, 2003).

Chalkokondyles as well as the lesser-known figure Gregorios.[130] Mark Eugenikos, the staunch anti-Unionist Archbishop of the Orthodox Church, not only effectively led the anti-Unionist party in Constantinople following the Council of Florence-Ferrara (1438-1439) but was also canonized in the eighteenth century. It is interesting that Mark Eugenikos and Bessarion were both students of Plethon, as they were doctrinally opposed to each other on the issue of Church Union, and Chalkokondyles did not explicitly delineate the opposition between the two theologians.[131] Our only evidence that these two figures were students of Plethon comes from the testimony of Sylvester Syropoulos, megas ecclesiarches and deacon of the Patriarchate, in his memoirs on the Council.[132] Chalkokondyles himself wrote of Bessarion and praised him for his knowledge of Latin and Hellenic learning.[133]

Platonic Interpretation of Aristotle in the Renaissance: The Case of Leoniceno

The study of the Platonic corpus in the West changed the ways in which the medieval tradition of Aristotelian studies was evaluated. Nicolò Leoniceno, the esteemed philosopher and Platonist at the University of Ferrara and the editor of the entire Aristotelian corpus for the Aldine press, illustrates this transformation. Leoniceno kept a copy of Bessarion's *In Calumniatorem Platonis* in his extensive library.[134] Plethon's tract had provided the groundwork for Bessarion's later work.

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[130] Woodhouse, 32-48.

[131] For a detailed analysis of the narrative concerning Council of Florence-Ferrara in the *Apodeixis*, see Chapter 4.

[132] Sylvester Syropoulos, *Les «Mémoires» du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438-1439),* ed. and tr. Laurent (Paris, 1971), 284. Woodhouse, 38.

[133] See Chapter 4.

[134] Daniela Mugnai Carrara, *La Biblioteca di Nicolò Leoniceno Tra Aristotele e Galeno: cultura e libri di un medico umanista.* (Firenze, 1991).

Leoniceno also made extensive use of Byzantine tradition in his work on Aristotle's tract "Concerning the Generation of Animals." Leoniceno cited the twelfth-century Byzantine philosopher and commentator Michael of Ephesos[135] as an authority in his own work, "De Virtute Formativa."[136] Michael of Ephesos' commentary is the only extant commentary on Aristotle's work. Leoniceno's tract was published in 1506 in Venice prior to the publication of Michael's commentary. In this tract, Leoniceno argued for a Platonist interpretation for the generation of animals, closely following the work of Galen rather than the Arab-Latin scholastic tradition of Aristotle in providing an answer to the question of spontaneous generation, among other topics.[137] Thus, Leoniceno did not cite any Latin or Arab sources in this tract, although that was the tradition that he was trying to amend. Further, Leoniceno only referred to the Greek sources (both classical and Byzantine) as having authority.

Interestingly, manuscript copies of Michael of Ephesos' commentary on the Aristotelian tract are very rare. In fact, a manuscript copy of Michael of Ephesos' commentary only arrived in Italy in 1492, and it was wrongly attributed to the late-antique philosopher Philoponos rather than Michael when it was printed.[138] Moreover, in the extant manuscripts, there is no indication that this commentary belongs to Michael instead of Philoponos. However, there are Byzantine manuscripts that have been preserved that list all

[135] Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180,* (Cambridge, 1993), 332. N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium,* (London, 1982), 180-184. Anthony Preus, "Michael of Ephesus and the History of Zoology," *The Classics in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies,* ed. Aldo S. Bernardo and Saul Levin, (1990), 265-282.

[136] Hiro Hirai, "Semence, vertu formatrice et intellect agent chez Nicolo Leoniceno entre la tradition arabo-latine et la renaissance des commentateurs grecs," *Early Science and Medicine* 12 (2007): 134-165.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.: 148.

extant commentaries on the Aristotelian corpus. It is from these lists that we learn that the commentary belonged to Michael of Ephesos and not Philoponos.[139]

In contemporary literature, there is no reference to Leoniceno's links to the Byzantine sphere, although he successfully applied the philological Byzantine method and attacked the Arab-Latin Scholastic method of the medieval period. Indeed, unlike in the Latin West, Byzantine Aristotelians had a tradition of working in medicine and rarely in logic.[140] Thus, Leoniceno's philological method[141] and bibliography appear to be drawn closely from the Byzantine tradition and illustrate the links between Renaissance Platonists and the Byzantines.

However, I am not advocating a study of Byzantine philosophy as a handmaiden to the Latin West when suggesting Leoniceno's literary connections with late Byzantine intellectual tradition. Rather, I propose to study several philosophical questions in the context of the Mistra Circle and to demonstrate that autonomous Byzantine philosophy as articulated by Plethon has much to contribute to an understanding of early modern thought, both Eastern and Western.[142]

The Golden Chain of Hellenic Philosophy

Although there is a tradition of Byzantine studies that connects the late Byzantine period with the West[143], the history of Plethon and his circle of students remains an insulated

[139] I extend thanks to Michele Trizio for this reference. Hermann Usener, *Kleine Schriften,* vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1912-1914), 5.

[140] Sten Ebessen, *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction: Collected Essays,* vol. 1 (Ashgate, 2008), 144. "In the Latin world, philosophy – of which logic was a major part – became a craft with craftsmen of its own. In the Greek world it remained an optional appendix to other branches of study, and *the approach to philosophical texts tended to be that of a philologist.*" Emphasis added.

[142] Michele Trizio, "Byzantine Philosophy as a Contemporary Historiographical Project," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales,* 74.1 (2007): 247-294.

[143] D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium and the Renaissance Greek Scholars in Venice: Studies in the Dissemination of Greek Learning from Byzantium to Western Europe* (New York, 1962). D. J. Geanakoplos, "Theodore Gaza, a Byzantine Scholar of the Palaelogan Renaissance in the Italian

chapter in the greater narrative of early modern European intellectual history. The connections between Plethon's radical interpretation of Plato, including his utopian program to reform the Byzantine state, as well as his philosophical and pagan Hellenism, receive a rare review from students of early modern intellectual history. By way of example, one may cite Quentin Skinner's admirable synthesis and overview The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, in which the author advocates a contextual interpretation. However, Skinner overlooked Plethon and the Mistra Circle.[144] Indeed, in general surveys of Renaissance and Reformation history,[145] the late Byzantines are conspicuously missing even though they had provided in-depth instruction in the Greek language, as well as the Greek classics, to generations of Western students in the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries.

This omission is connected to the debate on what constitutes the essence of Renaissance thought and its relation to classical and medieval Greek civilization. The term "Renaissance" generally refers to the revival of classical art, architecture, literature, and philosophy in Europe from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Thus, the study of the Greek classics in Italy and across Europe was a major component of Renaissance thought according to this definition. The study of fifteenth-century Byzantine intellectual

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Renaissance", *Medievalia et Humanistica,* n.s. 12 (1984): 61-81; John W. Barker, "Emperors, Embassies, and Scholars: Diplomacy and the Transmission of Byzantine Humanism to Renaissance Italy", *Church and Society in Late Byzantium,* ed. Dimiter G. Angelov, (Kalamazoo, 2009): 158-179. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance.* Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources,* (New York, 1979). L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes & Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek & Latin Literature.* J. Monfasani, *Byzantine scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and other émigrés: selected essays* (Hampshire, 1995). J. Monfasani, *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy: studies on humanism and philosophy in the 15th century* (Aldershot, 2004). N. G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek studies in the Italian Renaissance*. (London, 1992). Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains,* (New York, Evanston and London, 1961). I. Ševčenko, "The Palaeologan Renaissance" in ed. W. Treadgold, *Renaissances before the Renaissance, Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* (Stanford, 1984): 144-171.

[144] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought,* vol. 2, (Cambridge, 1978).

[145] Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation,* (Oxford, 1991). Diarmaid McCulloch, *The Reformation: A History,* (Viking, 2004). Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe,* (Yale, 1981).

history provides a particular window on the contribution of the Byzantines to the Italian Renaissance, as the study of the classics in the Byzantine sphere was never fully abandoned throughout the Middle Ages. Unlike in the West, the classical Greek texts and art were not "discovered" at a certain point, and the use of the term "renaissance" to refer to developments in Byzantine cultural and literary spheres is problematic.[146]

There was a continuous tradition of classical education in the Byzantine Empire throughout the medieval period with the possible exception of the seventh century.[147] However, Plethon and his circle redefined the status of classical tradition in their new formulation of Byzantine, or rather Hellenic, identity, raising it above the Christian and imperial traditions.[148] Furthermore, the Western Renaissance understanding of classical Greek civilization was necessarily dependent on the late-Byzantine evaluation and synthesis of that civilization. Texts such as Herodotos[149] and Plato's complete corpuses were introduced to Italy only in the fifteenth century by the expat Byzantines and their Italian associates.[150] Indeed, we consider the late-Byzantine world to be not only a factor in the development of Renaissance thought but the actual historical location where some of its ideas germinated.

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[146] Ed. Warren T. Treadgold, *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revival of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* (Stanford, 1995). Kurt Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination,* ed. Herbert L. Kessler with an Introduction by Hugo Buchthal (Chicago and London, 1971).

[147] Paul Lemerle, *Le premier humanism byzantine: notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origins au Xe siècle,* (Paris, 1971).

[148] Speros Vryonis, Jr. "The "Freedom of Expression" in Fifteenth-Century Byzantium".

[149] Stefano Pagliaroli, *L'erodoto Del Valla* (Messina, 2006).

[150] James Hankins, "The Study of the Timaeus in Early Renaissance Italy", *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe,* eds. Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi, (Cambridge, London, 1999), 77-121.

In the Middle Ages, among the few Platonic texts that was available in Latin translation in the West was Timaeus.[151] Timaeus is the most metaphysical dialogue in the Platonic corpus, providing an interpretation of the genesis of the cosmos and an insight into the divine mind that ordered the genesis. However, this Latin translation was a corrupt version of the classical Greek, and a large portion of the Platonic corpus was unavailable in the West through the Middle Ages. This is not to say that Platonic undertones were missing during this time. Neoplatonism was an influential philosophical school in late antiquity and left its indelible mark on both Eastern and Western Christianity. As the battle between 'pagans' and Christians was fought in late antiquity, the terms and ideas of Platonism were appropriated by the Christians to defeat the 'pagans' with their own weapons.[152] The most prominent Latin theologian of late antiquity, St. Augustine of Hippo, was influenced by Neoplatonism and contributed to the articulation of a Christian Platonism.[153] However, Aristotle, and his classificatory schema for the explanation of reality, existed alongside the more labor-intensive and layered philosophy of Plato in the medieval West.[154] The situation was different in Byzantium, or at least that is what Plethon argued in the fifteenth century.

According to Plethon, divine law and philosophy were transmitted from time immemorial in a golden chain, beginning with Zoroaster, the first legislator known to Plethon.[155] In his controversial book, Laws, which we will discuss below in more detail,

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[151] Ibid., 77-119.

[152] Niketas Siniossoglou, *Plato and Theodoret: The Christian Appropriation of Platonic Philosophy and the Hellenic Intellectual Resistance,* (Cambridge, 2008), 236. "The significance of Theodoret's appropriation of Plato extends beyond late antique intellectual history and the history of Platonism. The dispute between Theodoret and the 'pagan' intellectuals whom he is addressing is primarily significant for the question of Hellenic continuity and identity in late antiquity."

[153] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography,* (University of California Press, 2000), 503-504.

[154] Étienne Gilson, *La Philosophie au Moyen Âge Des Origines Patristiques à la fin du XIVe Siècle* (Paris, 1999).

[155] Woodhouse, 325-328.

Plethon had supplied a chronological list of legislators and philosophers whom he argued were the best guides.[156] In supplying this list, Plethon was following the late-antique pagan philosopher Hierocles, who had similarly argued that Platonist instruction was handed down in a golden chain.[157] Plethon's list of guides included the legislators Zoroaster, Eumolpos, Minos, Lycurgos, Iphitos, Numa, the Brahmans of India, the Magi of Media, the Kouretes, the priests of Dodona, Polyidos, Teiresias, Cheiron, Chilon of Sparta, Solon of Athens, Bias of Priene, Thales of Miletus, Cleoboulos of Lindos, Pittacos of Mitylene, Myson of Chenai, Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, Timaeus, Plutarch, Plotinos, Porphyry, and lastly Iamblichos, who was a contemporary of Constantine.[158] Plethon did not refer to any legislators or philosophers past the fourth century, after the conversion of Constantine to Christianity and the translation of the Empire to Constantinople. Plethon only included one Roman legislator, Numa, in the list in contrast to the numerous Greeks. The list excluded both Christ and the Church Fathers, who had appropriated Platonic discourse and aligned Platonic philosophy with Christianity. Siniossoglou has recently argued that this golden chain, which Plethon described up to the fourth century, can be extended to the fifteenth century when one considers the missing links after the establishment of Christianity, which forced pagan philosophers to go underground. Thus, Siniossoglou's list includes Proclos, Damascios, Olympiodoros, and possibly the dissimulating Byzantine intellectuals Psellos and Theodore Metochites.[159]

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[156] Ibid.

[157] Niketas Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon,* (Cambridge, 2011), 49.

[158] Woodhouse, 327.

[159] Niketas Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium,* 49-160.

Teaching of Classical Texts in Mistra

Plethon did not teach at a formal educational institution similar to the universities in Italy at the time, but his influence as teacher and philosopher reached Italy and beyond and transformed the ways in which Plato and the classical Hellenic tradition were interpreted in the early modern period.[160] Thus, Mistra in the early fifteenth century was a center of intellectual freedom to some degree[161] and where students came from various regions of the Byzantine Empire[162] as well as from Italy to study with Plethon, who was possibly the most relevant philosopher Byzantium produced.[163] A list of the contents of Plethon's extensive library has not survived, and we do not have access to the curriculum Plethon taught at Mistra except for the extant manuscripts associated with Plethon's library, including Plethon's autograph copies. If the range of subjects that Plethon taught to his students is in any way reflected by this corpus, one comes away with the impression that Plethon and his circle of students were primarily focused on the ancient Greek classics, and in particular the golden chain of Platonic scholars whom we have reviewed, as well as Herodotos and Strabo, among others.[164]

This focus deserves special mention to make sense of the classicizing outlook that permeated the Mistra intellectuals' worldview and the ways in which they made sense of

[160] James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1990), p 193-217. Cyriac of Ancona, *Later Travels,* ed. and tr. Edward W. Bodnar with Clive Foss, (Harvard University Press, 2003), 298-299.

[161] Speros Vryonis, Jr. "The 'Freedom of Expression' in Fifteenth Century Byzantium."

[162] Plethon's student Bessarion was from Trebizond, and Mark Eugenikos from Constantinople.

[163] Niketas Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium.*

[164] Alexandre, *Pléthon: Traité des Lois,* ed. C. Alexandre, tr. A. Pelissier (Paris, 1858, repr. Amsterdam 1966). For Herodotos, Plutarch, and Strabo, see infra.

contemporary reality.[165] As we shall see, Plethon, Laonikos, Bessarion, and others understood, interpreted, and responded to contemporary events (such as the rise of the Ottomans, the Hussite wars, the schism between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and the capture of Constantinople in 1453) through the lens provided by their extensive training in the classical texts. The Mistra Circle's predominant emphasis on classical Greek texts, which both predate the Roman period and include the late-antique tradition excluding the Christian classics, laid bare the inherent tensions in Byzantine culture and the uneasy synthesis that was formulated in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.[166]

In the fifteenth century, as the administrative structures of the Byzantine State crumbled around them, intellectuals, among them Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Bessarion, Plethon, Mark Eugenikos, Doukas, Kritoboulos, Sphrantzes, Gennadios Scholarios, Theodore of Gaza, George Amiroutzes, and George of Trebizond, heirs to a tradition that synthesized Mosaic and Christian teaching, classical Greek thought, and imperial Roman rule, were hard pressed to redefine their allegiances or even their identities. We address the Mistra Circle's particular formulation of Hellenic identity in the fifteenth century and the emphasis on the classical Greek legacy at the expense of the other elements in the context of their works. Whereas the Mistra Circle advocated a classical outlook, others, such as Mark Eugenikos and Gennadios Scholarios, eschewed the classical element, predominantly focusing on Mosaic and Christian teaching.[167] Meanwhile, Kritoboulos and George Amiroutzes viewed the

[165] For the role of classical tradition n Byzantine civilization, see Margaret Mullett and Roger Scott, *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition,* University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, (Birmingham, 1981). For the use of the Platonic tradition by the Mistra Circle, see Niketas Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium.*

[166] For a recent evaluation of the ways in which Plato was interpreted in late antiquity by a Christian audience, see Niketas Siniossoglou, *Plato and Theodoret: The Christian Appropriation of Platonic Philosophy and the Hellenic Intellectual Resistance* (Cambridge, 2008).

[167] Marie-Hélène Blanchet, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400-vers 1472): un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'empire Byzantin,* (Paris, 2008).

Ottoman State and the new Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed II, through the lens provided by Roman imperial tradition and proclaimed Mehmed II as the new Roman Emperor.[168] Thus, these three traditions (the classical, the Christian-Mosaic, and the imperial Roman), which had contributed to the making of medieval Byzantine identity, were each championed by competing groups in the fifteenth century, contributing to the vision of a disharmonious intellectual environment. One might even say that medieval Byzantine identity was dismantled in the fifteenth century and that each contributing strand was championed by a different faction. Of these three factions, Plethon and his Circle had the closest ties to the West, and their particular worldview and interpretation of classical texts left an indelible mark on the Renaissance.

According to autograph copies[169] in Plethon's hand, the philosopher studied the following authors and texts in addition to the golden chain we have reviewed: Pythagoras' Golden Verses, Herodotos[170], Xenophon, Demosthenes, Theophrastos's works on botany and zoology, Cleomedes[171], Strabo, Diodoros, Dionysios of Halicarnassus, Arrian, Appian, Maximos of Tyre, Lucian, Aphthonios' Progymnasmata, Adamantios' Physiognomonica, John of Damascus, Cedrenos, and Zonaras. This eclectic list mainly contains classical and late antique authors and only three from the Byzantine period. In addition to works of philosophy, history, and geography, Plethon also copied works of botany, zoology, and medicine, bearing testimony to the wide range of subjects in which Plethon was interested and possibly offered instruction.

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[168] Michael Kritoboulos, ed. D.R. Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae historiae* (Berlin, 1983).

[169] Aubrey Diller, "The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Plethon", *Scriptorium,* 10 (1956): 27-41.

[170] See Introduction for folios in Plethon's hand in Plut. Gr. 70.06.

[171] Aubrey Diller, "Three Greek Scribes working for Bessarion: Trivizias, Callistus, Hermonymus", *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica,* 10 (1967): 409.

There has been some debate among scholars regarding whether Scholarios' pronouncement concerning Plethon's paganism was a truthful evaluation of Plethon's philosophy. Those scholars who have studied Plethon in depth, such as Masai, Woodhouse, Anastos, Tambrun-Krasker, and Siniossoglou, agree that Plethon was a pagan. In contrast, those scholars who arrive at Plethon via the Plato-Aristotle controversy in Europe in the fifteenth century and who specialize in Western Renaissance history have reservations about paganism in the fifteenth century generally, and in Plethon's case in particular. Thus, Kristeller and Hankins argue that Plethon's philosophy was couched in the allegorical language associated with Hermetic tradition and that his Christianity was not to be doubted.[172] However, the allegory thesis, although it may explain the Platonic hierarchy of the gods in Laws, is not sufficient to explain the ritualistic aspects of the new religion, such as the particular and detailed form of praying while kneeling on one knee and raising the hands and the specified invocations to Zeus and other deities,[173] that Plethon claimed as Law, or the reasons why Plethon did not openly circulate the Laws and the Commentary on Chaldean Oracles in his lifetime. Further, Bessarion was the first to propose that Plethon's philosophical and religious thinking was based on allegory.[174] Bessarion, as Cardinal of the Catholic Church and as a serious contender for the Papacy, had every reason to conceal the radical character of his teacher's philosophy. As Livanos successfully argued, the posthumous eulogistic writings about Plethon specifically refrained from Christian language,

[172] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources* (New York, 1979), 156. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (New York, 1990), 193-217.

[173] Woodhouse, 351-352.

[174] Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance,* vol. 1, 253-254. "The fundamental move made by ancient interpreters of Plato at least from the time of Plotinus was to regard the dialogues not as literary accounts of some philosophical discussions….but rather as a kind of Holy Writ, as a mysterious epiphany of a theological system….At the level of Mind or intuition, beyond Soul and Body, linguistic representation of noetic experience was only possible through allegory, myth, and symbol."

opting to emphasize the non-Christian classics.[175] The most explicit indication that Plethon was pagan comes from Scholarios as well as George of Trebizond, which will be reviewed as part of Laonikos' philosophy of history in this chapter. Thus, we hold, along with the students of Plethon, that the philosopher's belief was not Christian in character.

Herodotos as Divine Guide and the Hellenic Philosophical Gods

Further proof supporting the thesis that Plethon was pagan and not Christian comes in the guise of a Herodotos manuscript copied by Nikolaos Triklines in Thessalonike in the fourteenth century.[176] In this manuscript, Plethon included four pages in his own hand,[177] and there is an inscription on the last folio of the manuscript added by Laonikos, demonstrating that the teacher and student worked closely together on Herodotos. This manuscript has not been evaluated in the scholarship on Chalkokondyles and Plethon even though it provides the most relevant information on Laonikos apart from the *Apodeixis*. Laonikos composed the inscription:[178]

> (Belonging to) Laonikos the Athenian. It seems to me that the Hellenes displayed a virtue greater than the merely human, and that they made a demonstration of deeds such as to amaze us when we learn about them in our inquiries. They (the Hellenes) were also fortunate to have a herald who himself did not fall far short in worth of the deeds themselves, I mean Herodotos of Halikarnassos, who recounted these events in the way in which each happened, in a manner akin to a divine procession.[179]

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[175] Christopher Livanos, *Greek Tradition and Latin Influence in the Work of George Scholarios: Alone against all of Europe* (Gorgias, 2006), 81-86.

[176] For a description of the manuscript, see the Introduction.

[177] Daniele Bianconi, "La Biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora Una Questione di Mani," *Segno e Testo: International Journal of Manuscripts and Text Transmission,* vol. 3 (2005): 403. The two folios contain the sections 4,155,2 through 4,163,2.

[178] Alexander Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the tragedies of Euripides* (Rome, 1970), 230. Turyn notes that the language of the inscription is similar to Laonikos'. Anthony Kaldellis, Laonikos' recent translator, also noted the similarity in language in private correspondence.

[179] Alexander Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the tragedies of Euripides* (Rome, 1970), 230. I extend thanks to Anthony Kaldellis for help with this passage. "λαονἰκου τοῦ ἀθηναἰου | δοκοῦσι δὲ ἔμοιγε οἱ ἕλληνες χρησάμενοι ἀρετῆ μείζονι ἢ κατὰ ἄν(θρωπ)ον ἀποδείξασθαι μὲν ἔργα | οἶα ἡμᾶς πυνθανομένους ἐκπλήττεσθαι, τυχεῖν δὲ κήρυκος οὐ πολλῶ τινι τῶν ἔργων | αὐτῶν ἀποδέοντος ἡροδότου ἁλικαρνασέως, τούτων ἦ ἕκαστα ἐγένετο θεία πομπῆ ἐπεξιόντος."

It is clear from the inscription by Laonikos that Herodotos' History had a divine status, and we hope to demonstrate that Laonikos shared this view with his teacher and other members of the Mistra Circle. In this inscription, Laonikos referred to the ancient Greeks as Hellenes and distinguished them from his contemporaries. However, this is not to say that Laonikos did not see continuity between the ancients and the moderns. Laonikos consistently referred to the Byzantines as Hellenes in the *Apodeixis* and referred to the Carolingians and the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Holy Roman Empire using the term "Roman."[180] Laonikos was the only historian in the Byzantine tradition to do so. The Byzantines traditionally called themselves Romans, claiming to be the inheritors of the Roman Empire.[181] The consistent reference to the Byzantines as Hellenes was thus a conscious choice.

On the surface, Laonikos did not appear to part ways with Byzantine fifteenth-century usage concerning established religions. Laonikos wrote that historically, only three religions had evolved into systems that were presently being practiced: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.[182] Laonikos did not include Hellenism in this list. However, this omission is deceptive. As we have seen, Laonikos wrote that the ancient religion of the

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[180] See Chapter 4. Gill Page, *Being Byzantine, Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge, 2008), 88-89. Page writes that in a creative translation, Choniates referred to his contemporary Byzantines as Hellenes and to the Crusaders as barbarians. However, Choniates was not consistent in his usage of the name Hellene, and there were other competing identifications, such as Mosaic-Christian and Roman, in addition to the Hellenic identity. Angeliki E. Laiou, "From "Roman" to "Hellene,"" *The Byzantine Fellowship Lectures.* (1974).

[181] Paul Magdalino and Ruth Macrides, "The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism," *Perception of the Past in 12th Century Europe,* ed. Paul Magdalino (London, 1992), 117-157. Magdalino and Macrides write that the rehabilitation of the name Hellene was already underway in the twelfth century. However, this name was applied to a particular group of people, distinguished by their learning in classical Greek literature. Thus, this usage is quite different from the ways in which Laonikos applied the name in an inclusive manner. Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 2007), 42-119. H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine,* (Paris, 1975).

[182] See Chapter 2.

Hellenes was still being followed in certain regions of the world in the fifteenth century, namely, among the Samogitians, Bohemians, an Indian race beyond the Caspian Sea, the Massagetae, and the inhabitants of the land of Khatai. Thus, Hellenism, with its worship of ancient Hellenic deities and nature, was a living reality according to Laonikos.

Intriguingly, Laonikos wrote that Herodotos described events in a manner akin to divine procession, "θεία πομπῆ." We can only make sense of this description used by Laonikos when we read and evaluate certain symbols inserted into the manuscript. There are two astronomical symbols, a conic symbol and a crescent symbol, that are inserted throughout the entire manuscript (Figure: 3). The symbols regularly alternate throughout the text, and there are 58 crescent symbols and 58 conic symbols in the 350 folio manuscript. The two symbols are often found together on the same folio but not always. The crescent and the cone are standard astronomical symbols referring to the moon and the sun, respectively. Plethon utilized these symbols in his own astronomical work,[183] employing their classical usage. How are these symbols related to Apollo and Artemis? How are we to explain the presence of these symbols in a Herodotos manuscript? How are they related to the idea of a divine procession?

[183] George Gemistos Plethon, *Manuel D'Astronomie,* ed. Anne Tihon and Raymond Mercier, (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1998), 63.

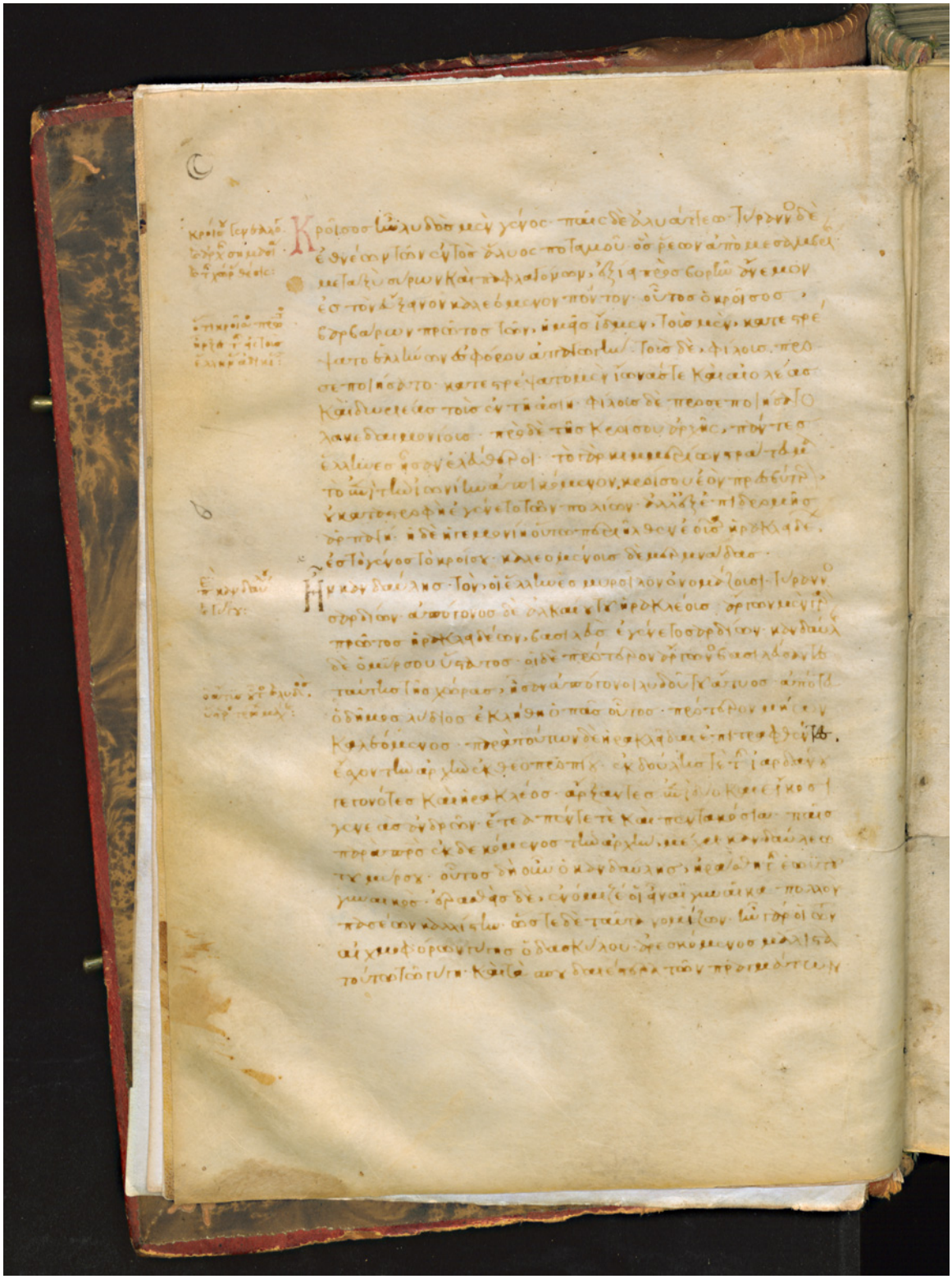


Figure 3: The first instance of the cone and moon symbols. fol. 2v, Plut. 70.06.

We also find these two symbols in other fifteenth-century manuscripts. Plethon's disciple Demetrios Raoul Kabakes compiled a manuscript of Plato's writings.[184] The extant portions of Plethon's Laws are also included in this manuscript. In his Laws, Plethon had included a section on the Invocation to the Gods, which minutely describes the ways in which prayers to the Hellenic Gods should be conducted along with ritual worship. Thus, the Laws prescribe daily prayers to the Hellenic Gods, including prayers to Apollo and Artemis:

> Each (of the gods) are appointed by You (Zeus) the King to a portion befitting itself in every respect. Thus Apollo presides over unity/self and Artemis over diversity/other.[185]

In the next section, Plethon had composed hymns to be offered to these Hellenic Gods after the ritualistic prayers. We thus find hymns to Apollo and Artemis among others. Kabakes' manuscript Monac. Gr. 237, which includes Platonic texts and Plethon's Laws, also contains this section on hymns. Moreover, the astronomical symbol for the sun, the conic shape, was drawn in the margin next to Plethon's Hymn to Apollo and was identified with Apollo; the crescent shape was drawn next to the hymn to Artemis and was identified with Artemis (Figure: 4).

Woodhouse, Plethon's biographer, was critical of the literary merits of these hymns and referred to some as purely imitative.[186] However, the cross-references between the Herodotos manuscript, Kabakes' Plato manuscript, and other manuscripts that we will review illustrate that Plethon's hymns, and the Laws more generally, are not to be evaluated in isolation. Rather, the Laws should be seen as a prescriptive

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[184] Monac. Cod. Graec. 237.

[185] R. Brague, *Pléthon:Traité des Lois*. (Paris, 1982), Book 3,34,2. "καὶ τῆς ἑαυτῷ προσηκούσης ἐν τῷδε τῷ παντὶ ἕκαστος μοίρας προστατεῖν, ὑπὸ σοὶ ἡγεμόνι, εἴληχεν· Ἀπόλλων μὲν ταυτότητος, Ἄρτεμις δὲ ἑτερότητος…"

[186] Woodhouse, 350-351.

handbook that organized ritual worship in addition to its more standard evaluation as a work of philosophy. Thus, we will read these hymns along with the Herodotos manuscript to investigate the ways in which the philosophical concepts of unity and diversity can be applied to the ancient Hellenes in Herodotos.

We have already seen that the Hellenes "displayed a virtue greater than merely human," according to Laonikos. Thus, the events in Herodotos acquire a sacred status no less divine than the ideas/philosophical gods of Plethon. Plethon's hymn to Apollo reads:

> Seventh Hymn, Fifth Monthly Hymn to Apollo
> The God Apollo, You as Guide assign
> Everything in nature to itself
> And you lead everything into One
> You arrange under one harmony
> That which was composed of many parts and of many sharp sounds
> From concordance you provide prudence and justice to souls
> Which are the most beautiful things
> And you provide health and beauty to the bodies
> Always inspire love of divine beauty,
> O Lord of our souls. Hail Paean.[187]

Thus, Apollo was not only the Hellenic idea/god overseeing unity; he also provided justice to souls and health and beauty to bodies. It is no surprise that Apollo was associated with the astronomical symbol for the sun in Monac. Graec. 237 because he was traditionally the divine embodiment of the sun as well as the god of

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[187] R. Brague, *Pléthon: Traité des Lois*. (Paris, 1982), Book 3, 35, 7.

"Ὕμνος ἕβδομος, ἐπιμηνίων πέμπτος, ἐς Ἀπόλλωνα.

Ἄναξ Ἄπολλον, φύσεως τῆς ταὐτοῦ ἑκάστης
Προστάτα ἠδ' ἡγῆτορ, ὃς ἄλλα τε ἀλλήλοισιν
Εἰς ἓν ἄγεις, καὶ δὴ τὸ πὰν αὐτὸ, τὸ πουλυμερές περ
Πουλύκρεκόν τε ἐὸν, μιῇ ἁρμονίῃ ὑποτάσσεις·
Σύ τοι ἔκ γ' ὁμονοίης καὶ ψυχῇσι φρόνησιν
Ἠδὲ δίκην παρέχεις, τά τε δὴ κάλλιστα ἐάων,
Καί ῥ' ὑγίειαν σώμασι, κάλλος τ' ἄρ καὶ τοῖσιν·
Σὺ δὴ καὶ ἵμερον θείων καλλῶν δίδου αἰὲν,
Ἄναξ, ἡμετέρῃσι ψυχαῖς· ὠὴ παιάν."

prophecy, truth, music, and healing.[188]

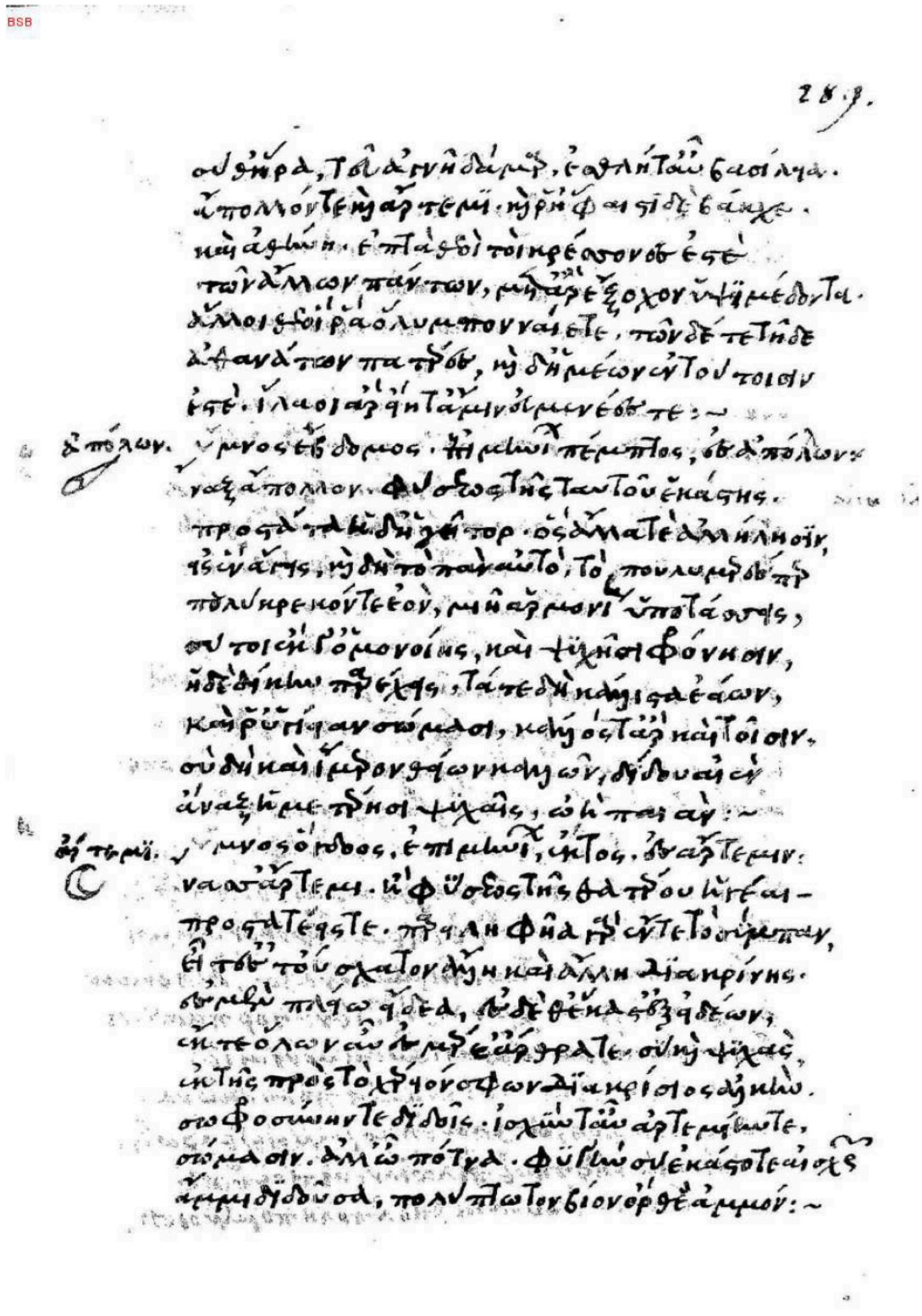


Figure 4: Hymns to Apollo and Artemis with symbols. fol. 289, Monac. Gr. 237.

[188] Kurt Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art,* (Princeton, 1951), 64.

These other aspects of Apollo's divinity were also recounted in Plethon's hymn. In late antiquity, certain elements of Apollonian worship were appropriated by the Roman Emperors, in particular the Invincible Sun (*Sol Invictus*), which at first sought Apollo's protection but which later conferred a divine status on the Byzantine Emperors themselves. The Oracle of Apollo in Delphi, in contrast, continued to function until being closed by Theodosius I in 392.[189] In the medieval period, ancient oracles from Delphi were reused in Theosophy/Wisdom of God, a work that survives in its sixth-century abridgment, and were appropriated as forerunners of Christ and Christianity.[190] Busini indicates that in the context of late antiquity, civic divine figures, such as Apollo's identification with Delphi, were increasingly superseded by a divine prophetic figure of Apollo, which was more in tune with the Judeo-Christian religion.[191] In fact, the late-antique battle between Christianity and Hellenism was fueled by the use and reuse of oracles from the antique period as well as the invention of new oracles, which were attributed to antiquity but had been composed recently to prove the eternal truth of the new religion, Christianity.[192]

In Plethon's hymn to Apollo the philosopher made no concession to that Christian appropriation in the late-antique and medieval periods, but, rather, he reproduced the traditional roles of Apollo as Hellenic divinity. Plethon's use of Hellenic mythology was thus quite different from that of Ficino, whose esoteric

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[189] Pierre Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Last Pagans,* tr. B. A. Archer (Cambridge, 1990), 71.

[190] Anthony Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon: Classicism and Pilgrimage in Byzantine Athens,* (Cambridge, 2009), 50-51. Kaldellis argued that it is possible for the oracles included in *Theosophy* to be authentic and need not be a "literary invention."

[191] A. Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon: Pratiques Et Traditions Oraculaires Dans L'antiquite Tardive (IIe-VIe Siecle),* (Leiden and Boston, 2005), 14.

[192] Ibid., 396-431.

application of Hermetic magic made appeals to an "ancient theology" and pagan wisdom that prepared the way for Christianity.[193]

We find Apollo as the provider of justice in another Mistra manuscript, Mut. Gr. 144, which is a lavish manuscript composed by twelve different hands and dated to 1441.[194] Kabakes oversaw the production of this miscellaneous manuscript, and it reflects the style of Plethon and his Circle, according to Gregorio.[195] The manuscript contains, among other works, the *Hexabiblos* of Constantine Harmenopoulos, a handbook of secular and canon law incorporating earlier law-codes such as the *Procheiron*; excerpts from the *Basilika*, the law book of Michael Attaleiates; the *Synopsis Minor*; the *Peira*; and the *Farmer's Law*. The secular portions of the *Hexabiblos*, composed in the fourteenth century, were highly influential and were preserved as a law code into the modern era. Mut. Gr. 144 contains the *Hexabiblos* on folios 3r-111v.[196] On folio 57v, we find Apollo's symbol, the conic figure, in accordance with Apollo's role as the dispenser of justice (Figure: 5).[197] This observation accords with the hymn to Apollo in Monac. Gr. 237 and it also reflects the interests of Plethon in his capacity as Judge General of the Romans under the Palaiologoi.

[193] Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance,* 267-360.

[194] G. de Gregorio, "Attività scrittoria a Mistrà nell'ultima età paleologa: il caso del cod. Mut. gr. 144*"*, *Scrittura e Civiltà*, XVIII (1994): 243-280.

[195] Ibid., 249.

[196] Ibid., 251.

[197] Ibid.

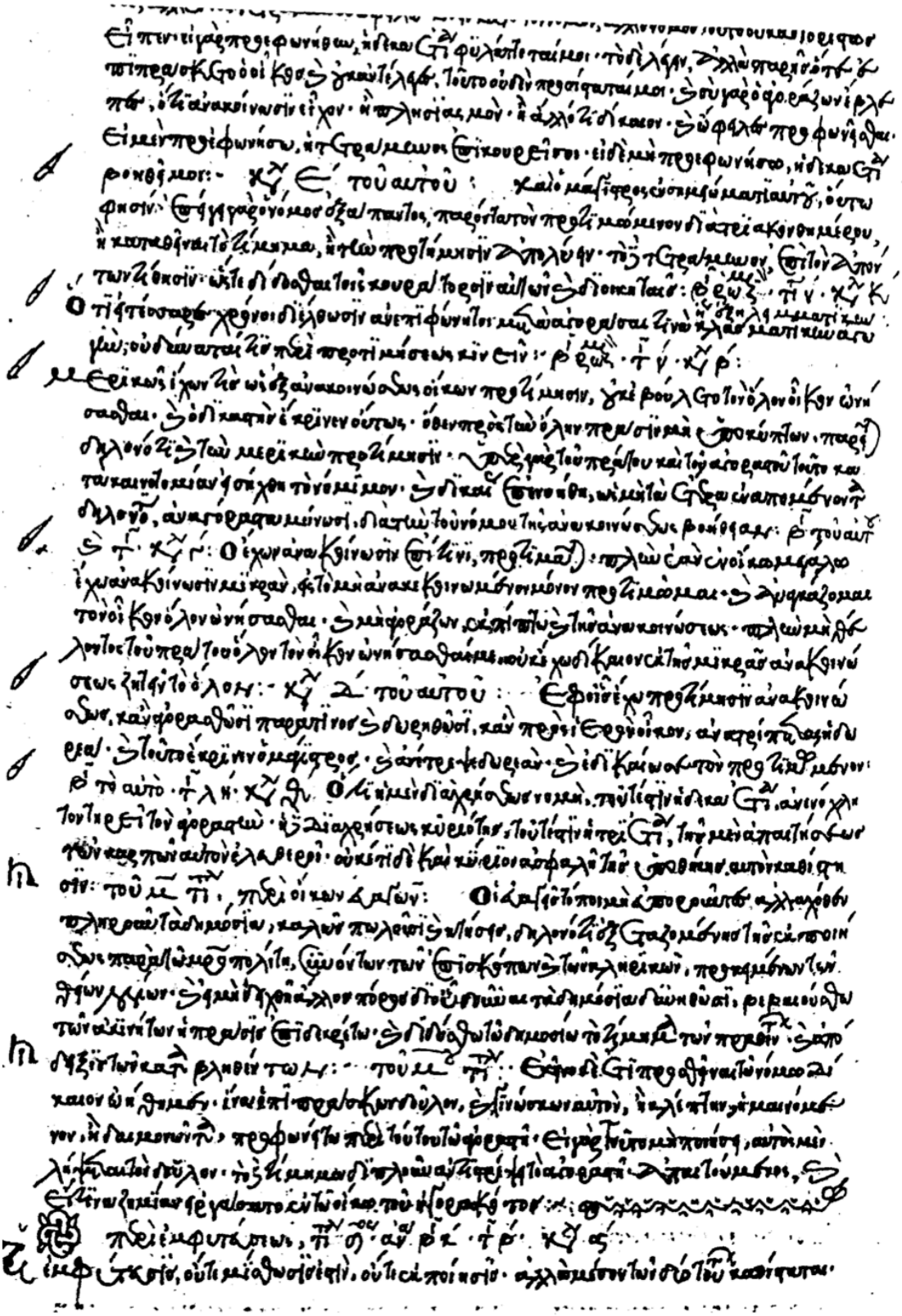


Figure 5: *Hexabiblos,* symbol of Apollo. fol. 57v, Mut. Gr. 144.[198]

[198] G. de Gregorio, "Attività scrittoria a Mistrà nell'ultima età paleologa: il caso del cod. Mut. gr.

Plethon had similarly composed a hymn to Artemis, the twin goddess of Apollo, who is symbolized by a crescent in these Mistra manuscripts. The Hymn to Artemis reads:

> The Eighth Hymn, The Sixth Monthly Hymn to Artemis
> Queen Artemis, you lead the nature of diversity and
> Order it. You undertake the entire whole and
> Divide one from another to the extent possible
> You distinguish the forms in the whole and
> You divide the many forms into each instance
> You give force and prudence to souls
> By separating them from the inferior parts
> And strength and health to the bodies
> But, O Queen, deliver us from every shameful thing and
> Let us lead our life correctly in various situations.[199]

In this hymn, Artemis was depicted as overseeing and ordering diversity in nature, supporting both body and soul and keeping them uncorrupted throughout life. In this manner, Plethon converted some of the Hellenic Artemis' traditional goddess roles, such as providing aid in childbirth, being a chaste goddess, and being the goddess of the forest and animals, into a metaphysical framework that created a correspondence between the mythical stories and the philosophical world of ideas.

One such concordance was between nature (containing a multiplicity of animals and flora) and diversity as a philosophical concept. We find Artemis in her function as the goddess overseeing diversity in Plut. 70.06. We have already mentioned that in this

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144", Scrittura e Civiltà , XVIII (1994): Tav. 11.

[199] R. Brague, *Pléthon: Traité des Lois, 3,35,8.*
Ὕμνος ὄγδοος, ἐπιμηνίων ἕκτος, ἐς Ἄρτεμιν.
Ἄνασσ' Ἄρτεμι, ἣ φύσεως τῆς θατέρου ἡγέαι
Προστατέεις τε· παρειληφυῖα γὰρ ἕν τε τὸ σύμπαν,
Εἶτ' ἐς τοὔσχατον ἄλλῃ καὶ ἄλλῃ διακρίνεις
Ἐς μὲν πλείω εἴδεα, ἐς δέ θ' ἕκαστ' ἐξ εἰδέων,
Ἔκ τε ὅλων αὖ ἐς μέρε' ἄρθρα τε· σὺ καὶ ψυχαῖς
Ἐκ τῆς πρὸς τὸ χέρειόν σφων διακρίσιος ἀλκὴν
Σωφροσύνην τε διδοῖς, ἰσχύν τ' αὖ ἀρτεμίην τε
Σώμασιν. Ἀλλ', ὦ πότνα, φυγὴν σὺ ἑκάστοτε αἰσχρῶν
Ἄμμι διδοῦσα, πολύπτωτον βίον ὄρθοε ἀμμόν."

manuscript, there are 58 crescent and 58 conic figures, symbolizing Artemis and Apollo, respectively. The first such symbol is the crescent figure that was inserted on folio 2v (Figure: 3) next to the story of Croesus. This was the first instance in which Herodotos provided a list of Hellenic peoples, distinguishing between their dialects and locations. Previously, Herodotos had referred to these peoples with their collective name, "Hellene," and had not paid tribute to their diverse and rich heritage. Thus, Laonikos inserted the crescent/Artemis symbol next to the section "Croesus subjugated the Ionians, the Aeolians, and the Asian Dorians, and made friends with the Spartans. Before the reign of Croesus, all Hellenes had been free"[200] to emphasize the diversity of ethnic designations under the all-inclusive Hellenic identity.

On the same page and next to the story of the Heraklids, we find the symbol of Apollo indicating one family's long and unique reign of twenty-two generations over Sardis. Apollo, as a philosophical god who oversees unity, thus helps us to read Herodotos' story of the Heraklids as one tending to stability and harmony.

The next symbol, the crescent signifying Artemis, comes on 4r[201] and illustrated the story of how the Mermands obtained the kingship by taking it from the Heraklids. (Figure: 6) In one of the more famous stories, Herodotos narrated how Kandaules, in passionate love with his wife, conceived of a plan to show her naked to his bodyguard so that Gyges would believe Kandaules when the king declared that his wife was the most beautiful of all women. Kandaules therefore invited and hid Gyges in the bedroom, and the bodyguard saw the Queen naked. However, the Queen, realizing that her husband has shown her naked, was enraged and ashamed. She decided to take revenge on Kandaules and forced Gyges to kill the king so that she may be vindicated.

[200] Herodotos, 1.6,2.

[201] Herodotos, 1.14.

We have seen that Plethon calls on Artemis as protector, delivering humans from shameful things in the hymn dedicated to the Hellenic goddess. Thus, the symbol for Artemis was inserted into the manuscript to emphasize the virtue of purity and the tragic consequences of transgressing the divine law of chastity.[202]

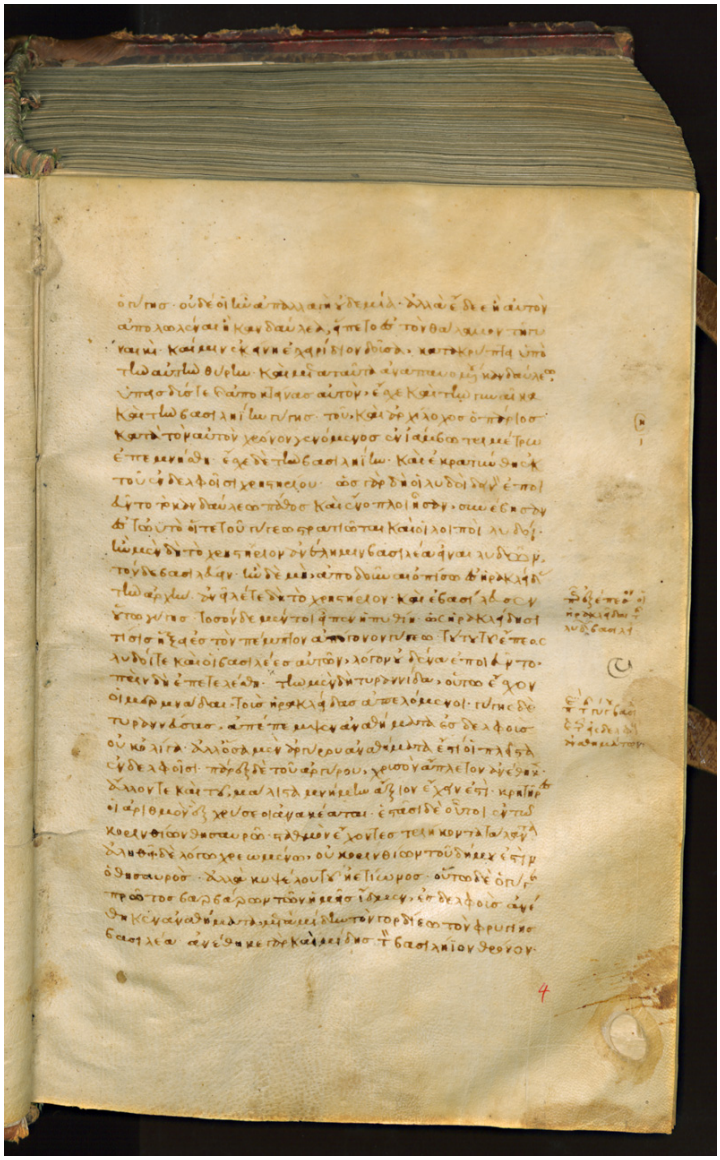


Figure 6: Artemis symbol. fol. 4r, Plut. 70.06.

[202] In the *Nomoi*, Plethon had underscored the importance of purity in sexual affairs. He had written that sex is a sacred act that should be conducted in private so that it may not inflame strangers' imaginations. Woodhouse, 337.

On 5v, the symbol for Apollo was inserted next to the story[203] of Arion of Methymna. Herodotos tells us that Arion was not only the most famous lyre player but that he had also invented the dithyramb (Figure: 7). When Arion was traveling to Corinth from Italy, the sailors planned to rob him of his money and then to kill him. Arion convinced them to let him sing a song to Apollo and promised that he would commit suicide by jumping into the sea after his song was finished. The sailors agreed, but a dolphin saved Arion. Thus, Arion safely arrived in Corinth, protected by his song to Apollo, who, as we have seen, is also the god of music and harmony, among his other attributes.

The next symbol for Artemis is found on 6v[204] next to the story relating how Alyattes made a dedication to Delphi after he was relieved of his sickness. The symbol for Artemis, no doubt, was inserted to draw attention to the goddess' role as healer (Figure: 8).

On folio 7r, we find the symbol for Apollo next to the story of Solon the Athenian and his establishment of laws for the Athenians (Figure: 9):

> Of particular note was Solon the Athenian. He had made laws for the Athenians at their request and then went abroad for ten years. He did it so that he could not be forced to repeal any of the laws he made. The Athenians could not do such a thing on their own because they had taken a solemn oath to abide for a period of ten years by whatever laws Solon would make.[205]

It is clear that this symbol was inserted to underline Solon's capacity as lawmaker, one of Apollo's chief functions according to Plethon's hymn.

[203] Herodotos, 1.23.

[204] Herodotos, 1.25.

[205] Herodotos, 1.29.

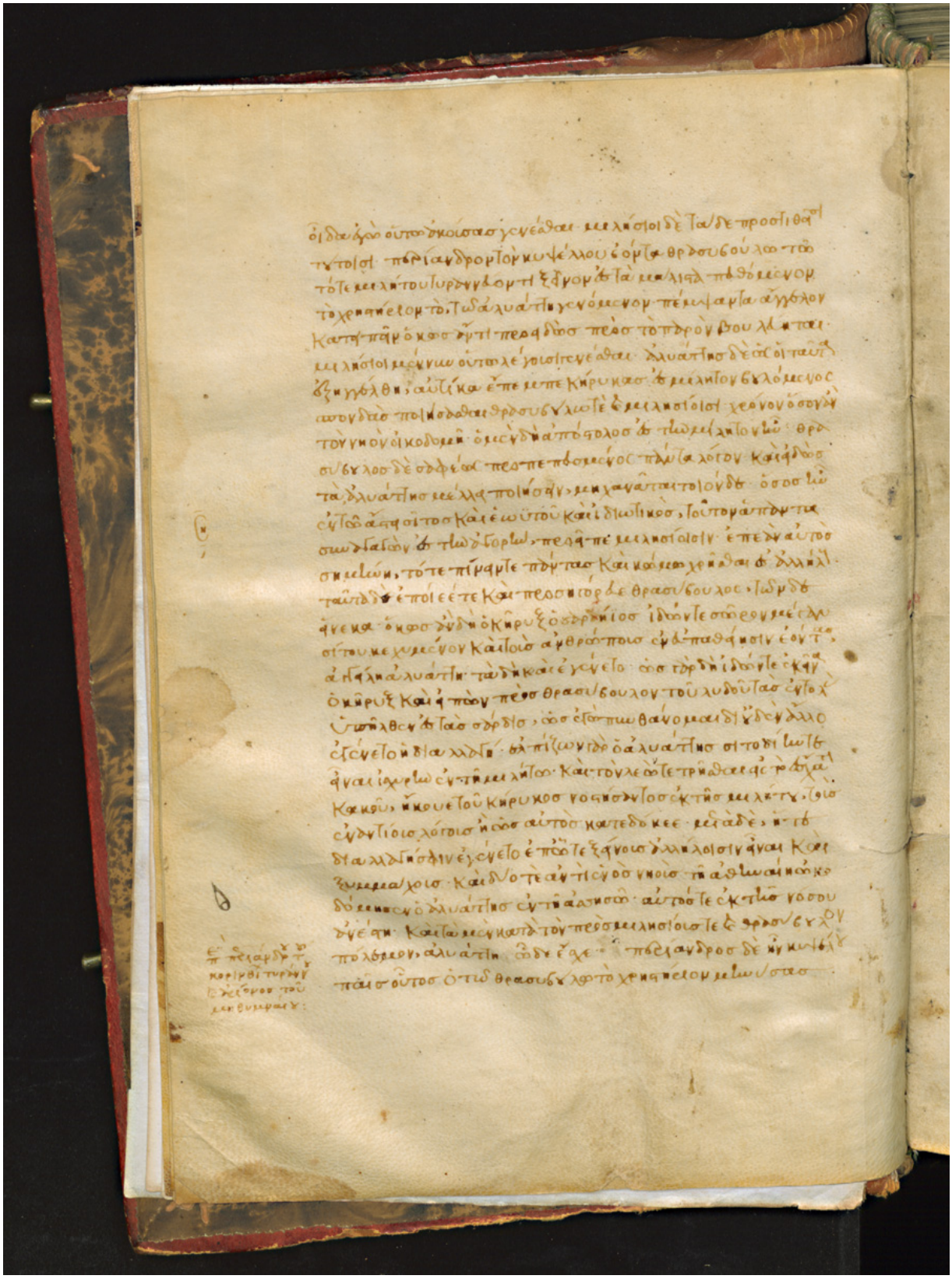


Figure 7: Apollo symbol. fol. 5v, Plut. 70.06.

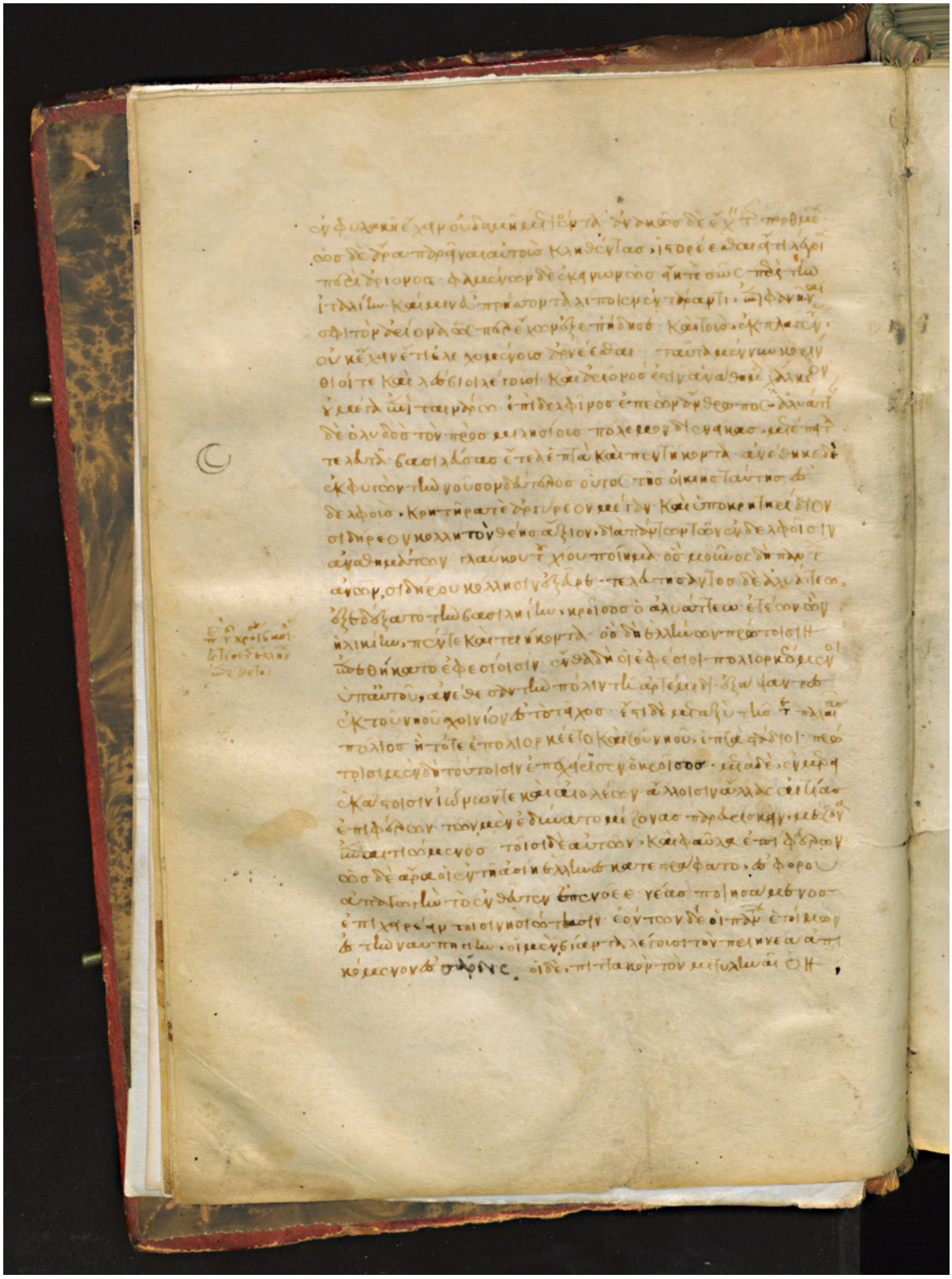


Figure 8: Artemis symbol. fol. 6v, Plut. 70.06.

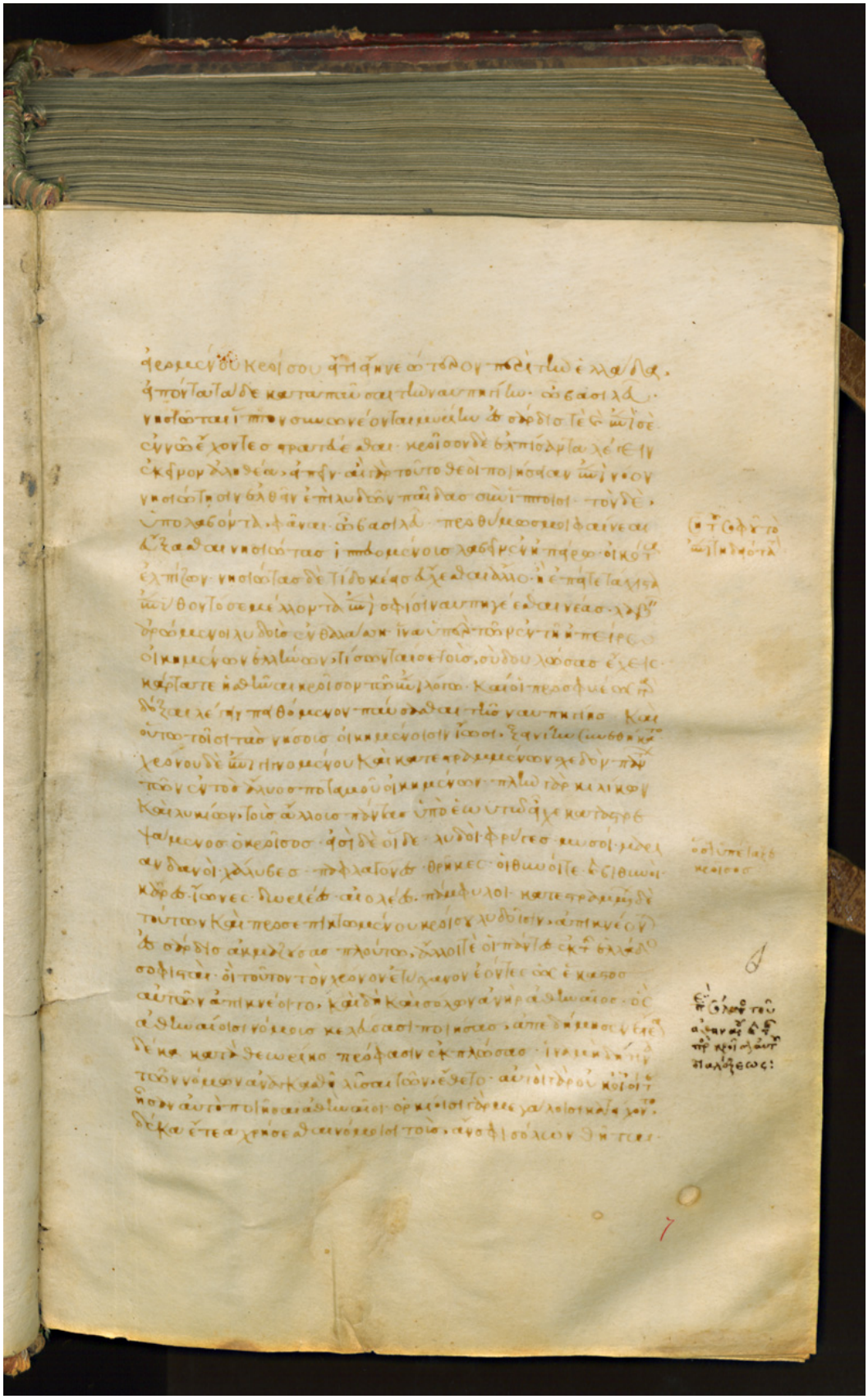


Figure 9: Apollo symbol. fol. 7r, Plut. 70.06.

The alternating symbols of Artemis and Apollo, inserted into the manuscript by an inner member of the Mistra Group (Plethon, Kabakes, or Laonikos), help us to read Herodotos in tandem with the philosophical ideas of unity, diversity, justice, virtue, order, and harmony. The symbols also help us to reconstruct the ways in which Herodotos appealed to Laonikos and Plethon. Herodotos was not only a guide to ancient history but also a recorder of human events, which unfolded in a manner akin to "divine procession"/ "θεία πομπῆ". Indeed, I suggest that Laonikos referred to the religious/philosophical symbols of Apollo and Artemis included in the margins of the manuscript when he wrote of the "divine procession." As astronomical symbols for the celestial bodies of the sun and the moon, these figures also signify the regularity and rotation of the heavens, which order, direct, and influence the sub-lunar world.[206] Thus, the connection between the heavens and human events was complete, and Herodotos was not only a historian but also a keeper of divine knowledge.

Free Will and Fate

Plethon wrote in the appendix to the Laws: "The object of the present work has now been achieved, with the help of the appropriate gods."[207] Indeed, Plethon's brand of Hellenism claimed access to unchangeable truth, provided one has divine guidance:

> the essence of all things divides into three orders: that which is always the same and in all respects unchangeable, that which is eternal but changeable in time; and that which is mortal.[208]

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[206] Alexander Jones, "The Stoics and the Astronomical Sciences", *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics,* 340*,* "the things on earth have *sumpatheia* with the things in the heavens and they are continually renewed in accordance with the aporrhoiai from them."

[207] Tr. Woodhouse, 354, Plethon, *Nomoi*, Book 3. 43. 240-242. tr. Woodhouse, 355. Plethon, *Nomoi*, Book 3. 43. 252-254. "These are the doctrines which were taught by the followers of Pythagoras and Plato, and also by the Kouretes and Zoroaster. They have always been accepted as 'common ideas', even if not by all men, at least by those who have been guided by the gods. The oldest of them known to us is Zoroaster…"

[208] Tr. Woodhouse, 354. *Nomoi*, Book 3.43.244.

According to this view, the universe, as well as the human soul, has a two-fold nature, one immortal and unchanging and another mortal and perishable, both of which emanate from the One, including all forms and instances.[209] Once the causal framework is understood in its true nature, in its immortal and unchanging version, it can be applied to any time period to analyze, to interpret, and to predict.

Physics and Ethics

Thus, Plethon's Hellenism was not only a political ideal centered on ethnicity, location, and language,[210] but it was also a religious doctrine in the sense that Plethon claimed to have access to unchanging truth. In the most philosophical passage of the *Apodeixis*, Laonikos described the mechanism of tides on the English coast, narrating this tension between the unchanging and the perishable aspects of reality:

> When the moon reaches the middle of the sky and then our horizon and the one beneath the earth, the waters turn and flow in the opposite direction. It is necessary to inquire regarding this motion of the waters by examining this. For I believe that the moon has been stationed to preside over the nature of the waters by God. This is not inconsistent with its nature and admixture of elements, the principles of which it received from God the Great King. When it rises in the sky it draws the waters after it until it reaches the highest point in the sky; then, as it descends, the waters go back, no longer following it in its ascent. And when, in turn, it begins its descent, the opposite happens as the waters go back and flood. The winds contribute to this also and move the waters even more, which receive from there the source of their motion. Their movement introduces a secondary motion against the motion of the totality of the sky, so it becomes both spontaneous (αὐθαίρετον) and violent (βίαιον), and that motion does not take place according to a harmony of agreement, but is extremely varied. This is pleasant to contemplate, to see, and to hear, and is in accordance with the measure that agrees with the soul of this universe, which perceives most of the motions that are born along and join together into a certain agreement of like kinds, and therein the soul finds pleasure. Therein lies also the source of the soul's motion, which in turn moves bodies in the two directions, namely to grow and to decline. Moreover, our individual souls receive the impetus for their motion as they are born along with the universe. For all who live in this world, birth and growth by necessity follow the spontaneous motion, while decline and

[209] Tr. Woodhouse, 334. *Nomoi,* Book 2. 6. 76-78. "The gods punish wicked men only in order to correct their faults. It is impossible that man should never do wrong, because he is composed of two parts, one divine and one mortal."

[210] See Chapter 3.

> death attend upon the violent and compulsive one. So much, then, concerning the motion of the ocean and the twofold motion of ensouled animals, those here that have a soul and move in any way whatever. The waters of the sea do not of necessity have that same motion as they move in accordance with how the individual winds and places compel them; their motion is determined by their nature and momentum.[211]

Laonikos applied a Neoplatonic interpretation in this passage; he referred to God, the Megas Basileus, who stationed the Moon over the waters; to the "soul of all"; and to a duality of body and soul. Laonikos' description of the moon also correlated with Plethon's hymn to Artemis and with classical texts, in particular with the Stoic cosmographer Cleomedes' On the Heavens, which Laonikos may have studied under Plethon.[212] Cleomedes used the notion of sympathy to describe the effects of the moon on the sub-lunar world. Similarly, Laonikos emphasized the function of the moon,

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[211] Darkó: **I**, 88-90. "σελήνης δὲ κατὰ μέσον οὐρανὸν γιγνομένης, ἔστε τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐς τὸν ὑπὸ τὴν γῆν ὁρίζοντα, τρέπεσθαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἐναντίαν τὰ ὕδατα κίνησιν. Χρὴ οὖν διασκοπεῖσθαι περὶ τῆς κινήσεως ταύτης τῶν ὑδάτων τῇδ' ἐπισκεπτομένους. τὴν γὰρ σελήνην ἐπιτροπεύειν τε τὴν τῶν ὑδάτων φύσιν ὑπὸ θεοῦ τετάχθαι οἰόμεθα. οὐκ ἂν δὴ ἀσυμφώνως ἔχειν πρός τε τὴν φύσιν τε αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν κρᾶσιν, ἣν εἴληχε τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑπὸ θεοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, πρὸς μὲν τὴν κίνησιν αὐτῆς μετεωρίζουσαν ἐφέλκεσθαί τε ἐφ' οἷ τὰὕδατα, ἐς ὃ ἐπὶ τὴν μεγίστην ἀνάβασιν γένηται τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, κἀντεῦθεν αὖθις κατιοῦσαν ἐπανιέναι τὰ ὕδατα, μηκέτι συνανόντα αὐτῇ ἐς τὴν ἄνοδον· ἐπειδὰν δὲ αὖθις ἐς τὴν κάθοδον γινομένη ἄρξηται γίνεσθαι ἐς τὸ ἄναντες, τὸ ἐντεῦθεν αὖθις ἐπανιόντα πλημμυρεῖν. συμβαίνει μέντοι καὶ ὑπὸ πνευμάτων ἐς τοῦτο συμβαλλομένων κινεῖν ἔτι μᾶλλον τὰ ὕδατα, ὅθεν ἂν δεχόμενα ᾖ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς κινήσεως. φέροιτο δ' ἂν ταῦτα κινούμενα διττὴν τήνδε τὴν κίνησιν ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παντὸς τοῦδε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κίνησιν, τήν τε αὐθαίρετον καὶ δὴ βίαιον γενομένην, ὡς ἂν μὴ ἐς σύμφωνόν τινα ἁρμονίαν γινομένης τῆς κινήσεως, πολυειδῆ τε καὶ ὡς μάλιστα, ᾗ ἂν τὸ ἥδιστον ἐπί τε τῇ θεωρίᾳ καὶ ὄψει καὶ ἀκοῇ, καὶ ἐς ὅρον τινὰ σύμφωνον τῇ τοῦ παντὸς τοῦδε ψυχῇ, ὡς ἂν αἰσθομένῃ μᾶλλόν τι ἐνεγκουσῶν τῶν κινήσεων καὶ ἀλλήλαις συμφερομένων ἔς τινα ὁμοειδῆ συμφωνίαν ἔχειν τὴν ἄλλην τὸ ἥδεσθαι. ἐντεῦθεν τήν τε ψυχῆς κίνησιν, τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκεῖθεν λαμβάνουσαν, ἐπὶ τὴν διττὴν ἐκείνην φορὰν κινεῖν αὖθις τὰ σώματα, αὔξοντά τε δὴ καὶ φθίνοντα. καὶ μὲν δὴ καὶ ἐπὶ κίνησιν τήνδε τὴν ὁρμὴν ὑποδέχεται τῷ παντὶ τῷδε συμφερομένην ἡ ἡμετέρα ψυχή. τῇ μὲν αὐθαιρέτῳ τήν τε γένεσιν καὶ αὔξησιν ἔπεσθαι ἀνάγκῃ, τῇ δ' αὖ βιαίῳ καὶ ἀκουσίῳ κινήσει τήν τε φθίσιν αὖ καὶ τὴν τελευτὴν ἐπισπομένην συμβαίνειν τοῖς τῇδε οὖσι. Ταῦτα μὲν ἔστε τὴν τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ κίνησιν καὶ τὴν τῇδε αὖ διττὴν ζῴων ἐμψύχων κίνησιν, ὅσα τε ψυχὴν ἴσχει ἐνταῦθα καὶ κίνησιν κινεῖται ἡντιναοῦν. τὰ μέντοι ἐς τήνδε τὴν θάλασσαν ὕδατα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐκείνην ἀνάγκῃ κινεῖσθαι κίνησιν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἔχει τε ἕκαστα πνευμάτων τε καὶ τόπων ἐς τὴν κίνησιν βιαζομένων αὐτά, ᾗ φύσεως ἔχοι ἂν καὶ ῥοπῆς, πρὸς ἣν ἂν κινοῖτο δὴ ταῦτα κίνησιν."

[212] The Stoic astronomer Cleomedes' rare work *The Heavens* was present in Mistra in 1450, and Laonikos may have studied the manuscript with Plethon. Cleomedes agrees with Laonikos concerning the moon's effects on the *pneuma* and the waters. Cleomedes, *Cleomedes' Lectures on Astronomy,* tr. Alan C. Bowen and Robert B. Todd (Berkeley, 2004), 133. "As for the size of the Moon evidence can also be derived from its power, since it not only illuminates the whole sky, fashions major changes in the air, and has many things on the Earth in sympathy with it, but is also the exclusive cause of the ebbing and flowing of the Ocean."

which lead to generation, in agreement with the moon goddess Artemis' role overseeing diversity. Further, Laonikos agreed with Stoic and Platonic philosophy when he wrote that human souls are generated along with the universe and partake of the principle element in the universe, *pneuma*. Not only was there a connection between human souls and the physical world, but Laonikos conceived of the generation of the universe as contemporaneous with the generation of human souls, and he thus repeated an argument of Stoic philosophy.

Laonikos drew a link between the world of ideas, physics, and ethics in his use of the term αὐθαίρετον to describe the pull of the moon on the waters in this passage. The word αὐθαίρετον[213] was not generally used for natural mechanisms but was found in ethical contexts denoting free will. Thus, this term is related to the nature of the moon, that it is an ensouled celestial body. According to Plethon and the Platonic tradition he is coming from, the celestial bodies are ensouled and thus free.

The moon, a free body, engenders spontaneous generation[214] and imparts its function overseeing diversity onto human souls, similar to Plethon's description of Artemis. Indeed, Laonikos closely followed Plethon's concept of henotheism in this passage. The universe, along with lesser deities, is created by the Megas Basileus, the One. The One generates aspects of itself (such as unity and diversity), seals its creations, and orders the universe in a hierarchy of ideas, forms, instances, and

[213] Theodore of Cyrrhus, the late-antique Christian apologist, made extended use of this term, which he translated into a Christian framework and appealed to the Christian concept of free will. N. Siniossoglou, *Plato and Theodoret,* 234-245.

[214] Plutarch was cited by Plethon as one of the authorities in the *Nomoi*. Plutarch wrote, "Thus they make the power of Osiris to be fixed in the Moon, and say that Isis, since she is generation, is associated with him. For this reason they also call the Moon the mother of the world, and they think that she has a nature both male and female, as she is receptive and made pregnant by the Sun, but she herself in turn emits and disseminates into the air generative principles." "Isis and Osiris", *Moralia,* vol. 5, 43, tr. Frank Cole Babbitt, (Loeb, 1936).

matter.[215] Laonikos, as well as Plethon,[216] made a distinction between the "soul of this universe" (referring to Plato's Timaeus, which describes the way in which the Megas Basileus generated the cosmos, imparting a soul and thus creating a living being), and the One in itself. Laonikos invoked the Platonic and Stoic concept of sympathy to describe the ways in which the "soul of this universe" caused ensouled bodies to grow as well as to perish.

A fascinating aspect of this discussion of natural phenomena was its relation to ethics. Similar to the use of αὐθαίρετον to refer to both the pull of the moon and free will, Laonikos chose another such word, βίαιον, to describe the effects of the winds (πνεῦμα) on the sub-lunar world. Violent necessity affects the physical world and ensouled bodies are also subject to it. Thus, the word βίαιον is used to refer to violent necessity/compulsion in correspondence between Plethon and Bessarion regarding fate and free will. Following a passage concerning what compels humans to do evil, whether it is voluntary or involuntary and by some sort of constraint, Plethon wrote:

> Some who want to deliver the soul from violent necessity (βίαιον), also take away from it the other and more divine necessity. That other necessity which is free will and which is in keeping with a purposeful intellect.[217]

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[215] P. Athanassiadi, "The Chaldean Oracles: Theology and Theurgy", *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity,* ed. P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede, (Oxford, 1999), 168-169. "In its mythological aspect (which is no less Chaldean) the primordial triad can be identified with Cronus (or some oriental counterpart), Rhea, and Zeus, the demiurgic principle *par excellence,* who then proceeds emanate unending series of beings in a twofold fashion, homonymously and heteronymously, giving rise in this way to the variety of creation, but at the same time preserving its essential unity in a cosmic order…"

[216] Tr. Woodhouse, 237. Plethon describes the way in which the soul of the universe is responsible for generation: "The proponents of the Forms do not suppose that God in his absolute perfection is the immediate creator of our universe but rather of another prior nature and substance, more akin to himself, eternal and incapable of change in perpetuity; and that he created the universe not directly by himself but through that substance."

[217] Plethon, Letter to Bessarion, in Mohler, Letter 2, 466. Tr. AA. "ταύτης οὖν τῆς βιαίου ἀνάγκης τὴν ψυχὴν ἔνιοι ἀπαλλάξαι προθυμούμενοι συναφαιροῦσιν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν καὶ θειοτέραν ἀνάγκην, τὴν ἐν τῷ ἑκουσίῳ τε καὶ κατὰ νοῦν."

Unsurprisingly, this correspondence between Plethon and Bessarion was contained within the context of a more general discussion of Plethon's astronomy text. Plethon quoted from Plato's Epinomis and argued that the celestial bodies' regular motion and majestic size are the cause of all good things in the sub-lunar world and are manifestations of their free will,[218] making it clear that physics and ethics were related according to Plethon as well as Laonikos. Both believed in a divinized cosmos with connections between the terrestrial and the celestial.

"Dire and Unalterable Necessity"[219]

The opposition between these two necessities, the one compulsory and the other free, was also related to the idea of Fate. It is generally agreed that Plethon's idea of Fate (*Heimarmene*) is a Stoic one, determined by intertwining chains of causes.[220] In late antiquity, the question of strictly deterministic fate was a cornerstone of the debate between pagans and Christians.[221] Late-antique Church Fathers strongly objected to deterministic fate, where individual free will is either completely absent or wholly dependent on the celestial spheres. Their Hellenic counterparts, in contrast, elaborated a fatalistic philosophy, in which the human being is not at the center of the universe, as in Christianity, but, rather, is one particular combination of freedom and necessity. The

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[218] Ibid.

[219] Plethon, *The Chaldaick Oracles of Zoroaster and his Followers with the Expositions of Pletho and Psellus,* ed. and tr. Thomas Stanley, (London, 1661), 38.

[220] L. Bargeliotes, "Fate or Heimarmene according to Pletho", *Diotima,* 3 (1975): 137-149. Milton V. Anastos, "Pletho's Calendar and Liturgy", *DOP* 4 (1948): 299-303. Masai, 278-279. Susan Meyer, "Chain of Causes: What is Stoic Fate?" in *God and Cosmos in Stoicism*, ed. Ricardo Salles, (Oxford, 2009), 71-90. Dorothea Frede, "Stoic Determinism", *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics,* ed. Brad Inwood, (Cambridge, 2003), 179-205.

[221] David Amand, *Fatalisme et liberté dans l'antiquité grecque*, (Amsterdam, 1973), 383-435, 480-532. Beatrice Motta, *Il Contra fatum di Gregorio di Nissa nel dibattito tardo-antico sul fatalismo e sul determinismo.* (Pisa, Roma, 2008). A. A. Long, "Astrology: arguments pro and contra", *Science and Speculation: Studies in Hellenistic theory and practice,*ed. J. Barnes, J. Brunschwig, M. Burnyeat, M. Schofield, (Cambridge, 1982), 190-191.

human being, Laonikos remarked, is an ensouled body, dependent on the celestial spheres in its passive component but also free because it is made of the same material that pervades the universe.

Scholars point to Stoic influence in late-antique Neoplatonism and in the articulation of close connections between the celestial and sub-lunar spheres in philosophy.[222] We have already seen that ethics, physics, and metaphysics shared the same vocabulary in Laonikos and Plethon, agreeing with the Platonic idea that the universe is an integrated whole.

Plethon devoted one of the sections of the *Nomoi* to the idea of Fate. This section circulated independently of the sections of the *Nomoi* that were preserved by Scholarios. It was most likely copied by Plethon's disciples during his lifetime, indicating that it was one of the more relevant sections in the Laws. According to Siniossoglou, "Plethon's reintroduction of heimarmene in the late Byzantine context was an un-Orthodox and shocking move." Siniossoglou further remarked that Plethon was testing the waters by circulating this chapter independently of the Nomoi and intended to disclose the entire work when the time was ripe.[223]

Plethon elaborated his idea of Fate both in his Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles as well as in the aforementioned chapter. Therein, he wrote that the whole future is determined in advance by Fate and it is not possible to alter it.[224] In his Commentary on the Chaldean Oracles, Plethon further reflected that human beings are subject to two forces because they are ensouled bodies. On one hand, being endowed

[222] A. A. Long, "Astrology".

[223] Siniossoglou, 159.

[224] Woodhouse, 332-334.

with bodies subject to the fixed laws of nature, they are not free. On the other hand, their souls are born along with the universe and thus are endowed with a higher truth:

> Incline not downwards: below the earth lies a precipice
> That drags down beneath the sevenhold steps, below which
> Is the throne of dread Necessity.[225]

This description is similar to the ways in which Laonikos elaborated the dual movement of ensouled bodies. Human beings, to the extent that they are guided by the higher principle of intellect, are capable of living in accordance with divine will and exercise justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance in their social relations. They thus attain happiness (*eudaimonia*) and contribute to the well-being of their state (*politeia*).[226]

Demetracopoulos has demonstrated that Scholarios prepared to write a refutation of Plethon's chapter on Fate and prepared two anthologies drawing on the work of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Boethius.[227] In the latter of these two anthologies, Scholarios distinguished between "Providence as God's eternal-transcendental plan and Providence as the temporal actualization of this plan in the created world," using the late-antique Latin work of Boethius.[228] To this end, Scholarios quoted from these authors and thus argued against astral influence upon human intellect and will[229] and against Plethon's thesis that celestial bodies are ensouled.[230] Even though Scholarios and his disciples agreed that historic and human events may be signified by the planets, stars, and the moon, they are not the cause of

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[225] Woodhouse, 51.

[226] L. C. Bargeliotes, "Plethon's Conception of Justice and Law". *Phronimon,* vol. 2 (2000): 23-29.

[227] Demetracopoulos: 301-376.

[228] Ibid.: 309.

[229] Ibid.: 311-312.

[230] Ibid.: 323.

events. This view is starkly different from Plethon's Hellenism, wherein the ensouled humans are not at the center of the universe but are one species of various combinations of matter and soul.[231]

Atemporal Generation versus Creation in Time

Scholarios and Plethon engaged in a dispute over the differences between Plato and Aristotle in the aftermath of the Council of Florence-Ferrara and after Plethon composed *De Differentiis*.[232] One of the items under debate concerned whether Plato and Plethon were correct concerning the atemporal generation of the universe. Scholarios objected to this view, but Plethon corrected him by pointing out that a causal generation is different from a temporal generation and that Plato was more correct in stating that the universe was causally generated than Aristotle, who confused causal and temporal generations and stated that the universe was not generated in any sense.[233] Plethon argued against both Scholarios and Thomas Aquinas, both Aristotelians, when he criticized the belief that humans are at the center of the universe.[234] According to Plethon, life is pre-determined and freedom is to align oneself with divine will.[235]

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[231] Siniossoglou, 250-263.

[232] *Georgii Gemisti Plethonis, Contra Scholarii pro Aristotele Obiectiones*. Ed. E.V. Maltese, (Leipzig, 1988), 1-46. Gennadios Scholarios, "Contra Plethonis ignorationem de Aristotele**",** M. Jugie, L. Petit, and X.A. Siderides, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, vol. 4. (Paris, 1935), 1-116.

[233] Blanchet, 178-181. Woodhouse, 282-307.

[234] In the *Nomoi*, Plethon describes a hierarchy of Gods and posits that "The gods are everything in Nature that is greater and more blessed than human nature," making clear that human beings come after both the celestial bodies as well as the terrestrial daemons. Woodhouse, 229-230.

[235] Plethon defined virtue under four headings: Prudence, Justice, Courage, and Temperance. He also argued that under the proper program of education, citizens of civic states would be able to acquire the necessary virtues and contribute to both the well-being of their state as well as attain god-like qualities which secure their freedom from the necessity of violence. Ed. and tr. B. Tambrun-Krasker, *Georges Gémiste Pléthon, Traité des vertus* (Athens, Leiden, 1987), 28.

Interestingly, Hocazâde made the same arguments as Plethon concerning the causal generation of the universe: that the universe is generated but not created in time, that it is eternal, and that it is one with divine essence. As we have mentioned, Hocazâde wrote his tract comparing al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd at the request of Mehmed II, and Plethon was also translated into Arabic at Mehmed's court around the same time.[236] Further, Hocazâde agreed with al-Ghazali as well as Plethon, siding against Ibn Rushd concerning the ultimate source of metaphysical knowledge, namely, that it is imparted in humans through divine aid.[237]

The atemporal and causal generation of the universe is a suitable starting point to discuss the ways in which Herodotos could be applied to the fifteenth century.[238] Plethon's brand of Hellenism and the Laws had the claim of being coeval with the most ancient human knowledge and relied on the capacities of the human mind to comprehend that which is divine and atemporal.[239] Thus, Plethon parted ways with Christianity, believing in ensouled celestial bodies, astral determinism, and the reincarnation of souls and revived elements of ancient Hellenic religion.[240]

We have seen that both Laonikos and Plethon considered the universe as well as the human being to have a two-fold nature: one immortal and unchanging, and the other mortal and perishable. Once the causal framework is understood in its true nature (that is, in its atemporal and unchanging version), it can be applied to any time period to

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[236] Mubahat Türker *Üç Tehafüt Bakımından Felsefe ve Din Münasebeti*, (Ankara, 1956).

[237] Woodhouse, 354. Siniossoglou, 169-170.

[238] Siniossoglou, 262. "The notion of a unified ontological *systema* evolves out of Plethon's preoccupation in the *Differences* to show that causal generation does not equal temporal creation."

[239] Siniossoglou, 192. "According to the pre-Plotinean approach to Plato's epistemology the Idea of the Good is not beyond knowledge and hence not beyond Being. The Good is *an idea* and *paradeigma* apprehensible by thought."

[240] Masai, 278-279.

analyze, to interpret, and to predict. This is the rationale behind the Apollo and Artemis symbols in the Mistra manuscripts, which point to astral determinism. In other words, ancient human knowledge, such as that preserved by Herodotos, Plato, and *Hexabiblos*, can be deciphered and understood in the fifteenth century with the application of the proper ideas. Thus, Plethon's hymns to the Hellenic Gods, including the hymns to Apollo and Artemis, were not only composed to accompany religious rituals but were also oracular pronouncements, helping the Mistra philosophers to unravel the mystery of what Laonikos called "the divine procession"/"θεία πομπῆ" of events in Herodotos.

Divine Lawmaking and Determinism

According to Plethon's epistemic schema, the highest authority is the lawmaker and the highest form of knowledge is lawmaking.[241] Plethon had commenced the Laws with the following words:

> This work is concerned with the laws and the best political institutions by which men's minds should be guided; and by following and practicing which, both privately and publicly, men may live the best and most excellent lives open to them, and also the happiest of lives to the greatest possible degree.[242]

Further, Plethon held the highest judicial post in the Byzantine State, that of Judge General. As we have remarked previously, Plethon does not appear to have been censured by Manuel II, as he was given hereditary fiefs in the Peloponnese that invested power into his hands and those of his descendants under the Despotate.[243] In Mistra, Plethon composed a series of advisory letters to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II, Despot Theodore, and other members of the imperial family, wherein he advocated political and legal reform that would substantially alter the ways in which Byzantine

[241] Woodhouse, 326-327, "The worst guides are poets and sophists, neither of whom are concerned with truth. Legislators and philosophers, though not infallible, make fewer mistakes." Masai, 96-101.

[242] Woodhouse, 325.

[243] Nevra Necipoğlu, 269

society functioned. Some elements of these reforms bear a striking resemblance to the ways in which the Ottoman State functioned in the fifteenth century. In an advisory letter to Despot Theodore composed in the early fifteenth century, Plethon argued for reforming the Byzantine constitution and explicitly stated that the Ottomans were successful as a result of their constitution.[244] Plethon also proposed a Platonic state[245] with strict divisions between the ruling elite, the artisans, and the farmers, which also happens to be the administrative model the Ottomans followed in the fifteenth century.[246] According to Plethon, the ruling elite should not engage in pursuits such as trading and banking; rather, they should be maintained on the basis of taxes alone and should provide military service. Plethon, no doubt, was criticizing the proclivity of the Byzantine aristocracy to engage in trade in the later Byzantine period.[247] Even though there were legal restrictions on the merchants for entering into the Byzantine senate, the Byzantine aristocrats increasingly engaged in trade and banking in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Plethon was similarly critical of the degree of influence the

[244] *PP*, vol. 4, 118. Woodhouse, 92-98. Masai, 67-83. Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium,* (Oxford, 1957), 206-212. For more on this passage and its echoes in Chalkokondyles, see Chapter 2.

[245] R. Webb, "The Nomoi of Gemistos Plethon in the Light of Plato's Laws." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52, (1989): 219-249.

[246] Nevra Necipoğlu*,* 275.

[247] The famous Loukas Notaras, *megas doux* of the Byzantine Empire, not only engaged in trade with Italians but also became a citizen of Genoa and Venice. K.P. Matschke, 'The Notaras family and its Italian connections', *DOP* 49 (1995): 59–72. A. E. Laiou, "The Byzantine aristocracy in the Palaiologan period: a case of arrested development", *Viator* 4 (1973): 131-151. N. Oikonomidès, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIIIe-XVe siècles)* (Montreal/Paris 1979), 115–20. A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis, 'The Byzantine economy in the Mediterranean trade system: thirteenth–fifteenth centuries', *DOP* 34 (1982): 199–201. Eadem. "The Greek Merchant of the Palaeologan Period: A Collective Portait," in *The Proceedings of the Academy of Athens* (1982): 97-132. Dionysios Stathakopoulos, "Critical Study: The dialectics of expansion and retraction: recent scholarship on the Palaiologan aristocracy", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies,* vol. 33.1 (2009): 92-101.

monastic habit, in particular the Hesychast tradition, held in the late-Byzantine period and repeated such criticism in his *Nomoi*.[248]

Plethon not only advocated constitutional reform, but he also undertook the writing of that constitution, although he did not circulate it freely. He further believed that the strength of the constitution was the sole factor in determining the success or failure of a state:

> If some city by chance and by design is successful, but is unstable, and it hastily holds dear such things that can be reversed, then it decays. For the most part, cities are preserved and sustained through the virtue of the constitution.[249]

Things that can be reversed are those causal chains that have no element of the more divine necessity of free will. In other words, they refer to those decisions that have been taken under duress. Thus, Sparta, Thebes, the Hellenic Empire of Alexander, Rome, and the Islamic states were successful because their constitutions allowed the citizens to align themselves with divine will. We have seen that Plethon believed in Fate and espoused the deterministic view of the universe. Further, according to Plethon, a correct view of religion is a necessary component for living a virtuous life, and it is only possible to impart that correct view in societies that are regulated with a constitution.[250] Plethon does not appear to have drawn a distinction between city-states and autocratic monarchies. Justice, as a virtue of the citizens in a well-functioning state; courage, as the virtue that compels citizens to protect their state; prudence, as an element of religious sentiment governing the state; public spirit, which preserves the cohesion of

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[248] Plethon not only referred to his contemporary theologians and monks as sophists, but he also wrote that they deliberately deceived the masses. Woodhouse, 327-328. Siniossoglou, 114-119.

[249] Plethon, *Consilium ad despotam Theodorum de Peloponneso,* ed. S.P. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, vol. 4 (Athens, 1930), 116. Tr. AA. "Τύχη δ' ἤν τις καὶ κατὰ γνώμην πράξειε πόλις, ἀλλ' ἀβέβαιον, καὶ ταχὺ φιλεῖ που τά γε τοιαῦτα περιτρέπεσθαι, τὰ δὲ πολλὰ δι' ἀρετὴν πολιτείας καὶ σώζονταί τε καὶ αἴρονται αἱ πόλεις, καὶ τοὐναντίον φθίνουσί τε καὶ διόλλυνται τῆς πολιτείας σφίσι πρότερον διεφθορυίας."

[250] Ibid, 127-128. Barker, 211.

society – in short, every type of virtue is intimately connected to the maintenance of the constitutional state.[251] Plethon therefore put the welfare of the whole ahead of the individual, and in this he agreed with Plato, whose ideal society is highly regulated, with strict divisions between guardians, merchants, and producers.[252]

Laonikos, too, noted the connection between virtue and fortune, similar to his teacher Plethon, in describing the success of states. According to Laonikos, the Romans "attained the greatest empire in the world, having their virtue in proportion to their fortune."[253] In a similar manner, Laonikos also praised various Ottoman rulers, in particular Murad II (1421–44 and 1446–51), and explicitly stated that it was because of the Ottomans' military and political virtue that they prospered.[254] Ivanka and Harris have argued that Laonikos used the connection between virtue and success to describe historical events and that this combination was due to classical Latin influence, such as that found in Cicero, rather than Byzantine tradition.[255] However, we have seen that Plethon, in his address to Despot Theodore, in his tract "Concerning Virtue," and in the Laws, argued that virtue is the sole determining factor in both an individual's as well as a political entity's success. Laonikos need not have appropriated classical Latin usage when his teacher extensively made use of the same combination.

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[251] *Georges Gémiste Pléthon, Traité des vertus.*

[252] Malcolm Schofield, "Approaching the *Republic"*, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought,* ed. Rowe and Schofield, (Cambridge, 2005), 217-224.

[253] Darkó, **I**, 4. . 1.5. "ἐς ὃ δὴ Ῥωμαίους ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης μεγίστην ἀρχὴν ἀφικομένους, ἰσοτάλαντον ἔχοντας τύχην τῇ ἀρετῇ"

[254] Darkó, **I,** 51. Tr. AA. "διαπολεμοῦντα καὶ ἔργα μεγάλα ἀποδειξάμενον, ὃς τοὺς μεγάλους ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πολέμους καὶ ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ διαπολεμήσας <ἔτη> ἕν τε καὶ τριάκοντα, ἐς τοσοῦτον αὐτῷ μετῆν τύχης τε ἅμα καὶ ἀρετῆς, ὥστε μηδέποτε ἡττηθῆναι ἐν μάχῃ, δύναμιν δὲ καὶ χώραν ἀξιόχρεων ὑπαγόμενος, κατ' ἄμφω δὲ τὼ ἠπείρω, γῆρας ἤδη βαθὺ ἀφικόμενος μὴ μεθίεσθαι τῶν πολεμίων μάχης, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ λυττῶντι ἐοικέναι ἐπὶ τὴν μάχην, ἅπληστον δὲ αἱμάτων γενόμενον ἁπανταχῇ."

[255] Endre v. Ivanka, "Der Fall Konstantinopels und das byzantinische Geschichtsdenken", *JÖB*, 3 (1954): 19-34. Jonathan Harris, "Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the rise of the Ottoman Turks", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 27 (2003): 153-170.

The battle between the Hellenes and the Ottomans will determine who will appropriate for themselves the free and divine elements that lead to generation and growth and who will be accorded the restricting forces that cause them to move against their higher nature and thus lead to decay and death.

In a deterministic universe, the answer is not only foreknown and revealed to certain individuals, but it is also impossible to alter the results. In the Laws, Plethon wrote that:

> Further evidence of this determinism is to be found in the fact that the gods sometimes reveal part of their foreknowledge to selected individual men. Some of these favored men have tried to exploit their foreknowledge to evade or divert the course of events. But they have failed to frustrate Fate, and their failure was itself fated.[256]

This is the theoretical basis for the Mistra Circle's belief in oracles. As we shall see, oracular knowledge was not only related to lawmaking according to Plethon and his circle, but it was also one of the ways in which the higher principles communicated with humanity to order, regulate, and influence sub-lunar events.

Oracular Wisdom and Ancient Prophecies in the Fifteenth Century

We find further evidence of Plethon's interest in oracles in the Laurenziana manuscript of Herodotos, Plut. 70.06. In this manuscript, the oracular responses are marked in the text with "χρησμός", signifying that these passages were of special importance to the owner of the manuscript. Further, Plethon inserted folios in his own handwriting into this manuscript, and these four pages contain the most detailed exposition on the Oracle of Delphi to be found in Herodotos' History.[257] In these sections, Herodotos gave an extended analysis of the ways in which the Oracle at Delphi was the direct force behind lawmaking and state building in the ancient world,

[256] Woodhouse, 333.

[257] Plut. 70.06, fols. 164-165. Herodotos 4.155- 4.163.

detailing the history of the finding of the colony of Cyrene in Libya and its relation to the Oracle. The story of the colony includes some perennial interests of Plethon, such as lawmaking, Hellenic identity, and the abolition of the king's ancestral privileges to impose constitutional rule:

> The Pythia ordered them to bring in a mediator from Mantineia…. This man arrived in Cyrene, and after conducting a detailed investigation of the community, divided the people into three tribes….In addition, Demonax set aside specific precincts and priesthoods for King Battos, but everything else that had earlier belonged to the kings he made public and placed in the hands of the people.[258]

Within the space of a few pages, Herodotos inserts four oracular pronouncements by the Pythia and details the ways in which the Oracle deliberately guided the founding of the Hellenic community in North Africa.

Bianconi, who attributed the pages to Plethon, has suggested that they were added to replace pages that had deteriorated.[259] There is reason to assume that Plethon had deliberately substituted his own-handwritten pages in this manuscript, ascertaining his ownership of the manuscript as well as drawing attention to those pages that mattered most to him.

A manuscript in the British Library compiled by Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, Plethon's loyal disciple, confirms this observation.[260] Kabakes called himself a sun-worshipper[261] and was a pagan, and numerous manuscripts containing Plethon's Laws are the product of his hand. Kabakes not only copied Plut. 70.06 in Rome (the Herodotos manuscript Vat. 1359 is in his hand),[262] but he paid special attention to the oracular statements found in that

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[258] Herodotos, 4.161. ed. R. B. Strassler and tr. Andrea L. Purvis, *The Landmark Herodotus,* (New York, 2007), 348.

[259] D. Bianconi, "La Biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora Una Questione di Mani", *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005): 403. "Sono stati aggiunti in un momento successivo alla trascrizione del codice per sostituire quelli originari evidentemente deteriorati o caduti."

[260] British Library Add MS 5424.

[261] A. Keller, "Two Byzantine Scholars and their Reception in Italy", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* vol. 20 (1957): 366-370.

[262] B. Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits d'Hérodote et la critique verbale*, (Genova, 1981), 109.

manuscript of Herodotos in a manner similar to Plethon and Laonikos. Kabakes singled out and copied the oracular statements in Herodotos in the British Library, Add MS 5424. He also included in this compilation various works of Synesios of Cyrene, including Synesios' controversial tract "On Dreams," Plethon's Summary of the Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato, and portions from the extant part of the Laws, hymns to Zeus and other Gods as well as invocations of the Gods.

Synesios of Cyrene, the fourth-century Neoplatonist philosopher who studied with Hypatia in Alexandria, became a bishop in later life, although his earlier pagan philosophy colored his conversion and he continued to compose hymns to the pagan gods.[263] Indeed, there is still controversy concerning his conversion to Christianity and the nature of his Christian faith. Kabakes included "On Dreams" by Synesios, which advocated the study of dreams as a sure method of divination, in this compilation.[264] Synesios also supported the study of the stars, birds, animal entrails, and magic for divination in this tract because, according to Synesios, an inner harmony exists in the universe, which makes the constituent parts codependent, thus making divination possible.[265] Synesios' "On Dreams" had also attracted the attention of the famous Byzantine historian and astronomer Nikephoras Gregoras in the previous generation, who wrote a detailed commentary on the work and

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[263] Alan Cameron has argued that Synesios had been Christian from an early age, but his thesis has been disputed by Wolfgang Hagl. Alan Cameron, Jacqueline Long, Lee Shery, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley, 1993). Wolfgang Hagl, *Arcadius Apis Imperator: Synesios von Kyrene und sein Beitrag zum Herrscherideal der Spätantike.* (Stuttgart, 1997). W. Theiler, *Die Chalaischen Orakel und die Hymnen des Synesios* (Halle, 1942). N. Terzaghi, *Synesii Cyrenensis Hymni et Opuscula* (Rome, 1939-1944). C. Lacombrade *Synésios de Cyrène: Hellènne et Chrétien* (Paris, 1951). Jay Bregman, *Synesius of Cyrene: Philosopher-Bishop* (Berkeley, 1982).

[264] British Library, Add MS 5424, ff 58-77.

[265] Matthew Dickie, "Synesius, De Insomniis 2-3 Terzaghi and Plotinus, Enneades 2.3.7 and 4.4.40-44", *Symbolae Osloenses* vol. 77 (2002): 165-174. Roger Pack, "Folklore and Superstition in the Writings of Synesius", *The Classical Weekly* vol. 43.4 (1949): 54-55.

agreed with the thesis of a highly determined universe. Gregoras began his History, similar to Laonikos' chapter on tides, by drawing links between the celestial and sub-lunar spheres and the ways in which human as well as cosmic events are heralds of God's magnificence.[266]

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[266] N. Gregoras *Nicephori Gregorae explicatio in librum Synesii "De Insomniis": scholia cum glossis* ed. Paolo Pietrosanti (Bari, 1999). ed. I. Bekker and L. Schopen, *Nicephori Gregorae historiae Byzantinae*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1829-1855), vol. 1, 5. Tr. AA. "Often, when reading many who immortalized the lives of old and up to our births by history-writing and hearing them confess to some divine foretelling in such an undertaking being authored, I observed some importunate ambition of the men, thinking the things that were said to be full of boasting. Thereafter, the men seemed to me to be clear guardians of truth, hence the work to belong, in reality, to God. (God) treats the hand of these like an organ, being inferior in little or nothing, so to say, to heaven and earth, which are the greatest and first of His creations, with the purpose of reporting the secret glory, as far as it is within reach, of God. For while, on the one hand, they are like silent heralds of divine magnificence, they pass through the entire course of time, being witnesses that challenge only the senses. On the other hand, history, both a living and talking voice, is really an alive and manifest herald of the same (magnificence). Traversing through the ages always shows that things have happened as in a universal tablet to the following generations. (It shows) All that, (people), among themselves and by means of each other, have done in life since eternity, and all that the wise men have philosophized about the nature of reality and what is comprehended by these people and what is not. (It sometimes demonstrates), that others have met with some difficulty, at other times that they enjoyed the beauty and goodness emanating from God to satiety, and sometimes how many unexpected kindnesses they fall upon there. And it seems to me that even the glory of heaven and earth is more generally accepted through the writing of history, and if I may say so, the brilliance is more brilliant. For how would people know, if history did not exist, that heaven, always moving in the same way since the beginning with the same steady motion, artfully unfolds the sun and the moon and all the stars as well-ordered and rhythmic in perpetuity and that it (heaven) narrates the glory of God both during the day and at night through eternity? (And how would they know) that the earth, since the beginning, turning in an unmoved manner, always demonstrates this birth and death to future people through eternity?" "Τοῖς τῶν πάλαι καὶ μέχρις ἡμῶν γενομένων τοὺς βίους διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ἀθανατίζουσι πλείστοις πολλάκις αὐτὸς ἐντυγχάνων, καὶ θείαις τισὶ προτροπαῖς ἀκούων ὁμολογούντων ἐς τὴν τοιαύτην κεκινῆσθαι ἐγχείρησιν, μέχρι μέν τινος ἄκαιρόν τινα φιλοτιμίαν τῶν ἀνδρῶν κατεγίγνωσκον, κόμπου μεστὰ τὰ λεγόμενα εἶναι οἰόμενος· ἔπειτα δ' ἔδοξαν εἶναί μοι οἱ ἄνδρες ἐπόπται μὲν αὐτῆς ἀληθείας σαφεῖς, θεοῦ δὲ τῷ ὄντι τὸ ἔργον, καθάπερ ὀργάνῳ χρωμένου τῇ τούτων χειρὶ, μικρὰ ἢ μηδὲν ἀποδέον, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς, τῶν μεγίστων καὶ πρώτων αὐτοῦ ποιημάτων, πρός γε τὸ τὴν ἀπόῤῥητον δόξαν ἀναγγέλλειν, ὡς ἐφικτὸν, τοῦ θεοῦ. τὰ μὲν γὰρ καθάπερ σιγῶντες κήρυκες τῆς θείας μεγαλουργίας, τὸν ἅπαντα διαγίγνονται χρόνον, αἴσθησιν προκαλούμενα μάρτυρα μόνην. ἡ δ' ἱστορία, ζῶσά τε καὶ λαλοῦσα φωνὴ, καὶ ὄντως ἔμψυχος καὶ διαπρύσιος κήρυξ αὐτῆς, διαπερᾷ τὸν αἰῶνα καθάπερ ἐν πίνακι παγκοσμίῳ δεικνύουσα τὰ προγεγονότα τοῖς ἐπιγιγνομένοις ἀεὶ, ὅσα ποτὲ ἐν ἀλλήλοις καὶ δι' ἀλλήλων οἱ ἐξ αἰῶνος ἐπεπράχεσαν ἐν τῷ βίῳ, καὶ ὅσα ποτὲ πεφιλοσοφήκασι περὶ τῆς τῶν ὄντων φύσεως οἱ σοφοὶ, καὶ τίνα κατείληπται τούτοις, καὶ τίνα μή· καὶ τίσι ποτὲ δυσχερείαις ἄλλοτε ἄλλοι συνηντηκότες, τίνων ποτὲ τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ καλῶν κἀγαθῶν ἐς κόρον ἀπολελαύκεσαν, καὶ πόσαις ποτὲ ταῖς ἀπροσδοκήτοις ἐκεῖθεν εὐεργεσίαις ἐνέτυχον. δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ τὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς δόξαν ἐνδοξοτέραν διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας καθίστασθαι, καὶ, ἵν' εἴπω, λαμπροτέραν πολλῷ τὴν λαμπρότητα. ποῦ γὰρ ἂν ᾔδεσαν ἄνθρωποι, τῆς ἱστορίας οὐκ οὔσης, ὡς ὁ μὲν οὐρανὸς τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ἀρχῆθεν ἀεὶ καὶ ἀκίνητον κινούμενος κίνησιν, ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ πάντας ἀστέρας διηνεκῶς ἐξελίττει πρὸς ποι Τοῖς τῶν πάλαι καὶ μέχρις ἡμῶν γενομένων τοὺς βίους διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας ἀθανατίζουσι πλείστοις πολλάκις αὐτὸς ἐντυγχάνων, καὶ θείαις τισὶ προτροπαῖς ἀκούων ὁμολογούντων ἐς τὴν τοιαύτην κεκινῆσθαι ἐγχείρησιν, μέχρι μέν τινος ἄκαιρόν τινα φιλοτιμίαν τῶν ἀνδρῶν κατεγίγνωσκον, κόμπου μεστὰ τὰ λεγόμενα εἶναι οἰόμενος· ἔπειτα δ' ἔδοξαν εἶναί μοι οἱ ἄνδρες ἐπόπται μὲν αὐτῆς ἀληθείας

Indications that Laonikos, too, believed in divination can be found in the *Apodeixis*. Laonikos included an oracular story for the West in the figure of Joachim of Fiore. Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202), a twelfth-century Cistercian mystic and theologian, developed a system of seven ages that corresponded to periods in history that would come to a close with the advent of the Antichrist and the subsequent liberation of humanity from tyranny when the Church would be replaced by a new age. Joachim of Fiore was sought by Pope Lucius III in 1184 to interpret some apocalyptic writings and was approved by the Pope to write down his interpretation.[267] The papal approbation was confirmed by two subsequent Popes, Urban III and Clement III. Joachim's thought was posthumously condemned as heretical in 1263 under the direction of Pope Alexander IV, but he continued to exert power, inspiring movements that were persecuted on account of their heresy. Laonikos included the section on Joachim in Book VI, following the history of the Council of Florence-Ferrara and the overview on the Papacy:

> Beyond these, there is Joachim who is famous among the wise men in Italy. And having arrived at the station of prophecy, he foretold of the elevation of future popes, the way in which each of these would be admitted to the rule and would conduct their lives. As it (something miraculous) happened, his oracles have been realized in deeds. And other wondrous things are told about this man.

σαφεῖς, θεοῦ δὲ τῷ ὄντι τὸ ἔργον, καθάπερ ὀργάνῳ χρωμένου τῇ τούτων χειρὶ, μικρὰ ἢ μηδὲν ἀποδέον, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς, τῶν μεγίστων καὶ πρώτων αὐτοῦ ποιημάτων, πρός γε τὸ τὴν ἀπόῤῥητον δόξαν ἀναγγέλλειν, ὡς ἐφικτὸν, τοῦ θεοῦ. τὰ μὲν γὰρ καθάπερ σιγῶντες κήρυκες τῆς θείας μεγαλουργίας, τὸν ἅπαντα διαγίγνονται χρόνον, αἴσθησιν προκαλούμενα μάρτυρα μόνην. ἡ δ' ἱστορία, ζῶσά τε καὶ λαλοῦσα φωνὴ, καὶ ὄντως ἔμψυχος καὶ διαπρύσιος κήρυξ αὐτῆς, διαπερᾷ τὸν αἰῶνα καθάπερ ἐν πίνακι παγκοσμίῳ δεικνύουσα τὰ προγεγονότα τοῖς ἐπιγιγνομένοις ἀεὶ, ὅσα ποτὲ ἐν ἀλλήλοις καὶ δι' ἀλλήλων οἱ ἐξ αἰῶνος ἐπεπράχεσαν ἐν τῷ βίῳ, καὶ ὅσα ποτὲ πεφιλοσοφήκασι περὶ τῆς τῶν ὄντων φύσεως οἱ σοφοὶ, καὶ τίνα κατείληπται τούτοις, καὶ τίνα μή· καὶ τίσι ποτὲ δυσχερείαις ἄλλοτε ἄλλοι συνηντηκότες, τίνων ποτὲ τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ καλῶν κἀγαθῶν ἐς κόρον ἀπολελαύκεσαν, καὶ πόσαις ποτὲ ταῖς ἀπροσδοκήτοις ἐκεῖθεν εὐεργεσίαις ἐνέτυχον. δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ τὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς δόξαν ἐνδοξοτέραν διὰ τῆς ἱστορίας καθίστασθαι, καὶ, ἵν' εἴπω, λαμπροτέραν πολλῷ τὴν λαμπρότητα. ποῦ γὰρ ἂν ᾖδεσαν ἄνθρωποι, τῆς ἱστορίας οὐκ οὔσης, ὡς ὁ μὲν οὐρανὸς τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ἀρχῆθεν ἀεὶ καὶ ἀκίνητον κινούμενος κίνησιν, ἥλιον καὶ σελήνην καὶ πάντας ἀστέρας διηνεκῶς ἐξελίττει πρὸς ποι κιλίαν ὁμοίως εὔτακτόν τε καὶ εὔρυθμον, καὶ ὁμοίως τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διηγεῖται δόξαν ἐφ' ἡμέρᾳ τε καὶ νυκτὶ δι' αἰῶνος· ἡ δὲ γῆ τὴν ἄτρεπτον ταύτην ὁμοίως ἀρχῆθεν ἀεὶ τρεπομένη τροπὴν, τὴν αὐτὴν τοῖς ἀεὶ ἐπιγιγνομένοις ἀνθρώποις γένεσιν καὶ φθορὰν δι' αἰῶνος προδείκνυσιν;

[267] Robert E. Lerner, "Antichrists and Antichrist in Joachim of Fiore" *Speculum* vol. 60 (1985): 553-570.

> When he was a private individual and not yet stricken in any small or great measure with wisdom, he was a porter at some monastery of Christians in Italy. He happened to come to the garden. As he was walking a most beautiful man appeared and he was holding a bucket in his hand. He stopped and said to Joachim "Joachim, take this. Drink this wine, for it is the best" And Joachim, taking it, drank the wine until he was full. And when he said to the man that he had his fill, the man said to him "Joachim, if you had drunk the entire wine, you would know everything exactly." Then he came to discourse with the most wise (men), and exhibited a wondrous wisdom. Then he hastened to the residency of the papacy and foretold every important thing that would happen to him (the Pope). He set these down on paper so that it would be apparent when his prophecies would be fulfilled in deed. He foretold such things that it is possible to see his prophecies everywhere.[268]

Laonikos also included a matching prophetic story for the Byzantines, and Mango has identified the relevant passage with the legend of Leo the Wise.[269] The Byzantine legend was associated with a collection of oracular writings bearing the name of the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Wise (886-912) and that contained both iambic verse with illustrations and thirteenth-century longer poems in demotic Greek.[270] The verse oracles were originally composed in the early ninth century but were reworked in the twelfth century.[271] These writings are chiefly concerned with predictions pertaining to the Byzantine Empire and Emperors. Chalkokondyles was not the first Byzantine historian to believe in the veracity of

[268] Darkó, **II**, 78-79. Tr. AA. "Περὶ μὲν τούτων Ἰωακεὶμ ἐλλόγιμος τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν σοφῶν γενομένων, καὶ ἐπὶ μαντικὴν ἀφικόμενος, τούς τε ἐσομένους ἀρχιερεῖς προεσήμαινε, τρόπῳ ᾧ ἂν ἕκαστος τούτων παριὼν ἐπὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν βιώσοιτο, <δαιμόνιον> δὲ γίγνεσθαι, ἐπειδὰν ἐς τὰ ἔργα καταστῇ τὰ μαντεύματα αὐτῷ. καὶ λέγεται μὲν περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τούτου καὶ ἕτερ' ἄττα θαύματος ἄξια. ἰδιώτην γὰρ ὄντα, καὶ οὐδ' ὁτιοῦν ἐπαΐοντα ἢ μικρὸν ἢ μέγα σοφίας, πυλωρὸν δὲ ὄντα κατά τινα μονὴν τῶν ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ ὄντων Ναζηραίων, τυχεῖν ἐλθόντα ἐς κῆπον· τῷ δὲ πορευομένῳ ἐπιφανῆναι ἄνδρα αὐτῷ τὸ εἶδος κάλλιστον, καὶ ἐπιστάντα οἱ εἰπεῖν, κατέχοντα ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν ὑδρεῖον, «ὦ Ἰωακείμ, λάβε, πίε τοῦ οἴνου τούτου· κάλλιστος γάρ ἐστι.» τὸν δὲ λαβόντα ἐπιπιεῖν τε τοῦ οἴνου ἱκανῶς καὶ ἐμφορηθῆναι. ὡς δὲ ἄρα ἱκανῶς ἔχειν αὐτῷ εἴρηται πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐπειπεῖν αὐτῷ τὸν ἄνδρα «ὦ Ἰωακείμ, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἔπιες τοῦ οἴνου, τὸ πᾶν ᾔδεις ἀκριβῶς.» ἐντεῦθεν τοῖς σοφωτάτοις καταστῆναί τε ἐς διάλεξιν, καὶ δαιμόνιόν τινα τὴν σοφίαν ἐπιφαίνεσθαι. ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ὡρμημένον ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς ἀρχιερατείας ἡγεμονίαν, προσημᾶναι μεγάλ' ἄττα ἐσόμενα ὁτῳοῦν, ἀποσημειωσάμενος, ὥστε καταφανῆ γίνεσθαι, ἐπειδὰν ἐς ἔργον ἐκβῇ. οἷα μέντοι προεσήμαινεν, ἔξεστιν ἁπανταχῇ περιιόντων τῶν σημείων αὐτοῦ."

[269] Cyril Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise," *Zbornik radova Vizant. Instit.* VI, no. 75 (1960): 59-93.

[270] Ibid.

[271] *The oracles of the most wise Emperor Leo & The tale of the true emperor* ed. and tr. W. G. Brokaar et al. (Amsterdam, 2002).

the oracles, but, rather, he was in the company of such illustrious historians as Niketas Choniates.[272] The relevant passage is included in Book VIII, narrating the reign of Mehmed II, and immediately succeeds Laonikos' statement that Mehmed II, after the capture of Byzantion, made peace with the brothers of Constantine VIII[273]:

> I marvel that some persons do not consider the Sibylline oracles to be true, since the enumeration of emperors in Byzantium (made), as they say, by the emperor Leo the Wise…. The enumeration ended with this emperor (John VIII?) and with the patriarch who died at Florence in Italy. For that list contained neither the emperor Constantine, since he was killed by barbarians and did not die in the imperial dignity, nor Gregory who departed to Italy. Spaces were incised in this book for the emperors after him (Leo VI?) down to the death of this emperor (John VIII?), and to those who attained the episcopate of the City, be they many or few, down to (the death of) this patriarch (Joseph II?). It is said that there are many works of this emperor (Leo VI) that deserve admiration, since he had experience of stars and spirits and was conversant with their power, and especially two or three that are worthy of mention.[274]

Narrating the fall of Constantinople in this Book, Laonikos found the events preceding 1453 to be predicted by the Leonine oracles, which he called the Sibylline oracles in reference to the late-antique texts. As can be readily seen, Laonikos was chiefly concerned with the Emperors and Patriarchs in the closing decades of the Byzantine Empire and did not devote attention to earlier figures.

Prophetic writings about the fall of Constantinople, the last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI, the end of the Ottoman Empire, and a second coming that would liberate the Hellenes abounded during the time Laonikos was composing the *Apodeixis*.[275] However, Laonikos' belief in oracles should not only be understood in the context of such popular

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[272] Paul Magdalino, "Prophecy and Divination in the *History*" in *Niketas Choniates: a Historian and a Writer* ed. Alicia Simpson and Stephanos Efthymiadis (Geneva, 2009).

[273] Darkó, **II**, 169.

[274] Tr. Cyril Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise."

[275] Cyril Mango, "Byzantinism and Romantic Hellenism", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965): 34-36. Donald M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor,* (Cambridge, 1992), 101-108. Aphrodite Papayianni, "He Polis healo: The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 in Post-Byzantine Popular Literature", *Al-Masaq,* 18 March 2010.

prophetic writings but as connected to his philosophy of history and his understanding of fate, chance, and virtue that stemmed from the then-current discussion on Plato and Aristotle. As we have seen, Plethon and Laonikos believed that divine truth is causally rather than temporally generated and is unchanging. Thus, oracles of the past, such as those issued by Phytia at the Oracle of Apollo, should hold sway in the fifteenth century as well as in the past.

Zoroastrian Oracles in the Renaissance

Plethon had pronounced one such oracle at the Council of Florence-Ferrara, which was revealed by his enemy George of Trebizond after Plethon's death. According to George of Trebizond, Plethon had stated that there would be one religion, with one soul and one mind, that would soon rule over the world, which would be neither Islam nor Christianity but one no different from that of the Hellenes/Pagans (gentiles in Trebizond's words).[276] Although this proclamation has attracted much attention in the literature, the provenance of Plethon's oracle has not been acknowledged. Plethon was, in fact, directly quoting from Plutarch's Isis and Osiris, a text from which Plethon made excerpts. Plethon's copy of Plutarch still survives in Plethon's hand.[277] Plutarch (c. 46-120), a prolific author and the senior priest of Apollo at the Oracle at Delphi, was one of the authorities whom Plethon explicitly referred to in his Laws. In the relevant passage of Isis and Osiris, Plutarch related the doctrine of the Zoroastrians:

> But those created by Areimanius, who were equal in number to the others, pierced through the egg and made their way inside; hence evils are now combined with good. But a destined time shall come when it is decreed that Areimanius, engaged in bringing on pestilence and famine, shall by these be utterly annihilated and shall disappear; and then shall the earth become a level plain, and there shall be one manner of life and one form of government for a blessed people who shall all speak one tongue.[278]

[276] Woodhouse, 168.

[277] Aubrey Diller, "Pletho and Plutarch", *Scriptorium* 8 (1954): 29-30.

[278] Plutarch, *Moralia,* "Isis and Osiris", vol. 5, tr. Frank Cole Babbitt, (Loeb, 1957), 114-115.

Diller suggested 1438 as a possible date for Plethon's copy of Plutarch, including the portions from Isis and Osiris. Diller suggested that Plethon copied these sections from an imperial manuscript that was brought to Florence.[279] If 1438 was indeed the date for Plethon's study of Plutarch, they accord well with George of Trebizond's testimony, as Plethon would have been reading the relevant passages in Florence, thus verifying that George of Trebizond was not merely slandering the philosopher but truthfully relating an exchange between the two men. George of Trebizond's statement therefore agrees with Scholarios' letters concerning Plethon's pagan belief.

Although Plutarch generally agreed with the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion, or what he thought they were,[280] he qualified the relevant passage as fabulous. Plethon cited Plutarch as one of the guides in his Laws, but the authority of Zoroaster was much superior to that of Plutarch in Plethon's schema. It is well known that Plethon ascribed the Chaldean Oracles, the sacred text of Neoplatonism in the Middle Ages, to Zoroaster (he was the first one to do so) and referred to Zoroaster as the first lawgiver, as far as he knew based on orally transmitted information.[281] Further, Plutarch's passages on the Zoroastrians were guides to interpreting Plato for Plethon's disciples. These passages were written in the margins of

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Emphasis added.

[279] Diller: 127.

[280] A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*, (Cambridge, 1975), 141. "The Hellenistic Greeks living outside Parthia never seem to have taken a serious intellectual interest in what was happening in Parthia; they became interested in a disembodied Persian thought, without any relation to political or social realities. What circulated in the Hellenistic world under the names of Zoroaster and of the Magi was a mixture of some genuine information with much arbitrary imagination."

[281] Note that Plethon, as well as his student Laonikos, considered this type of oral information to be more reliable than written forms. George Karamanolis, "Plethon and Scholarios on Aristotle", *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources,* ed. K. Ierodiakonou, (Oxford, 2002), 261. Laonikos, in the introductory paragraph to the *Apodeixis*, wrote that he composed his historical narrative based on oral information in addition to what he witnessed in his lifetime, thus agreeing with the ways in which Herodotos compiled information.

folios containing the Platonist Atticus' refutations of Aristotle in a manuscript compiled by Plethon's followers.[282] We also find extant portions of Plethon's Laws and excerpts from the pagan authors Julian, Plotinos, and Iamblichos, as well as refutations of Theodore Gazes and Scholarios, in this manuscript. Thus, the fragmentary information presented by Plutarch was appropriated as a manifestation of divine truth by Plethon and included in the Laws as well as in compilations from Mistra.

The most famous prophetic passage in Laonikos' History comes in the opening pages, but this passage has been interpreted by Vacalopoulos as proto-national discourse rather than belonging in the realm of oracle and prophecy.[283] However, the two were not independent of one another:

> And the present fame of the Hellenic language will be greater in the future, when an Emperor will rule over a sizeable Hellene Empire and he will have imperial descendants. The children of the Hellenes will be attached to these emperors according to their own customs and will be ruled in a manner pleasing to them. And they will rule over others forcefully.[284]

Both Plethon and Laonikos predicted the coming of a new age when people would follow the Hellenic religion. As we have seen, Hellenism was interpreted by the Mistra Circle as belief in the divine elements of unity and diversity, symbolized by Apollo, the Sun God, and Artemis, the Moon Goddess. Hellenism, as a holistic system of philosophy and religion, upheld the pagan oracles as manifestations of the divine, countering the Christian claim that the Judeo-Christian prophecies had exclusive access to eternal truth, whereas pagan oracles had none.

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[282] Monac. Gr. 490, fol. 117.

[283] A. E. Vacalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek Nation 1204-1461,* tr. Ian Moles, (New Jersey, 1970), 232-233.

[284] Darkó, **I**, 2. Tr. AA. "καὶ κλέος μὲν αὐτῇ μέγα τὸ παραυτίκα, μεῖζον δὲ καὶ ἐς αὖθις, ὁπότε δὴ ἀνὰ βασιλείαν οὐ φαύλην Ἕλλην τε αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐσόμενοι βασιλεῖς, οἳ δὴ καὶ οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων παῖδες ξυλλεγόμενοι κατὰ σφῶν αὐτῶν ἔθιμα ὡς ἥδιστα μὲν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς, τοῖς δὲ ἄλλοις ὡς κράτιστα πολιτεύοιντο."

Conclusion

The ideas of liberty, free will, fate, virtue, and the just state were not independent of a search for manifestations of these ideas in history. Plethon was not only a philosopher-teacher, he was also a lawmaker who turned to the classical Greek texts, in particular Plato's corpus, to reform the Byzantine state in the fifteenth century. Plethon's legacy extended beyond the borders of the Peloponnese, and his students contributed to the revival of the Greek classics in Italy, France, England, and Europe more generally. The Mistra Circle's interest in classical texts was not antiquarian, and they sought to decipher ancient texts to arrive at unchanging and eternal truth. This truth was revealed in human events, but Plethon and Laonikos also conceived of the cosmos as one integrated whole, encompassing both physics and ethics. Herodotos, in particular, was both a divine messenger as well as a veritable recorder of the virtuous acts of the Hellenes in the past, according to Plethon and Laonikos. They studied Herodotos in connection with the religion that Plethon sought to establish and interpreted Hellenism as a religious-political identity that manifested itself in ancient knowledge as well as in the affairs of the fifteenth century. In lieu of Christianity and Islam, which had evolved into systems of belief, Plethon advocated the religion of Hellenism, relying on philosophy as well as ritual and having a claim to eternal truth. Plethon's Laws thus attracted the ominous attention of Christian theologians and intellectuals, such as Scholarios and George of Trebizond, who correctly interpreted Plethon's attack on Christianity. Subscribing to Stoic determinism, Plethon envisaged a universe that was causally generated, regulated by unchanging rules, and that did not encompass the Christian notion of Divine Providence (*Pronoia*). Thus, philosophical lawmaking, oracular wisdom, and stoic interpretation of the universe replace the notion of transcendentally revealed religion that has the individual and her free will at its center.

2. The Fifteenth-Century Barbarians in Classicizing Garb

Introduction

The present chapter is concerned with the ways in which Chalkokondyles conceptualized the barbarian "other" and the various techniques he employed in narrating that subject. In particular, Chalkokondyles' account will be discussed in the context of Byzantine historiography and in comparison with his Greek historians, specifically Doukas[285] and Michael Kritoboulos.[286] By evaluating Chalkokondyles in this particular Byzantine context, it will be demonstrated that his history had no similar contemporary model in medieval or Renaissance Greek historiography. Thus, to understand Chalkokondyles as a Hellene historian writing in a particular intellectual milieu, it is imperative not only to examine the most obvious avenue of research encompassing the illustrious Byzantine tradition of historiography but also to look elsewhere, namely, to Chalkokondyles' revival of Herodotos, to the intellectual production associated with Plethon in Mistra and to his connections with the Italian Renaissance. This is not to say that Chalkokondyles was imitating Italian models but, rather, that he was conversant with contemporary Italian humanist theories concerning historical processes. Within that humanist milieu, Chalkokondyles was an innovator rather than a follower. Indeed, Momigliano cited Chalkokondyles as an intellectual who played a role in the rehabilitation of Herodotos as a trustworthy and relevant historian. Furthermore, Momigliano argued that the rehabilitation process was only completed in 1566, when Henri Estienne prefaced an edition of Herodotos with a tract

[285] Doukas, *Decline and fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks by Doukas,* tr. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1975).

[286] Kritoboulos and ed. Diether Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, (Berolini, 1983). Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror,* tr. Charles T. Riggs (Princeton, 1954).

on Herodotos called "Apologia pro Herodoto."[287] Chalkokondyles, who composed his work in the closing years of the 15th century, was insightful in his evaluation and adoption of Herodotos as a guide at this early date, in both Byzantine and Italian intellectual circles. Chalkokondyles' use of Ottoman history as the main narrative thread of the *Apodeixis* was a clear departure from Byzantine historiographical tradition and merits close attention.[288]

Chalkokondyles' Revolutionary Classicizing

It has been a staple of the scholarship on Chalkokondyles to mention the historian's use of classicizing Greek.[289] Moreover, Chalkokondyles not only employed classical Attic syntax, but he also adopted a classical vocabulary, referring to contemporary peoples and geographies with archaic ethnonyms and toponyms.[290] Chalkokondyles referred to his contemporary compatriots as "Hellenes," for example, and he used the same classical terminology when naming others. Thus, the Italians were generally called "Romans," (unless Chalkokondyles was referring to the citizens of the Italian city-republics, in which case he used names such as "Venetians" or "Genoese," which he further strove to place in a classical

[287] A. Momigliano, "The Place of Herodotos in the History of Historiography," *Studies in Historiography* (London, 1966): 127-142.

[288] Students of Chalkokondyles never fail to mention the historian's indebtedness to Herodotos. A. Markopoulos, "Das Bild des Anderen bei Laonikos Chalkokondyles und das Vorbild Herodot," *JÖB*, 20 (2000); Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *Expuneri Istorice*, tr. Vasile Grecu, (Bucarest, 1958), p 8-9, 12-13; W. Miller, "The Last Athenian Historian: Laonikos Chalkokondyles," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 42.1, (1922); H. Hunger, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Literature: The Importance of Rhetoric," *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. M. Mullett and R. Scott, (Birmingham, 1981) 44-45.

[289] Antoine Calosynas, "Antoine Calosynas vies des Chalcocondylas d'Athènes", ed. C. Hopf. K. Güterbock, "Laonikos Chalkondyles," *Zeitschrift für Völkerrecht und Bundesstaatsrecht* 4 (1909): 97. Jonathan Harris, "Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the Rise of the Ottoman Turks," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 27(2003): 163.

[290] Hans Ditten "Βάρβαροι Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den Letzten Byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern".

context[291]), the Hungarians were called "Paionians," the Serbians "Triballi," the French "Celts," the Russians "Sarmatians," the Tatars and the Mongols "Skythians," north African Arabs "Libyans" and so forth. Similarly, Chalkokondyles also chose to employ archaic toponyms. While the use of classical toponyms for Western and Byzantine cities does not stand out because of the correspondence between Byzantine tradition and the contemporary names for these places (Milan is "Mediolanon,"[292] Mistra is "Sparta"[293] and Constantinople is invariably "Byzantion" except in isolated instances), Chalkokondyles' use of archaic toponyms for Islamic cities is striking. Cairo, for example, appears as "Memphis,"[294] while Baghdad appears as "Babylon."[295] Thus, Chalkokondyles oftentimes conceptualized the barbarian "other" as being grounded in a classical past they shared with the Hellene protagonists.

However, Chalkokondyles chose to refer to the protagonist of the *Apodeixis* with a contemporary name, calling the Ottomans "Turks." At first glance, this onomastic practice does not stand out as a superficial comparison with the contemporary Doukas demonstrates that the latter also used the ethnonym "Turk" with respect to the Ottomans.[296] Kritoboulos, on the other hand, whose style, classicizing vocabulary and syntax are relatively close to the model Chalkokondyles used,[297] never referred to the Ottomans as Turks; neither did he refer to them by any other ethnic designation, failing to find a collective name for this people. In

[291] Hans Ditten, "Die Namen für Venedig und Genua bei den Letzten Byzantinischen Geschichtschreiber (15. Jahrhundert)," *Helikon* 6 (1966).

[292] Darkó, **I,** 79, 180.

[293] Darkó, **I,** 91; **II,** 227.

[294] Darkó, **I,** 131.

[295] Darkó, **I**, 105, 157.

[296] Doukas, tr. H. J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1975).

[297] Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, 44*-91*.

his History composed for Mehmed II as a panegyric of the Ottoman ruler, he spelled out in the dedicatory letter to the ruler that he chose to write a History in Greek to accompany the works in Arabic and Persian. While these latter works "will become known only among Arabs and Persians and those who are familiar with their language," Kritoboulos' History, being written in the Greek language, will help to demonstrate to "all the western nations"/"ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἑσπερίοις ἅπασι τῶν γενῶν" the great achievements of Mehmed II.[298] Kritoboulos did not at all mention the fledgling Ottoman Turkish historiography in this passage or elsewhere, making it clear that he did not attach any importance to it, to the Turkish language or to Turkish culture. However, the Arabic and Persian traditions were comparable to the Greek tradition, although belonging to another cultural universe. Kritoboulos thus understood the contemporary Ottomans as belonging to the cultural sphere of the Arabic-Persian civilization with no distinctive Turkish traits contributing to their success.

Chalkokondyles' consistent and systematic use of the ethnic designation "Turk" is particularly prominent, as this comparison with Kritoboulos reveals. What was the underlying reason for Chalkokondyles' deliberate choice of referring to the Ottomans with a contemporary name[299] in a highly classicizing historical account, and what does this usage signify? While employing a Herodotean model and putting intertextuality to use whenever he deemed it useful, Chalkokondyles was essentially writing about the new political order at the end of the fifteenth century. The emergence of the Ottoman Turks was a recent phenomenon that could only be partly explained by recourse to classical methodology and classical categories differentiating between civilized and barbarian, settled and nomadic, autochthonous and migratory. However, this explanatory process is, at best, translational and

[298] Ibid. 5.

[299] The Byzantines referred to the holders of a vast empire extending from the Chinese to the Persian frontier in the sixth century as "Turks."

does not fully capture the sui generis position of the migratory Ottoman Turks as the foes of the autochthonous Byzantines (or "the Hellenes" according to Chalkokondyles), who made away with the remnants of a thousand-year-old Empire. Furthermore, Persians are conspicuously missing in the *Apodeixis*, while Chalkokondyles' contemporary Doukas had configured the Timurids as Persian. Chalkokondyles' sporadically uses the rather common ethnonym "Persian" for a few fifteenth-century ethnic groups, but repeatedly uses the fifteenth-century ethnonym "Turk." This warns us that Chalkokondyles had substituted Herodotos' Persians with the Ottoman Turks.[300] We will see that Chalkokondyles often employed Turkish sources, thus adopting the Herodotean strategy of using foreign informants, and at times cited the Turkish provenance of his information with the result that he appears conscious of the "otherness" of the subject, both from Hellenic culture as well as from previous barbarian peoples . The Persians thus appear as a distinct and separate category. Chalkokondyles' reliance on Turkish informants rather than on the well-developed Byzantine tradition hints that, in this instance, the Byzantine models were useless in helping to explain the rise of the Ottomans. The reference to the Ottomans as "Turks" was part of his innovative program to document fifteenth-century realities.

Returning to the subject of Byzantine tradition, Chalkokondyles was not an exception in that intellectual tradition for his use of classicizing syntax and vocabulary. The use of classicizing in Byzantine letters has been extensively studied by scholars for the insights it provides into the worldview of the small and elite circle of Byzantine literati from late antiquity into the Renaissance.[301] By studying medieval Greek literary forms, Hunger argued

[300] Chalkokondyles was aware that the Persians existed in the fifteenth century. However, he referred to them without any geographical or ethnic information.

[301] Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Greek Culture in the Roman World; (Cambridge, UK, New York, 2007); Anthony Kaldellis, "Historicism in Byzantine Thought and Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 61(2008); Robert Browning, "Byzantine Scholarship," *Past and Present* 28(1964); Roger Scott and Margaret Mullett, *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition: University of Birmingham*

that Byzantine literary production rested on a relatively uninterrupted tradition from the classical period up to the Renaissance and that the imitation of Attic forms, language, meter, and genre came naturally to Byzantine authors, as the historical rupture introduced by the barbarian migrations in the West was not present in the Eastern Empire.[302]

The continuity thesis has been modified by Mango who has indicated that the self-representation of Byzantine intellectuals as being firmly grounded in the classical world is deceptive.[303] By way of example, Mango cites one of the most transformative periods, the seventh century. The continuing demographic implications of the Justinianic plague, the Sassanid invasions, the rise of Islam and the establishment of the Umayyad, the consequent political and thematic reorganization of the Eastern Empire, and the ensuing changing modes of production had brought about a world markedly different from the classical one, which had been focused on multiple urban centers dispersed and connected throughout the Mediterranean.[304]

Hence, the easy access for a reader of Attic Greek to the writings of both Prokopios in the sixth century and Chalkokondyles in the fifteenth century, as provided by the similarities in linguistic forms, vocabulary, and genre despite the thousand years separating the two historians, is not always a reliable indicator of the structures of thought underlying language. At the same time, these linguistic and stylistic similarities made Prokopios accessible to Chalkokondyles. Indeed, Prokopios was widely copied and studied during the Palaiologan

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Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, 1979 (Birmingham, 1981); R. J. H. Jenkins, "The Hellenistic Origins of Byzantine Literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17(1963): 37-52.

[302] Herbert Hunger, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Literature: The Importance of Rhetoric," in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition* ed. Margaret Mullett and Roger Scott (Birmingham, 1981).

[303] Cyril Mango, "Discontinuity with the Classical Past in Byzantium," in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Roger Scott (Birmingham, 1981).

[304] John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture,* (Cambridge, 1997).

period to the extent that excerpts from Prokopios were used for educational purposes. The earliest extant manuscripts for Prokopios' Wars are dated to the early thirteenth century, and numerous fifteenth-century manuscripts containing Prokopios' works attest to the fact that they were widely popular when Chalkokondyles was composing the *Apodeixis*.[305] A now-lost fifteenth-century manuscript containing excerpts from the Gothic Wars was accompanied by letters from Plethon, Chalkokondyles' teacher, and Bessarion, among other letters by fifteenth-century Greeks.[306] The Gothic Wars was available to the Florentine historian Bruni, a student of the Byzantine Manuel Chrysoloras and who reworked Prokopios in his own tract on the Gothic Wars.[307] Although Chalkokondyles' narrative does not betray any parallels with Prokopios', they were both using a high register of Attic Greek to compose their histories, similar to generations of Byzantine historians who succeeded Prokopios and who preceded Chalkokondyles.

To illustrate the linguistic and stylistic similarities between Prokopios and Chalkokondyles as well as their essential difference, consider the following example. When both mention the Massagetae in similar Attic syntax, forms, and terms and make an implicit reference to Herodotos, not only were they referring to different peoples, but these remarks were also concealing different understandings of social organization and different underlying reasons for using classical terminology.

In Prokopios, the Massagetae first appear as a contingent of the Empire at the battle of Dara during the Persian Wars who later planned to desert to the Persian side but were

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[305] Maria K. Kalli, *The Manuscript Tradition of Procopius' Gothic Wars: A Reconstruction of Family Y in the Light of a Hitherto Unknown Manuscript (Athos, Lavra H-73),* Beiträge Zur Altertumskunde (München, 2004), 149-67.

[306] Ibid., 166.

[307] E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London: Hambledon Press, 1983), 87.

unsuccessful. Prokopios explained that the Massagetae were then called Huns.[308] Elsewhere, he wrote that the Massagetae were simple, sturdy, and not given to bodily comforts. In fact, they neglected their bodies to the extent that they were continually covered with filth.[309] When Naples was captured, Prokopios presented these peoples as savage and impious, killing pregnant women and defiling holy spaces.[310] In all of these instances, the Massagetae appeared as a barbarian people with no significant social organization; this is in contrast to the Empire, which is the only state with the ideology of universality according to sixth-century Romans.

This presentation is quite different from that of Chalkokondyles. The fifteenth-century historian wrote that in the past, the Massagetae ruled over Khotan, which enjoyed good laws under their administration and which was the greatest city in the East apart from Samarkand and Memphis.[311] Khotan is mentioned in the sections on Timur, who according to Chalkokondyles was Massaget in origin.[312] Timur's rise to kingly power was also initially associated with the Massagetae. According to Chalkokondyles, Timur had been promoted by the "King of the Massagetae" to the highest honor, commander of the entire army.[313] Chalkokondyles is laconic concerning the Massagetae except to write that it is a strong nation, famous for its military qualities.[314] From the unfolding of events in the narrative, as

[308] Prokopios, History of the Wars, **III,** xi. 37.

[309] Prokopios, **VII**, xiv, 28.

[310] Prokopios, **V,** x, 29.

[311] Darkó, **I,** 118-119.

[312] Darkó, **I**, 110. Chalkokondyles' account of Timur is similar to Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo's travel account in Spanish, written after Clavijo had visited Timur's court on an embassy from the Castillian King Henry III. González de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403-1406*, tr. Guy Le Strange, ed. E. Denison Ross and Eileen Power; (London, 1928).

[313] Darkó, **I**, 105.

[314] Darkó, **I**, 109-110.

Timur raids Bagdad and Samarkand with his army, the Massagetae are distinguished from the Skythians (the Tatars of the Golden Horde) and the Chagatai, to whom Chalkokondyles referred with their fifteenth-century ethnonym.

Unlike Prokopios' Massagetae, the Massagetae in Chalkokondyles have a highly elaborate military organization. The latter are not the almost animal-like peoples that Prokopios described, but rather a mighty foe of the Ottomans with a distinguished past and who were worthy of fearful admiration by the entire world. What, then, were Chalkokondyles' motivations for employing a classicizing style? In this instance, Chalkokondyles' use of the name "Massaget" in the fifteenth century should be considered part of his Herodotean program. Just as the Massagetae in Herodotos were able to defeat the Persians and kill Cyrus,[315] Timur, a Massaget in origin according to Chalkokondyles, was able to gain the upper hand against the Ottomans and then defeat and capture the Ottoman ruler Bayezid. Putting intertextuality to use, Chalkokondyles emphasized that the barbarian protagonists were the Ottomans, a new ethnic formation with no classical past. However, Chalkokondyles also grounded the early fifteenth-century military encounter both in the present and in the ancient past with the reference to Timur as a classically inspired Massaget.[316]

Regarding Byzantine intellectual production more generally, it has been shown that continuity with the classical past in language, literary motifs, and genre provided both a justification for the present order of power relations in society, such as the hierarchical structure of Byzantine society and the dependence of Byzantine intellectuals on imperial

[315] Herodotos, 1.214.

[316] Chalkokondyles repeated information on the Massagetae from Herodotos and Diodoros of Sicily, as well as introducting fifteenth-century data. Chalkokondyles' narrative did not make clear who the Massagetae were in the fifteenth-century and he admitted that "This race is not well known to us and many stories are told about it that it would be better not to believe, at least as far as I can ascertain".

power, and created a sense of "timelessness."[317] Utilizing the continuous Hellenic and Roman traditions, Byzantine intellectuals instilled belief in the immutability of the Byzantine Empire. However, Chalkokondyles was describing a new world order that appeared after the final collapse of the Byzantine Empire, which no longer inspired with its permanence. In fact, he was putting the vocabulary of the classical tradition to new use, and his classicizing tendencies were not conservative, but rather iconoclastic. Unlike the majority of Byzantine historians, Chalkokondyles was neither imperially sponsored nor based in Constantinople. Even if he had been in Constantinople, he does not cite that information in the narrative with the result being that the historian appears to keep a critical distance from that center of Byzantine identity. Indeed, the historian often betrayed a hostile attitude toward Byzantine Emperors and the vanquished ruling elite.

In contrast, Kritoboulos' classicizing style is better understood as a continuation of the Byzantine imperial historiographical tradition. Kritoboulos was appointed the governor of Imbros after he negotiated the island's surrender to Mehmed II in 1456 with the Ottoman admiral Yunus Bey. He later remained governor on behalf of Demetrios Palaiologos, vassal of Mehmed II. Kritoboulos wisely and peacefully managed the delicate situation until the Venetian takeover in 1466.[318] Thus, Kritoboulos conceptualized the Ottoman state as belonging to the great imperial tradition, implicitly noting that it was the fifteenth-century embodiment of the imperial line that began with the Assyrians and continued with the Medes and the Persians before passing to the Greeks and Romans, including the Byzantines.[319] In the dedicatory letter to Mehmed II, Kritoboulos addressed the Ottoman ruler with the following

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[317] M. C. Bartusis, "The Functions of Archaizing in Byzantium," *Byzantinoslavica,* 56 (1995): 271-278.

[318] Diether Reinsch, "Kritobulos of Imbros - Learned Historian, Ottoman Raya and Byzantine Patriot" *Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'etudes byzantines* 40(2003): 301.

[319]Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, 13-15.

formula: "To the Greatest Autocrat, to the Emperor of Emperors Mehmed, the successful, the victor, the winner of trophies, the triumphant, the unconquered, the lord of the land and the sea by God's will, from Kritoboulos the islander, the servant of your servants."[320] Kritoboulos thus attributed Byzantine imperial titles to Mehmed II and referred to himself as the Ottoman ruler's "servant"/"δοῦλος," a title used in reference to Byzantine bureaucrats. Hence, Kritoboulos' classicizing style contributed to the legitimization of Ottoman rule and, in particular, to Mehmed II's conquests.

In the introduction to the *Apodeixis*, Chalkokondyles also elaborated on the succession of empires using the same order, beginning with the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks and ending with the Romans.[321] However, according to Chalkokondyles, the Byzantines had wrongfully assumed the Roman title, which in fact belonged to the West historically up to the fifteenth century. Thus, the succession of empires did not pass to the Ottomans from the Byzantines, and neither did Ottoman rule belong to the classical tradition of Empire. The consistent use of the title "βασιλεὺς" for the Ottoman rulers in the *Apodeixis* should not confuse the reader; "βασιλεὺς" is better translated as "ruler" or "king" than as "emperor," as the latter term indicates universality. After all, Chalkokondyles referred to all territorial rulers, including barbarian rulers such as the King of the Massagetae,[322] the Mamluk Sultan[323] and Timur,[324] with the same formula ("βασιλεὺς"), making it clear that in the fifteenth century, there were a plethora of monarchical political structures, both petty and substantial. In the first confrontation between Timur and Bayezid, Chalkokondyles referred to

[320] Ibid., 3. "αὐτοκρατορι μεγίστῳ, βασιλεῖ βασιλέων Μεχεμέτει, εὐτυχεῖ, νικητῇ, τροπαιούχω, θριαμβευτῇ, ἀηττήτῳ, κυρίῳ γῆς καὶ θαλλάσσης θεοῦ θελήματι, Κριτόβουλος δοῦλος εὐτελής."

[321] Darkó, **I**, 3.

[322] Darkó, **I**, 105.

[323] Darkó **I**, 131.

[324] Darkó, **I**, 96-155.

Timur as "βασιλεὺς," while referring to Bayezid only by name, thus drawing attention to the fact that not all "βασιλεῖς" were equal in rank.[325]

Another distinguishing aspect of Chalkokondyles' classicizing discourse that set him apart from traditional Byzantine historiography is the absence of the authorial persona in the *Apodeixis*. Students of Byzantine historiography have differentiated that tradition from its classical counterpart based on the emphasis Byzantine historians placed on individuals and the deliberate intrusions of the historian into the subject matter.[326] While classical historians, who composed their works until the dark seventh-century, strove to provide an objective telling of their chosen subject matter, the purpose and result of Byzantine historians were markedly different. Although the latter also set great value on recording the truth, the objectivity they strove for was certainly not impersonal. Some Byzantine historians did not present themselves as being removed from the picture they were painting and promoted their heroes and vilified the antagonists.[327] The fifteenth-century historians Doukas, Sphrantzes, and Kritoboulos also utilized the authorial persona. In Doukas' impassioned account, the historian made frequent use of the motif "the sins of our fathers," and the overtly Christian rhetoric in this historical account is a projection of the Christian identity of its composer. Sphrantzes, whose diplomatic career took him to the Ottoman court, composed his historiographical account as a memoir. Kritoboulos, on the other hand, bears witness to the fact that classical learning did not translate into objective writing of history. The mimesis of antiquity in Byzantine letters after the seventh century was not the self-conscious imitation of

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[325] Darkó, **I**, 95.

[326] J. N. Ljubarskij, "Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992): 177-186; Roger Scott, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography," in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Roger Scott (Birmingham: 1981), 61-74.

[327] R. Macrides, "The Historian in the History," *Studies in Honor of Robert Browning,* (1996): 205-224.

the classics that we find in fifteenth-century Italy; rather, Byzantine authors strove to adopt aspects of classical thought piecemeal. In his own History, Kritoboulos emulated Arrian's *Anabasis*, the widely read historical account of Alexander the Great.[328] In fact, in addition to his own History, Kritoboulos copied Arrian's *Anabasis* in his own hand to present to Mehmed II, and this copy is extant and remains in the Topkapı library. However, while Arrian was at times critical of Alexander the Great, Kritoboulos' account is unabashedly panegyrical, and Mehmed II comes across as the hero par excellence and without any weaknesses. The status of Kritoboulos as Ottoman governor no doubt greatly contributed to this portrayal, and the historian made no effort to maintain a critical distance.

However, prior to the seventh century, employment in the imperial government did not necessarily lead to a subjective writing of history. For this reason, Prokopios, writing in the sixth century and holding the position of secretary to Justinian's general Belissarios, appears as one of the last classical historians in the Greek historiographical tradition. Av. Cameron has argued convincingly on the proper way to read the highly derogatory Secret History in tandem with the eulogizing On Buildings: Prokopios had the classical objective of providing a full account of Justinian's rule, recounting, for example, both Justinian's failed intervention in the divisive theological dispute concerning Nestorianism and the imperially sponsored building program.[329] In fact, Prokopios' critical distance to his subject matter was so complete that Kaldellis has been able to argue that the historian was harboring and disguising pagan beliefs in the repressive sixth-century context.[330] Such a historiographical approach is not to be found in later centuries, but it was revived by Chalkokondyles who probably had access to Prokopios. Chalkokondyles did not focus on the individual as the

[328] Kritoboulos and Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae,* 59*-66*.

[329] Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, New York, 1996).

[330] Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2004).

protagonist of the narrative, but rather on abstract entities, in particular the Hellenes and the Ottomans, as his subject matter. Although Chalkokondyles arranged his work by the accession dates of the Ottoman rulers, and ascribed much importance to the individual traits of the Ottoman rulers, he also greatly relied on descriptions of ethnic groups, including the Ottomans, and their longstanding cultural practices.

Furthermore, Chalkokondyles rarely overtly projected himself as the author onto the subject matter and did so only in those instances where he qualified the provenance of the presented information as being certain. Thus, when Chalkokondyles provided an overview of Turkish principalities in Asia Minor, he wrote that he knows for a fact/"ἐπίσταμαι" that those under the rule of Turgut, Karaman, Metin, and Aydın belong to the Turkish race.[331] Elsewhere, when Chalkokondyles listed the casualties after the second battle of Kosovo between Murad II and Hunyadi, the Historian wrote that he learned/"ἐπυθόμην" that seven thousand Paionians and Dakes perished, while on the Ottoman side, there were only four thousand casualties.[332] Similarly, Chalkokondyles introduced the Ottoman budget with the same qualification that he learned/"ἐπυθόμην" the specifics from an Ottoman chancery secretary. Chalkokondyles was not employed in any capacity in either the Byzantine or the Ottoman states, and his critical distance to both of these states should be understood within the context of this lack of imperial sponsorship.

Historians have compared Chalkokondyles' Ottomans to Herodotos' Persians, but they did not discuss the underlying reasons for Chalkokondyles' adoption of that particular historiographical model.[333] What were the uses of ethnographic information in the greater

[331] Darkó, **I,** 60.

[332] Darkó **II**, 137.

[333] A. Markopoulos, "Das Bild des Anderen bei Laonikos Chalkokondyles und das Vorbild Herodot", *JÖB*, 20 (2000). Ferhan K. Mollaoglu, "Laonikos Chalkokondyles'in Hayatı ve "Tarihi", *OTAM*, 21 (2007): 41–57.

narrative of the *Apodeixis*? Attempting a structural analysis of the information Chalkokondyles offered on the barbarian "other," one may investigate the various ways in which such information can be contextualized at that particular historical moment, which encompasses the fall of all of the Byzantine territories to the Ottomans during the lifetime of Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the humanistic adoption of the classics in the Renaissance. Thus, Chalkokondyles' Herodotean model was connected to his political agenda of constructing a barbarian pedigree for the Ottoman Turks by establishing their connection to the foes of the Hellenes throughout history and by presenting such information in a novel manner. This method of presentation departed from both earlier Byzantine historiographies and contemporary accounts by Greek historians.

At the time the *Apodeixis* was composed, Italian humanists were looking to the classical historians for inspiration. Chalkokondyles' counterparts in Italy, such as Bruni, were mining the Roman past and Roman historians, in particular Livy, for a new vision of historiography. In this new model, the Italian historians focused on city-states, developed a theory of republicanism, adopted a secular analysis in lieu of explanations based on divine intervention in human affairs, distanced themselves from the medieval period and offered a tri-partite division of history (the classical period, the middle ages, and the "now" of Bruni).[334] The classical Greek historians were translated into Latin at this time. Nicholas V (1447-1455) commissioned the translation project and Herodotos, Polybios, Thucydides, Strabo, and Appian became accessible in Latin in the latter half of the fifteenth century.[335] All nine books of Herodotos were translated into Latin by Lorenzo Valla in 1457 following the

[334] Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance; Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, (Princeton, 1966); James Hankins, "The "Baron Thesis" after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56.2 (1995); Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Volume 1, the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[335] E. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography*, 83-107.

death of Nicholas V, who had commissioned the project, but Valla did not have a chance to revise the translation and supply his own preface as he, too, died in that same year. Valla not only belonged to the intellectual circle of Bessarion along with Laonikos' cousin Demetrios Chalkokondyles, but he had also hoped to avail himself of Bessarion's help with the translation before the Cardinal went to Bologna.[336] By the end of the fifteenth century, the Latin translation of Herodotos had already been printed three times (Venice (1474), Rome (1475), Venice (1494)) in addition to its numerous manuscript copies, bearing testimony to its wide appeal in the West.[337]

Thus, Chalkokondyles' adoption of a Herodotean-style historiography focused on the Ottomans should be seen in light of his connections in Italy and the well-established demand for information on the Ottomans. Chalkokondyles catered to that demand and was successful given that the work survives in 29 manuscript copies from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries. It was first published in Latin translation in 1556[338] (along with Theodore Gaza's exhortations in response to the Ottoman threat) and in an illustrated French translation in 1577[339] under the auspices of the French throne even before its first Greek edition in 1615.[340] Within the span of half a century, both the Latin and the French translations underwent numerous reprints, attesting to Chalkokondyles' popularity in the sixteenth century.

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[336]Ludwig Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion Als Theologe, Humanist, Und Staatsmann: Funde Und Forschungen* (Paderborn, 1923), 325-331.

[337] Stefano Pagliaroli, *L'Erodoto Del Valla* (Messina, 2006), 25-38.

[338] Laonikos Chalkokondyles and Theodore Gaza., *Laonici Chalcondylae Atheniensis de Origine et Rebus Gestis Turcorum Libri Decem, Nuper e Graeco in Latinum Conversi*, tr. Conrad Clauserus (Basileae, 1556).

[339] Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *L'histoire de la décadence de l'empire Grec et establissement de celuy des Turcs, comprise en dix livres, par Nicolas Chalcondyle*, tr. Blaise de Vigenère (Paris, 1577).

[340] Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Georgios Akropolites, and Nikephoras Gregoras, *Laonici Chalcocondylae Atheniensis Historia De Origine Ac Reebus Gestis Imperatorum Turcicorum,* (Genevae, 1615).

In his own work, Chalkokondyles displayed an intricate knowledge of the political context of what is today called civic humanism, adding further proof of his connections with Italy.[341] Casting his vote for the Florentine and Venetian states, Chalkokondyles appeared knowledgeable of Florentine and Venetian propaganda against Milan during the course of the wars, and he detailed and applauded Florentine and Venetian civic structures while criticizingthe seigniorial rule of Milan as tyranny.[342] Chalkokondyles often presented the Italian city-states, in particular Venice and Florence, as civilized foils to the barbarian Ottoman Turks.[343]

An aspect of that binary opposition between civilized and barbarian in Chalkokondyles was a discussion of political structures that was informed by a reading of classical Greek political theory. Throughout the *Apodeixis*, Chalkokondyles evinced a general interest in the ways that different peoples are governed or govern themselves and integrated his findings into each ethnographic piece that accompanied the politico/military narrative. Previous Byzantine historians were no doubt equally interested in political structures, but the historiographical model that they adopted was in tune with the notion of just Empire and

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[341] James Hankins, "The "Baron Thesis" after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56 (1995): 309-38. For the Latin/western sources of Laonikos Chalkokondyles see "Chapter 4: Relinquishing the Claim to Roman Inheritance." In this final chapter, I argue that Chalkokondyles made use of various western narratives, such as that of Carolingian epics and the myth of Pope Joan. He was also knowledgeable about the ways in which the fall of Constantinople was evaluated in the West as "the revenge for Troy."" Furhtermore Chalkokondyles adopted a Venetian perspective concerning the Fourth Crusade. In "Chapter 3: "The Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk: Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography," I focus on the use of political theory to discuss Italian city states. In this section, I also compare and contrast Leonardo Bruni's "Constitution of Florence"" which was composed in Greek with Laonikos Chalkokondyles'narrative concerning Florence.

[342] Darkó, **I,** 181; **II**, 38." For the Venetians, when Filippo died, came to an agreement with the people of Milan, encouraged the city to accept an aristocracy, and acted as the defenders there of the regime. The city was governed in that way for some time, selecting magistrates from among the leading men inside the city. But they began to fight in the streets as the city turned toward a more egalitarian regime, and they sent out an army. Part of the city, as matters were not making any progress, wanted a tyranny, and they called in Francesco to be their ruler; but the rest were opposed to them."

[343] See Chapter 3: "The Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk: Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography."

lawful imperialism. Magdalino has written that the Rome appropriated by Byzantine authors was the Rome of Polybios, Plutarch, Dio Cassius, and John the Lydian. The Byzantines'

> " democratic and aristocratic traditions were those of the Hellenistic *megalopolis;* their revival was the revival of an earlier *renovatio à la grecque,* that of Justinian and his age, itself experienced through the filter of the Macedonian Renaissance.""[344]

Polybios, who applied and synthesized Greek political philosophy with the historical development of the Roman state and its institutions,[345] was an apt example to follow for imperially sponsored Byzantine historians who configured themselves as Roman historians with a Hellenic heritage.[346]

The Roman legacy, which Chalkokondyles had relocated in the West, was also appropriated by Mehmed II.[347] Polybios appealed to the sensibilities of Mehmed II, who fashioned himself as an imperial ruler with universal aspirations. Mehmed II kept the five extant books of Polybios in his library. He also had Italian artists commemorate his rule with bronze medals that imitated ancient Roman coins.[348] Gentile Bellini, who also painted Mehmed II's portrait, was among the artists Mehmed II employed to design these medals. In one of Bellini's designs, the obverse has Mehmed II's bust with the inscription "Suitanus Mohameth Othomanus Turcorum Imperator"/"Sultan Mehmed, of the house of Osman, Emperor of the Turks," while on the reverse, three crowns appear. In another bronze medallion by Bertaldo di Giovanni, the obverse has Mehmed II's portrait with the inscription "Maumbet Asie ac Trapesunzis Magneque Gretie Imperat"/"Mehmed, Emperor of Asia,

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[344] Paul Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*," *Speculum* 58(1983): 344.

[345]D. E. Hahm, "Kings and Constitutions: Hellenistic Theories," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* ed. C. J. Rowe, et al. (New York, 2000).

[346] See Chapter 4: "Relinquishing the Claim to Roman Inheritance".

[347] Gülru Necipoğlu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," *Muqarnas,* 29 (2012).

[348] Julian Raby, "Pride and Prejudice: Mehmed the Conqueror and the Italian Portrait Medal," *Studies in the History of Art* 21(1987); Julian Raby, "Constanzo De Ferrara," in *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, ed. Stephen K. Scher (1994); Susan Spinale, "Reassessing the So-Called 'Tricaudet Medal' of Mehmed II," *The Medal* 42(2003): 3-22.

Trebizond, and Greater Greece." Some scholars argue that the three crowns in the Bellini medal symbolized his rule over these territories. The Renaissance bronze medals that were made in imitation of ancient Roman coins had definite imperial connotations; Mehmed II's decision to have Italian artists design these with his portrait and with the titles in Latin is generally evaluated in the context of Mehmed II's imperial program.

The rise and decline of empires was connected to the legitimacy of the Roman Empire in the West and the illegitimacy of the Ottoman Empire in succession to Byzantine rule in the *Apodeixis*. Illegitimate empire and imperialism in Herodotos, as well as in Chalkokondyles, was mainly associated with the Persian, and in Chalkokondyles' case, Ottoman, invading armies and with a finely-tuned military machine under the "βασιλεὺς." Before analyzing the various types of barbarian political structures that Chalkokondyles illustrated with fifteenth-century examples, we will finish reviewing the more formal aspects of Herodotean influence in the *Apodeixis*: the investigative method and the structuring of the Books.

The Adoption of Herodotean Investigative Techniques and Structure of the Books

The similarity to Herodotos strikes the reader in the opening paragraph of the *Apodeixis* as Chalkokondyles establishes the subject matter with the following words:

> The result of the enquiries carried out by Laonikos. The following is composed as a history by Laonikos the Athenian, out of all the information that has reached him in life through seeing and hearing. Intending, at the same time, to fulfill that obligation to Nature, and intending that none of all that happened at this time should appear inglorious to succeeding generations, for it seems to me, that they are in no way inferior to anything that ever happened in the world that is worthy of remembering. I talk of the chance events that happened to their rule during the final period of the Hellenes, and I talk of the rise of the Turks to great might, indeed to the greatest that has ever yet been reached.[349]

[349] Darkó, **I**, 1-2. Tr. AA. "Λαονίκῳ Ἀθηναίῳ τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον οἱ ἐς ἐπὶ θέαν τε καὶ ἀκοὴν ἀφιγμένων ἐς ἱστορίαν ξυγγέγραπται τάδε, ὥστε δὴ χρέος τοῦτο ἐκτινύναι τῇ φύσει ἅμα οἰόμενος καὶ μηδὲν αὐτῶν ἀκλεῶς ἔχειν ἐς τοὺς ἐπιγιγνομένους ξυνενεχθέντων, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, οὐδαμῇ ἐλασσόνων τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ποτὲ γενομένων μνήμης ἀξίων. τῆς τε Ἑλλήνων φημὶ τελευτῆς τὰ ἐς τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτῶν ἐπισυμβεβηκότα, καὶ Τούρκων ἐπὶ μέγα δυνά-μεως καὶ ἐπὶ μέγιστον τῶν πώποτε ἤδη ἀφικομένων." Emphasis added.

Chalkokondyles' introduction is very similar to Herodotos' preface, not only because of his choice of words but also because of his conceptualization of History:

> Herodotous of Halicarnassus here presents his research so that human events do not fade with time. May the great and wonderful deeds—some brought forth by the Hellenes, others by the barbarians—not go unsung; as well as the causes that led them to make war on each other.[350]

The titles of both works as well as the opening phrase of Chalkokondyles' introduction are clearly concerned with the role of investigation in (historical) writing on an abstract level. In fact, at the time Herodotos wrote, the word "ἡ ἱστορία" did not have its present-day connotation, but had a more general meaning of "enquiry"/"investigation."[351] Thus, the title of Chalkokondyles' History, ἀπόδειξις ἱστοριῶν, is slightly different from Herodotos' ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις. Indeed, Chalkokondyles' use of the plural ἱστοριῶν with the singular ἀπόδειξις suggests that the historian was deliberately using the archaic meaning of the word and therefore the title may be better translated as "The Result of the Inquiries," a reading more akin to Chalkokondyles' aims and philosophy of history than that offered by Nicoloudis: "The Demonstration of Histories."

Chalkokondyles implicitly noted later in the introduction that he adopted an approach similar to Herodotos in his investigations, as the fifteenth-century historian relied on information he had witnessed as well as oral reports to explain both the events of his lifetime and prior events, all of which brought him closer to the truth.[352] Not only did Chalkokondyles have a claim to truth, but he also believed that his methods of

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[350] Herodotos, tr. Purvis. Proem. "ΚΛΕΙΩ. Ἡροδότου Θουρίου ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλέα γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι."

[351] R. Fowler, "Herodotos and his prose predecessors," *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotos,* ed. C. Dewald and J. Marincola (Cambridge, 2006): 29-45. Francois Hartog, "The Invention of History," *History and Theory* 39 no. 3 (2000): 394-395. F. Hartog and Wayne R. Hayes, "Herodotus and the Historiographical Operation," *Diacritics* 22.2 (1992): 83-93.

[352] Darkó: **I,** 2, "ἀλλ΄ ᾗ ἂν εἰς μάλιστα ἔχοι ὡς ἀσφαλέστατα ἐπὶ τὸ ἄμεινον ἀληθείας εἰρῆσθαι."

research and exposition were more suitable than other methods in approximating that truth. Momigliano has succinctly distinguished a Herodotean approach from the approach advocated by Thucydides, whose strict focus was on contemporary political events. The veracity and relevance of these events could be directly checked and interpreted by the observer historian.[353] Herodotos, on the other hand, whose main narrative thread focused on the clash between the Persians and the Hellenes that occurred in an earlier generation than when the historian was composing his work, necessarily had to rely on oral reports from multiple sources. Moreover, Herodotos' numerous excursuses into cultural geography, which is conspicuously missing in Thucydides, and the distant past, such as Egyptian history, necessitated his reliance on foreign informants. Similarly, Chalkokondyles did not limit his narrative to the events of his own lifetime, but rather began his main story concerning the struggle between the Hellenes and the Turks by relating information on the origins of the Turks in general, and the Ottoman Turks in particular, which will be discussed in detail below.

The stated content of these two histories is also worth noting. Just as Herodotos was interested in preserving for posterity not only the glorious accomplishments of the Greeks but also those of the barbarians, Chalkokondyles, too, presented his subject as two-fold, detailing the destruction of the Byzantine state, "the Hellenes," as well as the military and administrative achievements of the barbarians. In both Herodotos and Chalkokondyles, the accomplishments of the barbarians counter those of the Greeks. The success of one group necessitated the failure of the other.

However, Chalkokondyles creatively translated Herodotos on a significant instance regarding the opposition between "self" and "other." The category of "self" on the surface

[353] Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography,* "The Herodotean and Thucydidean Tradition (Berkeley, 1990), 29-54.

appeared to be the same in both accounts, namely the Hellenes. In the opening paragraphs, Chalkokondyles tacitly argued for a continuity of Hellenic tradition from the time of classical Greece into the fifteenth century by referring to Greek history from its mythical beginnings, through the Hellenistic period, and then into the Roman and Byzantine periods. In Herodotos' History, the "barbarian" antagonists were the Persians, whose political culture, centered on the hereditary autocratic Persian kingship and military organization with a view to subjugating other ethnicities and kingdoms was the opposite of the Greek polis and the ideal of citizenship. This conception of imperial rule, which is to be read as tyrannical rule, nicely contrasted with the Greek polis, whose laws in the case of Athens at any rate, were the rational product of a single individual, Solon. Herodotos wrote concerning the Athenian democracy:

> So the Athenians had increased in strength, which demonstrates that an equal voice in government has beneficial impact not merely in one way, but in every way: the Athenians, while ruled by tyrants, were no better in war than any of the peoples living around them, but once they were rid of tyrants, they became by far the best of all.[354]

The barbarian antagonists in Chalkokondyles' account were the Ottoman Turks, who were the latter day Persians with a similar ruling structure centered on lineage and with an elaborate administrative structure, which exploited taxation, land-holding, and military technology to furnish the increasingly centralized military Empire. Chalkokondyles stressed the importance of lineage for the Ottoman rulers in the first book when he wrote that:

> those that have come after that one (Osman) are named after him. And they are called the sons of Osman still to this day.[355]

Furthermore, Chalkokondyles referred to each Ottoman ruler accompanied by the previous ruler's name, mirroring the Islamic practice of including the patronymic in one's name. Thus,

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[354] Herodotos, 5.78.

[355] Darkó, **I**, 14. tr.AA. "καταλιπεῖν τε ἀπὸ τούτου τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν τοῖς ἀπ' ἐκείνου γενομένοις, Ὀτουμάνου παῖδας ἐτι καὶ νῦν καλεῖσθαι."

Osman was "Osman the son of Ertugrul," Orhan was "Orhan the son of Osman," Murad I was "Murad the son of Orhan" and so forth. Chalkokondyles' contemporaries, Doukas and Kritoboulos, did not use this formula. In an exchange between Timur and Bayezid after Bayezid had been captured, the defeated Ottoman ruler referred to himself as the "son of Murad, son of Orhan, (I am) the son of βασιλέων"[356] in Chalkokondyles' narrative, making apparent Bayezid's hubris, which was one cause of his downfall. Bayezid's defeat by Timur at the Battle of Ankara in 1402 led to internecine fighting between Bayezid's sons. Chalkokondyles devoted one of his ten books to this destabilized period of Ottoman history, acknowledging its formative influence.

Both Herodotos and his excellent student Chalkokondyles were not only interested in the military/political confrontation between the Greeks and their antagonists, but they were also interested in preserving knowledge on a wide array of other peoples. In Herodotos, proper historical investigation examined the chronology and content of events, and in particular, military/political events and the accompanying administrative structures, and attempted to delineate the underlying causes of those events. Indeed, Herodotos' intellectual descendants include historians as well as ethnographers. As such, ethnographic enquiry, which details ethnic identity, language, customs, geography and in general all of the details that compose the fabric of reality, is not only a proper component of historical investigation, but it is also essential for a correct evaluation of human events. Political/military events, in fact, are only the results of a historical process. The real driving force of History can only be truly comprehended in that larger framework described by ethnographic enquiry, that provided the groundwork for political/military events.[357] Harris, in an effort to find the intellectual context of Chalkokondyles' program, drew attention to the study of classical

[356] Darkó, **I,** 149 tr.AA. "ἐμοι...τῷ Ἀμουράτεω τοῦ Ὀρχάνεω, βασιλέων παιδί."

[357] Arnaldo Momigliano, "Greek Historiography," *History and Theory* 17.1, (1978): 1-28.

Latin historiography during the Italian Renaissance. According to Harris' analysis, Chalkokondyles adopted the unique combination of fortune and virtue found in these classics when describing the Ottoman success in state building.[358] Chalkokondyles, however, was most likely influenced by his teacher Plethon, who had produced a tract on Virtue that hearkened back to Stoic philosophy and the ancient Greek classics, than he was by the Italian cognates.[359] Moreover, the ethnographic model that Herodotos offered to Chalkokondyles was just as useful, if not more so, in understanding Chalkokondyles' objective stand in describing the "other." We will see that customs as well as the Islamic religion played a pivotal role in describing Ottoman success in the *Apodeixis*.

Chalkokondyles specified that his main subject was the military/political affairs of the Turks and the Greeks; this, however, did not prevent him from providing extensive historical, political, and ethnographic information on many other peoples. Chalkokondyles included various Italian cities (in particular Venice, Genoa, Milan, Florence, Rome, and Ferrara), Iberia, Germany, France, England, Hungary, the Poles, the Slavs, the Empire of the Golden Horde, the Mongols, the Russian steppe, the Serbs, the near east and the Balkans and Asia Minor as the essential building blocks of his history. Chalkokondyles' wide-ranging historical, geographical, and ethnographic interests as a historian in the fifteenth century and as a composer of a universal history correspond to Herodotos' similar interests concerning his own times. Chalkokondyles used the genre of universal history to shed light on the interconnectedness of events.[360]

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[358] Jonathan Harris, "Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the Rise of the Ottoman Turks", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 27 (2003): 153-170.

[359] George Gemistos Plethon, *Traité des vertus,* ed. Brigitte Tambrun-Krasker, (Athens, 1987). See Chapter 1, "Apollo, Artemis, and Hellenic Philosophy in the Renaissance."

[360] See Chapter 3, "The Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk?: Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography.

Herodotos' celebrated chapters on the geography and culture of the Egyptians were integrated into the main narrative through the military campaigns of the Persians against Egypt. In Herodotos' History, the Egyptians occupied a liminal space, being neither Greeks nor fully "barbarian" (if, for the purposes of this thesis, one defines the latter as the opposite of the former). In Herodotos and in classical Greek thought, education, the idea of the antique, a focus on the polis as an integral component of being human, and human laws occupy prominent place as defining characteristics of Greek identity. According to Herodotos' famous description, Egyptians are the most learned of any nation, are more ancient than the Greeks, are the source of the Greek religion, have a social organization centered around cities, and even inspire the Athenian law-maker Solon to establish an Egyptian custom in Athens.[361]

Similarly, in the fifteenth century and according to Chalkokondyles and his Byzantine contemporaries, there were non-Greek peoples who were not barbarians. In the greater narrative of the *Apodeixis*, Chalkokondyles singled out a great number of these non-barbarian/non-Greek peoples, such as the Florentines and the Venetians, who partook in the classical heritage in various ways. The historian focused on their antiquity, which extended backward to the Roman period, on the importance of civic identity in their self-representation, and, of course, on the legal structures ordering these polities.[362]

Thus, the category of "other," according to Chalkokondyles, did not necessarily refer to barbarians, peoples who are overwhelmingly different from the Greeks in their traditions and understanding of the world. The "other" in specific instances referred to a people who exploited their classical heritage, both Roman and Greek, much more successfully than the Hellenes did in the fifteenth century. Moreover, these other inheritors of the classical

[361] Herodotos, 2.177.

[362] See Chapter 3: "Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk: Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography."

tradition, the non-barbarian "other," occasionally provided a better foil to the barbarian Turks than the Hellenes did in the fifteenth century. As such, the "other" was at times an object of admiration and emulation in Chalkokondyles' narrative with respect to their achievements along classical lines. With this tri-partite categorization, dividing the world into Greeks, other peoples sharing a similar heritage as the Greeks, and barbarians, who belonged to a dissimilar tradition and had a completely different set of values, Chalkokondyles does justice to the world-view of Herodotos.

Similarly, the organization of the *Apodeixis* owes a great deal to a close reading of Herodotos. Herodotos had built the main plot of The Histories around the rise of the Persian Empire, the campaigns of the Persians, and the dynastic succession of the Persian Kings. Although Herodotos commences with the Lydians and Croesus' campaigns, this story is tied to the greater narrative of the Persians through the defeat of Croesus by Cyrus. Likewise, the synopses on the Babylonians and the Massagetae, the extensive description of the Egyptians, the portions on the Ethiopians and the Indians, the detailed account of the Skythians, the information on the Libyans, and the report on the Athenians, the Spartans and the Greek alliance against the Persians that form the bulk of the latter half of The Histories were all integrated into the main narrative through the Persian campaigns against these peoples.

The structure of the political narrative of the *Apodeixis* and the ordering of the Books thus roughly follow the succession of the Ottoman rulers, particularly after the end of the Ottoman Interregnum. Chalkokondyles integrated information on the Serbs, Bulgars, Hungarians, Germans, French, English, Timurid Empire, Arabs, Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Tatars, Egyptians, Indians, Venetians, Milanese, Bosnians, Genoese, Aragon, Castile, Florence, Italy more generally, and on the Albanians at turning points that were connected in some way with the Ottoman campaigns. Chalkokondyles not only mined Herodotos for information on various peoples but also utilized Herodotos' internal structure in keeping with

humanist readings of the classics that took issue with scholastic methods as well as with medieval historiography.

Following a very brief exposition on Greek, Roman, and Byzantine history (which is similar to Herodotos' introductory chapters on the Lydians and Assyrians which provide an introduction to the contemporary affairs), Book I of the *Apodeixis* details the origins of the Turks and the establishment of the Ottomans in Bithynia, continuing the political narrative until the end of Murad I's reign. Book 2 begins with the establishment of Bayezid as ruler and concludes with the death of Bayezid following the battle of Ankara in 1402. Book III is mainly devoted to the Timurid Empire and the military campaigns of Timur. Book IV begins with the Ottoman Interregnum, and following the eventual victory of Mehmed I over his rival brothers, ends with Mehmed I's death. Books V through VII are concerned with the events of Murad II's reign. The remaining three Books detail the political and military accomplishments of Mehmed II's rule, including the capture of Byzantion in 1453.

In the very long tradition of Byzantine historiography, such primary focus on the "other" and the "barbarian" was unprecedented with the exception of Chalkokondyles' contemporary, Kritoboulos. While previous Byzantine historians had also devoted considerable attention to non-Byzantine peoples and to ethnography, their main subject matter had nevertheless remained Byzantine history. By comparing and contrasting Chalkokondyles with Kritoboulos, one gains a better understanding of the different ways in which classical Greek historiography influenced these two fifteenth-century historians.

Kritoboulos composed the History of Mehmed the Conqueror using as his subject the military campaigns and political events of Mehmed II's reign.[363] The circumstances surrounding the composition of that history, however, were quite different from those of

[363] Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*.

Chalkokondyles.[364] In the preface to his History, Kritoboulos dedicated the work to Mehmed II. Moreover, only a single extant manuscript of Kritoboulos' history exists, which is located in the Topkapı Palace Library. This manuscript is an autograph copy accompanied by a dedicatory letter to the Ottoman ruler, whom Kritoboulos referred to as a "philhellene" in the margin of the historical text.[365]

In addition to the manuscript History of Mehmed the Conqueror and the dedicatory letter, Kritoboulos reproduced and presented to Mehmed II a copy of Arrian's *Anabasis*, the history of Alexander the Great's reign, intending the latter work to be read alongside his own history.[366] Mehmed II's admiration of and desire to imitate the deeds of Alexander is attested to in both Latin and Ottoman sources.[367] It is a commonplace of the scholarship on Mehmed II to mention that the Ottoman ruler often had the conquests of Alexander read to him. One of the richest and most extensively illuminated manuscripts produced in Mehmed II's court shortly after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 was a copy of Ahmedî's *İskendername*. Ahmedî's work, an Alexander epic written c. 1410, contained, among other stories, the earliest Turkish account we possess concerning the Ottomans.[368] Kritoboulos explicitly stated Mehmed II's admiration of Alexander in his own work:

> …(Mehmed II) had under his power already the largest and best parts of both Asia and Europe, he did not believe that these were enough for him nor was he

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[364] Julian Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37(1983): 15-34. Diether Reinsch, "Kritobulos of Imbros - Learned Historian, Ottoman Raya and Byzantine Patriot".

[365] Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium."

[366] Ibid.

[367] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia, 2004), p87-88.

[368] E. J. Grube, "The Date of the Venice Iskandar-Nama," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987): 187-202. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, 1995), 38. In the following pages, we will discuss Ahmedî's work in the context of early Ottoman historiography, which correlates with Chalkokondyles' account of Ottoman origins.

> content with what he had: instead he immediately overran the whole world in his calculations and resolved to rule it in emulation of Alexanders and Pompeys and Caesars and kings and generals of their sort.[369]

Thus, Kritoboulos was influenced by Arrian's History of Alexander and viewed the conquests of Mehmed II in light of those of Alexander. Further, Kritoboulos composed his history to be read by Mehmed II, elites of the Ottoman court and Western Europeans, which contrasts with Chalkokondyles' intended audience of those with access to classical Greek. Chalkokondyles wrote:

> Let no one disparage us for recounting these matters in the Greek language, for the language of the Greeks has spread to many places throughout the world and has mixed with many others. It is exceedingly prestigious already and will be even more so in the future…[370]

Kritoboulos, however, composed his History in Greek in order that Western nations may learn the deeds of Mehmed II. Such a deliberate choice of historiographical model and audience influenced the construction of Kritoboulos' narrative. Kritoboulos not only left out Western and Eastern Europe as well as the Near East, which were major components of Chalkokondyles' narrative, but he also chose to relate only those events, particularly military events, concerning the rule of Mehmed II. As a result, Kritoboulos' History is much more limited in scope than Chalkokondyles' universal history, not only with respect to non-Ottoman subjects but also with respect to Ottoman history predating the rule of Mehmed II.

Stories of Origins, Skythians, and the Turks

The search for origins and genealogy are distinguishing characteristics of Chalkokondyles' *Apodeixis*. This search can be understood partly in the context of the

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[369] Kritoboulos-Reinsch, **I,** 5,1; Kritoboulos-Riggs, 14. English tr. provided by Riggs.

[370] Darkó, **I,** 2. "μὴ δὲ ἐκεῖνό γε πάνυ ἐκφαύλως ἔχον ἡμῖν, ὡς Ἑλληνικῇ φωνῇ ταῦτα διέξιμεν, ἐπεὶ ἥ γε τῶν Ἑλλήνων φωνὴ πολλαχῇ ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην διέσπαρται καὶ συχναῖς ἐγκαταμέμικται. καὶ κλέος μὲν αὐτῇ μέγα τὸ παραυτίκα, μεῖζον δὲ καὶ ἐς αὖθις""

Herodotean quest to understand alterity in relative terms, and partly in the context of the rising interest in the past and in foreign peoples among Renaissance thinkers. In fact, we will see that these two contexts were not independent of each other. As I have already noted, Chalkokondyles generally conflates contemporary ethnic groups with archaic peoples. One ramification of such a practice is the immutability of those very peoples. The continuity of names implies that at some very basic level, the determining characteristics of each people remain the same. Most profoundly, Chalkokondyles' wholesale adoption of Hellenic identity signifies a direct link between Chalkokondyles himself, in his own words an Athenian, and the classical Hellenes. Chalkokondyles also constructs a multi-faceted Roman identity, which largely relies on the classical as well as the fifteenth-century "Roman" versus "Barbarian" dichotomy.[371] There are other such continuities in Chalkokondyles' presentation, such as between the classical "Skythians" and their contemporary counterparts or between the "Celts" of the early medieval period and their fifteenth-century descendants.

However, in two instances Chalkokondyles articulated and elaborated change over time from the classical period until the fifteenth century, providing his readers with two stories of origins, the first for the protagonists of the History, the Ottoman Turks, and the second for the Venetians.[372] What are the various ways in which Chalkokondyles provides genealogical information on the Turks? What does change over time imply concerning the nature of the Ottoman polity? How is Chalkokondyles' narrative of Turkish origins different from fifteenth-century Greek discourse? What are Chalkokondyles' sources for the information on Turkish origins? All of these questions are better investigated in light of Chalkokondyles' Herodotean model.

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[371] See Chapter 4: "Relinquishing the Claim to Roman Inheritance."

[372] See Chapter 3: "The Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk: Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography."

Chalkokondyles' adoption of Herodotos came at time when the Herodotean model was suitable for arranging the wide array of information (religious, ethnic, and linguistic) available on the Ottoman Turks, which had been culled over an extended period by Byzantine intellectuals and was available when the "other" was no longer outside the walls of Constantinople, but inside. An entity that was culturally alien yet at the same time temporally and spatially very near, the Ottoman Turks must have appeared to the Byzantines in a different light than they did to the more distant Italians. Chalkokondyles made extensive use of the availability of such information on the Ottoman Turks, writing a synopsis on their origins in the *Prooimion*. We will first analyze this information, comparing and contrasting it with Byzantine and Renaissance sources and will demonstrate that Chalkokondyles extensively relied on foreign informants, an inherently Herodotean investigative technique, or alternatively on Ottoman written sources, which still add to that sense of Herodotean cultural relativity.

Chalkokondyles begins by writing, "I do not know what ancient name I would call the Turks so as to not miss the truth."[373] It is evident that correct genealogy and terminology were essential components for understanding contemporary reality for Chalkokondyles. He implicitly assumes that some ethnic characteristics remain immutable over the centuries, otherwise there would be no need to delve into such research on origins to find the truth about fifteenth-century Turks. Furthermore, as we have discussed, the use of ancient ethnonyms was standard Byzantine practice, invoking the classical past to make sense of the present. Chalkokondyles, then, proceeds to give various competing theories on Turkish origins, each of which highlights different characteristics of the contemporary Turks. "Some consider the Turks to be the descendants of the Skythians" writes Chalkokondyles, who then

[373] Darkó, **I**, 7 "Τούρκους δὴ ὀυν ἔγωγε οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι ἂν καλέσαιμι κατὰ τὸ παλαιόν, ὥστε τἀληθοῦς μὴ διαμαρτεῖν."

continues by stating that they are most likely close to the truth as the Turks and Skythians share similar customs and do not have much difficulty in understanding each other's language even in his day.[374] Chalkokondyles employed a similar analysis of the Illyrians and the Triballi, concluding that the Triballi are a tribe of the Illyrians because they speak the same language, have similar customs and follow the same way of life.[375] Customs and language, then, appear as two of those immutable characteristics that define a people, both ancient and contemporary, in keeping with the ethnographic model Herodotos offered.[376] However, a third essential category, religion (Christianity and Islam), should be added to this equation because it is the dividing line that distinguishes the non-barbarians from the barbarians.

Chalkokondyles explained the way in which the barbarian Turks, who were possibly the descendants of the Skythians, came to occupy their present geography:

> They say that Skythians rushed out of Tanais for the seventh time and subdued upper Asia, when the Parthians were holding the rule over the land of the Persians, Medes, and Assyrians. After these, they descended upon lower Asia, upon Phrygia, Lydia, and Cappadocia, bringing that land under their power. And now it is possible to see, they say, many peoples of this race spread over many places of Asia. They exercise the customs and way of life of the Skythian nomads and this way of life is seen in no other place of Asia. In this way, the barbarian race of the Turks, inhabiting lower Asia, that is Lydia, Caria, Phrygia, and Cappadocia still communicate with the Skythians, who are spread over from Tanais to Sarmatia.[378]

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[374] Darkó, **I**, 7 "οἱ μὲν γὰρ Σκυθῶν ἀπογόνους τοὺς Τούρκους οἴονται εἶναι."

[375] Darkó, **I**, 23-24.

[376] In Herodotos, language, religion, and customs are the primary elements that unify the Hellenic city-states in responding to the Persian invasion. Herodotos, 1.142-144. The importance of language is elaborated in the story of Skyles, the Skythian King who was born of a Greek mother and who later in life practiced Hellenic customs because of his mother's early instruction in the Greek language. Herodotos 4.78.

[378] Darkó, **I**, 7 Tr. AA. "Σκύθας τε γάρ φασι τὸ ἕβδομον ἤδη ἀπὸ Τανάιδος ὡρμημένους καταστρέφεσθαι τὴν ἄνω Ἀσίαν, Πάρθων τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἐχόντων, τήν τε Περσῶν χώραν καὶ Μήδων καὶ Ἀσσυρίων, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐπικαταβάντας ἐς τὴν κάτω Ἀσίαν, ἐπὶ Φρυγίαν, Λυδίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, τὰ ἐς τήνδε τὴν χώραν ὑποχείρια σφίσι ποιήσασθαι. Καὶ νῦν ἔστιν ἰδεῖν, ᾗ λέγουσι, πολλὰ τοῦ γένους τούτου πολλαχῇ τῆς Ἀσίας ἐπινεμόνα, πρὸς Σκυθῶν τῶν νομάδων ἤθη τε καὶ δίαιταν τετραμμένα οὐδαμῇ τῆς Ἀσίας ἔσχον καταφανῆ τὴν διατριβήν. Κἀκείνῃ δὲ ἔτι συμβάλλονται,

Chalkokondyles also writes that these two peoples, the Skythians and the Turks, not only speak cognate languages, but they also use the same equipment, thus continuing the ethnographic analysis. The use of classical names, such as Parthians for the Great Seljuqs, creates an ambivalence that is only resolved when one considers that the use of these ethnonyms (Parthians, Medes, Assyrians) as well as the toponyms (Phyrgia, Lydia, Cappadocia, Caria) firmly ground this passage in the Herodotean geography. In fact, with the exception of Psellos, who called the Great Seljuq ruler "the Parthian Sultan"/"Πάρθος σουλτὰν," Byzantine historians did not refer to the Great Seljuqs as "Parthians," but rather as "Persians."[379]

According to others, Chalkokondyles wrote, the Turks were the descendants of the Parthians (the Great Seljuqs?) who were chased from their land by the Skythians (Mongols?) and who then came to occupy lower Asia. "They have degenerated into a nomadic way of life, being scattered throughout the cities," he continued. Still others considered the Turks to have come forth from the prosperous and great Persian city of *Turkis*. Other theories put forth Coele-Syria and Arabia rather than Scythia as the Turks' place of origin. According to this latter hypothesis, the Turks were followers of Omar, whom Chalkokondyles qualified as the successor to the lawgiving/"ἡ νομοθεσία," a reference to the rise of Islam in laudatory language that will be discussed in the section on Islam. The followers of Omar advanced to the rule of Asia, while those left behind turned to a more nomadic way of life. Chalkokondyles ended the discussion of this secondary literature on the origins of the Turks with the comment:

ὡς Ἀσίας τὴν κάτω χώραν ἐνοικοῦντα βάρβαρα ἔθνη Τούρκων, Λυδίαν, Καρίαν, Φρυγίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, Σκύθαις τὴν ἀπὸ Τανάιδος ἐπὶ Σαρματίαν χώραν."

[379] Michael Psellos, *Chronographie, Ou, Histoire D'un Siecle De Byzance (976-1077),* tr. Emile Renauld, Collection Byzantine (Paris, 1967), **VII**, 63. See Koray Durak, "Defining the 'Turk': Mechanisms of Establishing Contemporary Meaning in the Archaizing Language of the Byzantines," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 59 (2009): 65-78. Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* (Berlin, 1958) vol. 2, 245.

> As each of these (theories) have truth and it is necessary to judge which one of these (theories) is better regarding the truth, I am not able to interpret one as the most credible.[380]

Chalkokondyles did not refrain from stating which of these theories was plausible based on the fifteenth-century evidence. He wrote:

> Let this much be said however… Someone would be better off, agreeing with those who claim that (the Turks) in the beginning originated from the Skythians on account of the fact that Skythians of Europe, passing through the so-called marketplace towards the east, easily understand the Turks in Asia, and both races still today practice a similar lifestyle and have similar dress.[381]

These passages bear striking resemblance to Herodotos' account of the genesis of the Skythians wherein the classical author gives conflicting stories on the origins of the Skythians. Following Skythian and Greek versions in which Zeus and Heracles are the respective progenitors, Herodotos narrates a third version that "I consider the most likely of the three." In this version, the Skythians, hard pressed by the Massagetae, travel across the Araxes into Cimmeria. Some Cimmerians leave while others choose to die, leaving their country uninhabited in the face of the invading Skythians. The presentation of alternative accounts of the same event, each coming from disparate sources, and the withholding of judgment concerning their veracity until the end of the story is a Herodotean narrative strategy that Chalkokondyles employs frequently and with great success.[382] Moreover, both authors insert their authorial persona in the conclusion, making transparent both the subjective nature of the investigation and their preference for plausible conclusions.

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[380] Darkó, **I**, 8-9. Tr. AA. ΄ὡς μὲν οὖν τούτων ἕκαστα ἔχει ἀληθείας, καὶ ἐφ' ἃ δέῃ τούτων χωροῦντας πείθεσθαι ἄμεινον, οὐκ ἔχω ξυμβαλέσθαι ὡς ἀσφαλέστατα.᾽

[381] Darkó, **I**, 9. Tr. AA "Τοσόνδε μέντοι εἰρήσται, ὡς τοῖς ἀπὸ Σκυθῶν γενέσθαι τὴν ἀρχὴν τούτοις διισχυριζομένοις ἔχοι ἄν τις συμφέρεσθαι ἄμεινον, διὰ τὸ Σκύθας τοὺς ἐν τῇ Εὐρωπῃ πρὸς ἕω ἔτι καὶ νῦν διαγενομένους κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν καλουμένην τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ Τούρκων ἐπαίειω οὐ χαλεπῶς, διαίτῃ τε καὶ σκευῇ ἔτι καὶ νῦν τῇ αὐτῇ ἄμφω τὼ γένεε διαχρωμένους."

[382] Herodotos, 1.1. Herodotos commences the narrative by providing two alternate versions, one Phonecian and another Persian, explaining the source of the hostilities between the Greeks and the Persians.

Herodotos' inclination to favor secular explanation over myths is mirrored in Chalkokondyles' origin story of the Turks. In this passage, Chalkokondyles reaches judgment based on fifteenth-century evidence rather than on legendary beginnings.

Chalkokondyles concluded this section with an interesting remark. "It is clear that this name refers to someone who prefers a nomadic life and makes a living in this way."[383] He did not specify whether "this name" referred to the Skythian or the Turk, creating an ambivalence that strengthened the thesis that the Turks are related to the Skythians. In fact, a common motif, the nomadic way of living as practiced by the Turks, informed all of these genesis stories. Moreover, location, or more specifically, loyalty to a common homeland, was conspicuously missing from this equation, which detailed customs and language as being the defining characteristics of Turkish ethnicity.

Chalkokondyles was heir to a Byzantine tradition of thinking about nomads and need not have inherited his terminology directly from Herodotos, who had counted various Indian tribes, the tribe of the Budini living north of Lake Maeotis, and some coastal tribes in Libya among the nomadic peoples. Chalkokondyles was adopting for his own purposes the Byzantine tradition of equating nomadic peoples with "Skythians." Beginning in the fourth century, Byzantine historians had employed the word "Skythian" to refer to different peoples at different times: Huns, Goths, Avars, Khazars, Bulgars, Hungarians, Pechenegs, Uzes, Kumans, Seljuqs, Mongols, and Tatars.[384]

The "Skythian" reference, which had been developed in the context of Byzantine letters, was often employed in the fifteenth century by Italian humanists who depicted the

[383] Darkó, **I**, 9. Tr. AA. ΄δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ τοὔνομα αὐτὸ τὴν νομαδικὴν δίαιταν προῃρημένον καὶ τὸν ταύτῃ τοῦ βίου πλέον αὐτῷ ποιούμενον."

[384] Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 279-83.

Ottomans as Skythians in elaborate narratives.[385] Bessarion, who belonged to the Italian tradition as much as he did to the Byzantine one, argued that Mehmed II was using the nomadic tradition among the Turks, gaining more power and followers with each victory. Nikolaos Sekoundinos, born on the Venetian-held island of Euboia, was a translator at Florence-Ferrara in 1438-1439, which he had attended with Plethon and Bessarion who were members of the Byzantine delegation. Sekoundinos, a papal legate in later life, was not only well-versed in Greek and Latin, but had also spent time with the Ottomans as a war captive in 1430 when Murad II took the city of Thessalonike. After Mehmed II assumed the throne and took Constantinople, Sekoundinos joined the Venetian Bartolomeo Marcello in 1453 on a mission to negotiate the ransom of Venetians who had been captured during the conquest. Familiar with Ottoman culture, Sekoundinos composed a short tract on the origins of the Turks at the request of the humanist and future Pope Pius II, Aeneas. Sekoundinos wrote the tract c. 1456 and dedicated it to Aeneas. Sekoundinos commenced the narrative:

> six hundred years ago and more the nation of the Turks originated from the Skythians, who had been accustomed to live across the Don, everywhere in Asia, in no specific capital, no cities, and no firm or long-term homes but wandered over the open fields; like a stream flowing from its spring....In addition the same point is argued by the similarity of [style of] life, customs, clothing, care of the body, way of riding horses and of using the bow, the identical way of waging war, their native discipline and the greatest proof of all: the related languages and manner of speaking.[386]

The similarity to Chalkokondyles' narrative makes this work a likely source for the Athenian historian. In fact, Chalkokondyles' Latin translation was printed together with Sekoundinos'

[385] Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*, 75-77.

[386] Nikolaos Sekoundinos, "An Epitome on the Family of the Ottomans for Aeneas, the Bishop of Siena, by Nikolaos Sekoundinos," in *Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks: Some Western Views and Testimonies*, ed. and tr. Marios Philippides (Temple, Arizona, 2007), 56-57.

tract in 1556 by Ramus.[387] Similarly, in the 1450s, Pius II composed a tract on the origins, customs, and dress of the Ottomans as part of a larger work on the world.[388] Arguing that the Turks were "Skythian" barbarians in no way related to the Trojans, which was another current theory of Turkish origins that posited that the Ottomans were the descendants and the avengers of the Trojans,[389] Pius II denounced all attempts to relate Turkish ancestors to a non-barbarian people.[390] Chalkokondyles was no doubt referring to such Renaissance theories when he gave an overview of the current knowledge concerning the Turks.

Byzantine intellectuals in the fifteenth century, on the other hand, had direct access to both classical Greek texts and Byzantine historiography in reevaluating the origins of the Turks with whom they were in direct contact. The suggestions of Plethon and Theodore Gazes regarding Ottoman origins show emancipation from previous Byzantine thinking on the topic and in particular, from theories linking the Turks with the Skythians. Plethon, in his address to Despot Theodore on the Peloponnese regarding reform of the Byzantine polity, styled the Ottoman Turks as descendants of the ancient Paramasids. Meserve has demonstrated that Plethon was utilizing Arrian and Strabo in this reference to that ancient people whom Alexander the Great had encountered in the East.[391] She has also identified Theodore Gazes' tract on the Origins of the Turks as a rebuttal of Plethon's theory regarding

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[387] Marios Philippides, *Mehmed II the Conqueror and the Fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks: Some Western Views and Testimonies*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Temple, Arizona, 2007), 15.

[388] Pius II, *Asiae Europaeque elegantiss description* (Cologne, 1531).

[389] Kafadar, 9, 159n11. Terence Spencer "Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance" *Modern Language Review* 47 (1952): 330-333. S Runciman "Teucri and Turci" *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honour of Aziz Suryal Atiya* (Leiden, 1972). F. L. Borchardt *German Antiquity in Renaissance Myth* (Baltimore 1971).

[390] Mustafa Soykut, *Image of the "Turk" in Italy : A History of the "Other" in Early Modern Europe, 1453-1683*, I (Berlin, 2001), 116-17.

[391] Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, (Cambridge, 2008).

the Paramasids. In "On the Origins of the Turks", Gazes utilizes both the late eleventh-century Byzantine historian Skylitzes as well as Strabo to suggest that the Turks originated in antiquity from the northern Caucasus and are descendants of the Median Kurtoi, mentioned by the Geographer. While Chalkokondyles did not explicitly refer to the theories of Plethon and Gazes, he related various competing theories on Ottoman origins that indicate that he had original information to contribute to that debate.

The Byzantine historian Doukas, Chalkokondyles' contemporary, contended that the Ottoman Turks did not belong among the "Skythian" peoples, and neither were they related to the "Skythians." Rather, the Ottoman Turks would be more correctly termed as μιξοβάρβαροι, a people who were half-barbarian, half-Greek. According to Doukas, Ottoman society was composed of those individuals who were born to mixed marriages and of Byzantine renegades of petty backgrounds who had switched sides in search of wealth and status. Doukas wrote:

> The people of this shameless and savage nation, moreover, do the following: If they seize a Greek woman or an Italian woman or a woman of another nation or a captive or a deserter, they embrace her as an Aphrodite or Semele, but a woman of their own nation or of their own tongue they loath as though she were a bear or a hyena.[392]

Doukas further developed the μιξοβάρβαροι motif in his section on the hostilities between Bayezid and Timur. Lacking a pure lineage, the Ottomans were inferior to the "Skythians" in the eyes of the "Skythian" Timur, according to Doukas. In Doukas' narrative, Timur delivers a speech to his army before confronting Bayezid and the Ottoman army at the Battle of Ankara (1402). In that speech, Timur refers to the Ottomans as μιξοβάρβαροι, contrasting them with both the Persians and the Greeks of the classical world as well his own army of "Skythians" and judges the Ottomans to be easy prey, "like locusts to lions."[393]

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[392] Doukas, tr. H. J. Magoulias, 73.

[393] Ibid, 92.

How, then, did Doukas explain the successes of the Ottomans given his evaluation of Ottoman worth? The Christian God's divine wrath and his plan for the Roman people play a central role in Doukas' understanding of History. Doukas, an avowed pro-Unionist, considered the misfortunes of the Romans to be God's punishment for the intransigence of Orthodox religious leaders and the mob in Constantinople, who obstructed the union of the Churches until the very end, the fall of Constantinople in 1453.[394] Thus, in Doukas' eyes, the Ottomans, having no real history or lasting organization because they were brigands of mixed blood, were the indirect beneficiaries of God's retribution directed against the Romans.[395] Whatever role God, belief, and fate might have played in Chalkokondyles' understanding of the world, his grasp of historical processes as reflected in the *Apodeixis* was more classicizing, in particular Herodotean, than religiously oriented.

In narrating the origins of the Ottomans, Chalkokondyles relied on Ottoman sources, oral and written, in addition to Byzantine tradition and Renaissance theories, such as finding correspondence between the Ottomans and the Skythians. In this respect, he was also employing the Herodotean method of relying on foreign informants. Immediately following the chapters on the Skythian theories, Chalkokondyles relates another theory of origins, this time concerning the recent past and introducing it with the words, "I know for a fact"/" ἐπίσταμαι." The information Chalkokondyles then supplied was highly original, not to be found in Greek, Latin or European vernaculars in the fifteenth century, and should be read in tandem with the earliest Ottoman historiographical sources.

Concerning this more recent history of the Turks, Chalkokondyles wrote:

> This race, the Turks, is great and covers a large territory. I know that it is divided into parts, among others into the tribe of the Oguz, a race that is

[394] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 207-211.

[395] Ibid., 63-64.

> neither insignificant nor ignoble. Gunduzalp, an equitable man who led the tribe of the Oguz, was born into this Oguz tribe.[396]

Chalkokondyles proceeds to state that he learned that Gunduzalp was distinguished by his justness, so much so that the Oguz people asked the ruler of the land to appoint him as judge over them. Gunduzalp's son and successor Oguzalp, on the other hand, was a tyrannical ruler, famous for his wars against the Hellenes in Asia. Chalkokondyles, then, appears to conflate the military exploits of Umur Beg with Ertugrul, father of Osman. According to Chalkokondyles, Ertugrul built a navy and raided both coasts of the Aegean, amassing wealth from plunder and war captives. Many descendants of nomads joined Ertugrul in these successful wars across the border.

This account is reminiscent of the epic tradition concerning Umur Beg (1309-1348), ruler of the Aydın principality, whose naval exploits in the Aegean appealed to the sensibilities of the fifteenth-century Ottomans. When Mahmud Pasha Angelovic, grand vizier to Mehmed II and a scion of the Byzantine family of Angeloi, commissioned the Ottoman poet Enveri to write a universal history, Enveri included various chapters on Umur Beg in addition to the chapters on the Ottomans in his *Düsturname*.[397]

That Chalkokondyles was relying on Ottoman sources is further corroborated by his reference to Aladdin, who, according to Chalkokondyles, held Ertugrul in great honor. In fact, the Oguz genealogy of the Ottoman rulers and the reference to Aladdin in the context of early Ottoman history figured in all fifteenth-century Ottoman historical sources, which we will now examine. While it is uncertain as to whether Chalkokondyles had access to these

[396] Darkó, **I**, 9. "Τὸ δὴ γένος τοῦτο, τοὺς Τούρκους μέγα τε ὂν καὶ ἐπὶ πολὺδιῆκον ἐς μοίρας ἐπίσταμαι διακεκρίσθαι τινάς, ἄλλας τε δὴ καὶ Ὀγουζίων τὴν μοῖραν, γένος οὐ φαῦλον, οὐδὲ ἀγεννές. ἀπὸ τούτων δὲ τῶν Ὀγουζίων γενέσθαι Ἰονδουζάλπην, ἄνδρα ἐπιεικῆ τε καὶ τῆς τῶν Ὀγουζίων μοίρας ἡγησάμενον."

[397] Enveri, *Le Destan d'Umur Pacha: (Düsturname-i Enveri),* (Paris, 1954).

written accounts, we will demonstrate that he must have been familiar with Ottoman self-representation in the closing decades of the fifteenth century.

The earliest extant source is Ahmedî's *İskendername*, an Alexander epic in Turkish verse that was composed during the closing years of the fourteenth century.[398] Initially intended for the ruler of the Germiyan principality, Ahmedî dedicated the work to the Ottoman prince Süleyman, son of Bayezid, during the Ottoman interregnum c. 1410. In addition to the narrative on Alexander's exploits, *İskendername* contains chapters on the Ottoman rulers who were praised foremost for their religious fervor, the ghaza ideology, in their wars against the infidel. Ahmedî related Ottoman history beginning with the Mongol onslaught in the Near East in the thirteenth century and with the worldly rule of Chengiz Khan, which contrasted with the divinely inspired military activities of the ghazis. Occupying a prominent place in the social memory of the early Ottomans, Ahmedî singled out the pagan Chengiz Khan as a disruptor of the social order and a perpetrator of violence.[399] In the next section, which Ahmedî related as the "Epic of the Oguz"/"Oguz Dastan," the Poet first developed the story of Sultan Aladdin, whose religiously upright character was manifested in his charitable and just deeds and in his wars against the infidel.[400] Ahmedî wrote that Aladdin left his ruling city, Konya, to join Gündüzalp, Ertugrul, Gökalp, and many of the Oguz as comrades in arms on the frontier. However, when news reached the Tatars that Aladdin was waging war against the infidel, they broke the peace, forcing the Sultan to return to Konya.

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[398] Ahmedî, ed. İsmail Ünver, *İskender-Name: İnceleme-Tıpkibasim*, (Ankara, 1983). Ahmedî, ed. Nihad Sâmi Banarlı, *Dâsitânı tevârîhi mülûki âli Osman ve Cemşit ve Hurşîd mesnevisi : XIVüncü asır Anadolu şairlerinden Ahmedînin Osmanlı tarihi,* (Istanbul, 1939).

[399] Ahmedî, *XIVüncü Asır Anadolu Şairlerinden Ahmedînin Osmanlı Tarihi: Dâsitanı Tevârîhi Mükûki Ali Osman Ve Cemşîd Ve Hurşîd Mesnevisi,* 63.

[400] Ibid., 65.

Aladdin, in turn, entrusted to Ertugrul the frontier region around Söğüt so that he could continue the war against the infidel.[401]

This information on the early Ottomans, which Ahmedî related in the late fourteenth/early fifteenth century, was elaborated in prose by succeeding Ottoman authors. Şükrullah's Persian universal history *Behçet ül-Tevarih* is one of the earliest extant Ottoman historiographical sources and is composed of thirteen books, the eighth one being devoted to the Ottomans.[402] This work was also commissioned by Mehmed II's grand vizier Mahmud Pasha Angelovic, similar to Enveri's *Düsturname*. In addition to the book on the Ottomans, Şükrullah also included a section on the genealogy of the Turks. Şükrullah wrote that the Turks are numerous and divided into many tribes, some of whom live in the desert and the steppes and others in cities, which corresponds to the information Chalkokondyles related.[403] Concerning Ottoman origins more particularly, Şükrullah agreed with Ahmedî and wrote that Ertugrul is from the Oguz and campaigned with Sultan Aladdin when the latter came to the frontier. Şükrullah, too, wrote that Sultan Aladdin had to return his capital when the Tatars broke the peace and began ravaging the land. Sultan Aladdin, in turn, entrusted the frontier region to Ertugrul, dressing him with the symbolic robe of honor, the caftan. Ertugrul based himself in Sögüt and continued the war against the infidel.[404]

The reference to Sögüt as the earliest Ottoman base was also recounted in the *Apodeixis*. Chalkokondyles wrote that he learned that the Ottomans arrived at the prosperous village of "Sogouti in the Mysia region" and stayed there for some time. The narrative focused on Osman, son of Ertugrul, who did not fare well in the beginning, as he was a free

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[401] Ibid., 65-67.

[402] Şükrullah, ed. N. Atsız, *Dokuz Boy Türkler Ve Osmanlı Sultanları Tarihi. [Yazan] Şükrullah, [Hazirlayan] Atsız* (Istanbul, 1939).

[403] Ibid., 25.

[404] Ibid., 27-28.

spirit. Osman showed kindness to the villagers in Sögüt, and when disagreement arose between them and their neighbors, these villagers chose Osman as their leader, who then defeated the neighboring Hellenes. Chalkokondyles referred to Aladdin again in the context of Osman's rule. According to Chalkokondyles, Osman continued to raid the Hellenes and was consequently honored by Sultan Aladdin, who elevated him to the rank of general. Chalkokondyles continued, writing that when Aladdin died, there was dissent among his chiefs, who ultimately made a pact to be allies in war and divided the lands they conquered among themselves.[405]

The power vacuum that followed the Mongol conquest of Anatolia, to which Chalkokondyles briefly alluded in this passage, was a commonplace motif in early Ottoman historiography. Enveri and Şükrullah legitimized Ottoman rule on the frontier of Bithynia by stating that Seljuk rule had disintegrated following the Mongol conquest and that the early Ottomans were the ideological descendants of the Seljuk house because of their war against the infidel.

Finally, one should re-emphasize that these three narratives, Ahmedî's *İskendername*, Enveri's *Düsturname*, and Şükrullah's *Behçet ül-Tevarih* were circulating in Mehmed II's court in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Chalkokondyles' access to that court, through individuals such as his father George Chalkokondyles, Cyriac of Ancona, and Sekoundinos, must have familiarized the Historian with the information on the early Ottomans contained in these works. What is noteworthy, however, is that Chalkokondyles chose to include such information and that he further underscored that the veracity of these accounts was certain, as opposed to what he had earlier related concerning the Skythian origins of the Turks, thus making it clear that he preferred Ottoman sources to Western theories. Chalkokondyles was also respectful of the various different ways in which Ahmedî,

[405] Darkó, **I**, 10-13.

Enveri, and Şükrullah presented the story of Ottoman origins, relating the Gunduzalp, Oguzalp, and Ertugrul lineage, presenting Oguzalp as a tyrannical ruler, and emphasizing that Aladdin invested Osman with the rule over the frontier. Relying on Ottoman informants and presenting such information with the introductory words "I know for a fact"/"ἐπίσταμαι" and "I learned by inquiry"/"ἐπυθόμην," Chalkokondyles' narrative was inherently Herodotean in its inclusion of content that came from non-Greek sources.

Political Structures of the Barbarian "Other"

Political structure, similar to genealogy, was a primary organizing principle for Chalkokondyles in arranging information on the "other." The various ways in which different peoples were ruled or chose to rule themselves is indicative of their ethnic characteristics in the *Apodeixis*. Chalkokondyles inserted synopses on political structures that help elucidate the events taking place. These synopses also work to contrast the protagonist, the Ottomans, with their foes, such as the Serbs, Mongols, Venetians or Hungarians. However, Chalkokondyles presented such structural information not only on the Ottomans and their adversaries but also on a host of others, such as the Egyptians as enemy of Timur, the Milanese and Genoese as enemies of the Venetians, the Florentines as the host of the Council of Florence-Ferrara, and the French and English in the context of Manuel II Palaiologos' visit to Paris and London to raise aid against the Ottomans. Thus, similar to Herodotos' *Historia*, the structure of the *Apodeixis* branches out. In discussing the political/structural information of these peoples, we will distinguish between the non-barbarian "other" and the barbarian "other" to unravel Chalkokondyles' thinking on alterity and to understand which characteristics define the two categories.

Chalkokondyles' extensive descriptions of various political structures should be understood in the context of the fifteenth-century emphasis on political philosophy. Numerous philosophical tracts on the government of such cities as Venice, Florence, and

Genoa help demonstrate that Renaissance thinkers made sense of contemporary reality by analyzing political structures.[406] This line of inquiry finds its Byzantine counterpart in the writings of Plethon. Plethon's advisory letter "On the Peloponnese," addressed to Theodore II Palaiologos (1407-1443), Despot of the Peloponnese, is concerned with reforming the Byzantine state.[407] While previous Byzantine political theoreticians, such as Thomas Magistros and Manuel Moschopoulos in the fourteenth century, had composed tracts on taxation and constitutional government, their advice was not as radical as that of Plethon. Plethon suggested to implement a Platonic state with divisions between the guardians, the merchants, and the producers.[408] A component of Plethon's reform had a constitutional basis. Plethon understood that the success of each state was dependent on its constitution. According to Plethon, the states of Sparta and Thebes, the Hellenic Empire of Alexander, the Roman Empire, and the Islamic Empire all thrived because of their constitutions. Following an overview of the various types of political rule, namely democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy, Plethon suggests a revival of the Platonic state in the Peloponnese that would impose strict divisions between the ruling elite, the artisan class, and those employed in agriculture. Plethon included the Islamic Empire in the list of successful states, writing that:

> When they (the followers of Mohammed) established laws for themselves and a strange state, even when the laws were deficient, (these laws) nevertheless appeared to secure growth in civic matters and power over the enemies. They first brought under their rule Arabs belonging to the same tribe and then they severed the largest and best part of Roman dominion. They ruled over Libya and defeating the Persians, they brought (them) under their administration. And still many races across the world desiring these laws and using them

[406] Jill Kraye, *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts. Volume 2: Political Philosophy* (New York, 1997).

[407] S. P. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, vol. 4, 113-35.

[408] For Thomas Magistros and Manuel Moschopoulos, see D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007).

> appear to do well. In fact, the barbarians in our day, who are greatly powerful, use these laws and thus reach the greatest power.[409]

It is readily seen that Plethon not only considered Islam to offer a constitution, regulating and ordering Islamic states, albeit in a somewhat negative sense, but that he also attributed the contemporary success of the Ottomans, who were among "the barbarians in our day," to that constitution.

Islam as Lawgiving and the Prophet Mohammed as Hero

Both Plethon and his student Chalkokondyles inherited a large corpus of Byzantine thinking on Islam. Plethon composed the advisory letter to Despot Theodore prior to the fall of Constantinople to the armies of Mehmed II in 1453. Plethon's somewhat positive evaluation of Islam is noteworthy as the end of the Byzantine state had not yet fully forced Byzantine intellectuals to reconsider whether the enemy culture had any merit. Generally, Byzantine tracts on Islam that were composed before 1453 display a certain sense of dogmatism and are refutations of Islam. Meyendorff, tracing Byzantine attitudes toward Islam from John of Damascus in the eighth century through the fourteenth century, demonstrates that Byzantine writing on the subject was mainly polemical in nature and aimed at preserving Christianity in the face of the Islamic threat.[410] Vryonis also notes that until the fourteenth century, religion was the primary lens through which Byzantines viewed Islam. Islam's rise was thus interpreted not according to secular reasons, but according to divine will. Vryonis also observed that the fourteenth century witnessed the emergence of a new

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[409] Ibid., 118. Tr. AA. "Ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐπειδὴ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς νόμους τινὰς ἔθεντο καὶ πολιτείαν νεωτέραν, εἰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο τι μὴ καλῶς ἔχοντας, ἀλλ' οὖν πρός γε πόλεων ἐπαύξησιν καὶ κράτος πολέμων ἐπιτηδείως ἔχειν δοκοῦντας, πρῶτα μὲν τῶν ὁμοφύλων Ἀράβων αὐτοὶ ἡγήσαντο, ἔπειτα καὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐπικρατείας τὴν πλείστην καὶ ἀρίστην ἀπετέμοντο, καὶ Λιβύης δὲ ἐπῆρξαν, καὶ Πέρσας παραστησάμενοι τῇ σφετέρᾳ αὐτῶν ὑπήγαγον πολιτείᾳ, ἄλλα τε συχνὰ γένη τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην, τοὺς τούτων ἐζηλωκότες νόμους καὶ τούτοις χρώμενοι, εὐτυχεῖν πη δοκοῦσιν, οἵ τε καθ' ἡμῶν οὗτοι μέγιστον δυνηθέντες βάρβαροι, τούτοις τοῖς νόμοις κεχρημένοι, τὰ μέγιστα δεδύνηνται." Barker, 207.

[410] John Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964): 115-132.

approach to Islam, one that advocated a return to pagan philosophy in explaining Islamic success, such as Metochites' reliance on the concept of *Tyche* to explain human events and the rise and fall of empires.[411]

In the closing centuries of Byzantine rule, late Byzantine intellectuals appear to have had a penchant for writing in the genre of dialogue with a Muslim on the relative merits of Christianity and Islam. In the fourteenth century, Gregory Palamas wrote a tract on Christianity and Islam in the context of a dialogue with a learned Muslim cleric.[412] Manuel II composed a similar tract during the time he was held hostage in the court of Bayezid.[413] Demetrios Kydones was the author of a polemical work on Islam. These Byzantine authors continued the polemical tradition, but their writings also betray a more elaborate understanding of the tenets and application of Islam.

After 1453, some intellectuals, most notably Scholarios, George of Trebizond, and George Amiroutzes, developed an alternative approach as mediators who help explain Christianity to the Ottoman ruler. Mehmed II had installed Scholarios Gennadios, the leader of the anti-Unionist party following the death of Mark Eugenikos, as Patriarch of Constantinople. In his capacity as Patriarch under Ottoman rule, Scholarios wrote a declaration of the Orthodox faith at the Ottoman Sultan's behest.[414] The text was promptly

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[411] Sp. Vryonis, "Byzantine Attitudes toward Islam During the Late Middle Ages," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 12(1971): 263-286.

[412] Gregory Palamas, ed. Sp. Lampros, "Γρηγορίου Παλαμᾶ ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖς" *Neos Hellenomnemon* 16 (1922): 3-22.; Gregory Palamas, ed. Anna Philippidis-Braat, "La captivité de Palamas chez les Turcs: Dossieret Commentaire," *Travaux et Memoire* 7 (1979): 109-222. G. Arnakis, "Gregory Palamas among the Turks and Documents of His Captivity as Historical Sources,"*Speculum* 26.1 (1951): 104-118.

[413] Manuel II Palaeologus, ed. A. Khoury, *Entretiens avec un Musulman: 7e controverse,* (Paris, 1966).

[414] A. Decei, "Patrik II. Gennadios Skolarios'un Fatih Sultan Mehmet İçin Yazdığı Ortodoks İ'tikad-namesinin Türkçe Metni," *Fatih ve İstanbul,* 1 (1953): 98-116. R. Özdem, "Gennadios'un İtikatnamesi," *Ülkü Halkevleri Dergisi* 60 (1938): 529-540. M. Jugie, "Écrits apologétiques de Gennade Scholarios a l'adresse des Musulmans," *Byzantion* 5 (1930): 295-314.

translated into Turkish and should be seen as an attempt to find common ground between Christianity and Islam. It has been suggested that Gennadios was hoping to convert the young Mehmed II. Although the Patriarch was unsuccessful, he was not alone in his hopes.

After the conquest, George of Trebizond traveled from Italy to Constantinople, believing that Mehmed II was a new Emmanuel. George of Trebizond wrote "On the Truth of the Faith of the Christians" and two letters to Mehmed II in Greek. Following an unsuccessful attempt at gaining an audience with Mehmed II, he returned to Italy.[415] George saluted Mehmed II in these writings as "the most just of kings," "autocrat," and "emperor of emperors," acknowledging the success of the Ottoman ruler with regard to state building. In his tract "On the Truth of the Faith of the Christians," George of Trebizond demonstrates that he had knowledge about Islamic criticisms of certain Christian doctrines, such as the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, Mary's virginity, the veneration of icons, and transubstantiation. However, his attempts to find convincing arguments to prove the veracity of these doctrines failed to gain him an audience with the Ottoman ruler.

Another Byzantine intellectual who wrote a tract on Christianity for Mehmed II was George Amiroutzes.[416] George Amiroutzes was a member of the Trapezuntine aristocracy and held the title of *protovestiarios* during the siege of Trebizond. As first cousin of Mahmud Pasha, the Ottoman grand vizier to Mehmed II, Amiroutzes was in a unique position to negotiate the terms of surrender. Amiroutzes has left us an eyewitness account of the siege and its aftermath in the two letters he composed for his compatriot Bessarion. Gennadios, George of Trebizond, and George Amiroutzes belonged to a faction that believed dialogue with the Muslims was a distinct possibility in the fifteenth century. Furthermore, their

[415] George of Trebizond, ed. A. Mercati, "La due lettere di Giorgio da Trebisonda a Maometto II," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 9 (1943): 65-99.

[416] George Amiroutzes, ed. A. Argyriou and G. Lagarrigue, "Georges Amiroutzès et son dialogue sur la foi au Christ tenu avec le Sultan des Turcs," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 11 (1987): 29-221.

attempts to explain Christianity to Mehmed II should be evaluated together with the favorable exposition of Islam in the *Apodeixis*, which can also be seen as part of that attempt at dialogue.

However, this is not to say that Chalkokondyles did not consider Islamic peoples to be barbarians. He partially defined the term barbarian in the context of Timur's wars, to which subject the Historian devoted the greater portion of Book III. Chalkokondyles related the following passage in the section on the Skythians, namely the Mongols generally but in this case the Tatars of the Golden Horde, against whom Timur campaigned. After relating the geographical locations of the Skythians/Tatars, Chalkokondyles described their neighbors, the Sarmatians (Russians).[417] Branching out, Chalkokondyles then included information on the Prussian neighbors of the Sarmatians, writing:

> They (the Prussians) have a religious order just as it is customary in Iberia and among the race of monks inhabiting Rhodes. These three religious orders, situated all across the world, are seen (defending) the religion of Jesus against the barbarians: the one in Iberia against the Libyans in this place, who crossed over, the one of the Prussians against the Samogets and the Skythian nomads, who settled near this place formerly, and that of the Rhodians against the ones in Egypt and Palestine on account of Jesus' grave there and also against the barbarians in Asia.[418]

Thus, the category of the fifteenth-century barbarian as indicated by this list included the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada, the Tatars of the Golden Horde, the Mamluk, and of course the Ottomans. In his usual fashion, Chalkokondyles referred to these peoples with classical names, creating continuity between the barbarians of antiquity and the fifteenth-century antagonists. With this deliberate choice, Chalkokondyles constructed a timeless category of

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[417] Hans Ditten, *Der Russland-Exkurs Des Laonikos Chalkokondyles* (Berlin, 1968), 49-51.

[418] Darkó, **I**, 123-124. Tr. AA. "ἔστι δὲ τούτοις ἱερόν, ᾗ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἐν Ἰβηρίᾳ ἱερὸν νομίζεται καὶ ἐν τῇ Ῥόδῳ ἐνοικοῦν Ναζηραίων γένος. Ταῦτα γὰρ δὴ τὰ τρία ἱερὰ ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐς τὴν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ θρησκείαν ἐπι τοὺς βαρβάρους ᾠκημένα δὴ καταφανῆ ἐστι, τό τε ἐν Ἰβηρίᾳ πρὸς τοὺς ταύτῃ τῶν Λιβύων διαβάντας, καὶ Προυσίων πρός τε τοὺς Σαμώτας καὶ Σκυθῶν τοὺς νομάδας, αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ ἀγχοῦ τὸ παλαιὸν ᾠκισμένους, καὶ Ῥοδίων δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τε καὶ Παλαιστίνῃ διὰ τὸν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τάφον καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ βαρβάρους."

the barbarian. The distinguishing characteristic of these latter day barbarians was that they were enemies of Christianity, which was a fact that Chalkokondyles explicitly underscored. However, Chalkokondyles refrained from classifying these peoples with other value-laden adjectives, apart from the obvious term "barbarian." While Chalkokondyles, in this passage, invested more importance in the formative role of Christianity in contemporary affairs than he did in the rest of the *Apodeixis*, one should note that religion was only one of numerous frameworks to define and regulate human societies.

Contrasting Chalkokondyles with his contemporary Doukas illustrates the ways in which the author of the *Apodeixis* constructed a much more nuanced interpretation of the clash between Christianity and Islam than hitherto offered. Doukas identified the Turks not only as barbarians but also as unholy/"ἀσεβεῖς"[419] and unbelievers/"ἄπιστοι."[420] Indeed, the opposite of "we," the Romans, is the unholy/"ἀσεβεῖς," as Doukas wrote: "God has rightly and justly ordained that we should be delivered to the unholy to be chastised by them."[421] In specific instances, Doukas employed derogatory language. Thus, Juneid, who took Ephesos from Umur of the Aydınoğlu Principality, was a destructive force/"ἀλάστωρ."[422] Mehmed II was the "impious tyrant, deadly enemy and murderer of our nation."[423] In another instance, Doukas wrote that Mehmed II was:

> the Antichrist before the Antichrist, the spoiler of the flock of my Christ, the enemy of the Cross….the disciple of Satan transformed himself into a serpent.[424]

[419] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 216-217; 218-219.

[420] Ibid., 164-165.

[421] Ibid., 133-135.

[422] Ibid..

[423] Ibid., 244.

[424] Ibid., 191.

For Chalkokondyles as well as Doukas, being non-Christian was a characteristic of the barbarian category. However, Chalkokondyles' presentation is more complicated than that offered by Doukas because for Doukas religion was the simple defining factor. According to Chalkokondyles, there were in fact Christian barbarians. He referred to the Armenians, a Christian people although heretical in the eyes of the Orthodox, as being among the barbarians.[425] Concerning Bayezid's campaigns, Chalkokondyles wrote that:

> After this Bayezid marched against Iskender, the king of the Armenians, against the city of Erzinjan, the royal court of the Armenians, and against a town called Shemakha. It is said that this Iskender was by far the bravest of the barbarians in Asia, second to none in military daring and the strength of his body.[426]

In the exposition on Islam, which Chalkokondyles included in the section on Timur's campaigns against Arabia, the Historian further emphasized the ambiguous position of the Armenians:

> The Armenians are the only (nation) that they do not enslave, among all the other nations who differ with them (the Muslims) with respect to religious practice, because he (Mohammed) was foretold of his glory in the world to come by some Armenian. On account of this he did not allow the Armenians to be enslaved.[427]

The reference to the Armenians alongside the barbarians in Asia Minor partly reflected their historical political independence and cultural autonomy and partly the frontier location of the Armenian state between the Arab and Byzantine zones of influence in the middle Byzantine

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[425] Darkó, **I**, 58-59.

[426] Darkó**, I**, 58-59. The ruler of Erzincan whom Bayezid campaigned against was not named Iskender, but rather Taharten according to Neşri, *Neşri Tarihi,* ed. Unat and Köymen, (Ankara, 1995): 334-335. Aşıkpaşazade, on the other hand, does not name the ruler of Erzincan when he writes concerning Bayezid's campaigns, but later refers to Taharten as one of those who deserted to Timur. Aşıkpaşazade, *Aşıkpaşaoğlu Tarihi* ed. N. Atsız (Ankara 1985)

[427] Darkó, **I,** 115. "Ἀρμενίους δὲ μόνους τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν διαγερομένων σφίσιν ἐς τὴν θρησκείαν οὐκ ἀνδραποδίζεσθαι, ὡς Ἀρμενίῳ τινὶ προειρηκότι τό γὰρ κλέος αὐτοῦ ἐς τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐσόμενον. διὰ τοῦτο μὴ ἐπιτρέπειν ἀνδραποδίζεσθαι Ἀρμενίους." This comment might be recognition of the fact that the Armenians were not subjected to the devşirme until ca. 1500.

period.[428] One should also note that Chalkokondyles avoided the question of the heresy of the Armenian Church, which was a commonplace of Byzantine theological writings.[429] Moreover, the emphasis on Mohammed's clemency towards Armenians, a praiseworthy act, was in keeping with the unusually sympathetic description of Islam in the *Apodeixis*, which also departed from Byzantine tradition. We will now turn to those passages on Islam that were included as part of the account of Arabia in the context of Timur's campaigns.

Plethon's influence on Chalkokondyles is most apparent in the Historian's depiction of Islam as lawgiving/ ἡ νομοθεσία, which was similar to the aforementioned advisory letter "On the Peloponnese" by Plethon. Further evidence for Plethon's intellectual influence on his student Chalkokondyles came in the guise of an autograph note. Plethon had excerpted the section on the Islamic conquests from the twelfth-century historian Kedrenos in one of his autograph notes, but had referred to Mohammed as a lawgiver/νομοθέτης in place of Kedrenos' dismissive evaluation of Mohammed as a pseudo-prophet/ψευδοπροφήτης.[430] Chalkokondyles also referred to the Prophet Mohammed as the lawgiver/νομοθέτης. Chalkokondyles' positive evaluation of Islam and its Prophet bears the intellectual stamp of Plethon, his teacher, and the legislative aspects of Islam were the distinguishing characteristics of that religion in the *Apodeixis*. In fact, Chalkokondyles wrote that Arabia was inhabited by people whose "Laws allow indolent mildness and yet also divine

[428]Nina G. Garsoian, "The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire" in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. Helene Ahrweiler and Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C. and Cambridge, Mass., 1998). Ernst Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des Byzantinischen Reiches: Von 363 bis 1071 nach Griechischen, Arabischen, Syrischen und Armenischen Quellen* (Bruxelles, 1935). Sp. Vryonis, "The Byzantine Legacy and Ottoman Forms," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23(1969-1970): 256-57.

[429] Garsoian, "The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire."

[430]Aubrey Diller, "The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Plethon," *Scriptorium* 10 (1956): 37.

enthusiasm, and they especially promote constant study,"[431] emphasizing the civilizing force of Islam. The legitimacy of the Islamic constitution, which is simply the lawgiving/ ἡ νομοθεσία in Chalkokondyles' terminology, was highlighted in the opening passage on Arabia and Islam with the comment that this country, Arabia, is ruled by a "king rather than a tyrant who lives as an equal member, having the same rights as the inhabitants" in the fifteenth century.[432] Elsewhere Chalkokondyles wished to impress upon his readers the rightful authority of Mohammed and explicitly wrote that he was fair in his lawgiving and was not a tyrant.[433] Chalkokondyles noted that Mohammed freed religion to the extent that it did not involve carelessness and revelry, but rather entailed constant practice.

In the sections on Egypt and the Mamluk, which were elaborated in the context of the Timurid onslaught in the eastern Mediterranean when the Mamluk Sultan sent Timur an embassy, Chalkokondyles returned to the subject of Islam as lawgiving, but this time applied in a contemporary setting. Chalkokondyles called the country "Egypt"/"ἡ Αἴγυπτος," which was standard practice among Byzantine authors, but more interestingly, he called Cairo "Memphis." The Historian gave the geographical extent of the lands under a certain ruler whom he called the "Emperor of Memphis," most likely referring to the Abbasid Caliph in Cairo rather than to the Mamluk Sultan, as we shall see. Chalkokondyles' exposition on Egypt was favorable, particularly with regard to learning, even though he had previously counted Egypt and its people among the barbarians. This brings to mind Herodotos' evaluation of that land and of the impressive contributions of the Egyptians to human knowledge. According to Herodotos, the twelve-month calendar was a creation of the Egyptians that the Greeks had adopted. The religious observances and deities were associated

[431] Darkó, **I**, 113 "ἀνίει τε τὴν νομοθεσίαν ἔστε τὴν ῥᾳστώνην καὶ τὴν τοῦ θείου βακχείαν μέντοι, συνεχῆ δὲ ὡς μάλιστα μελέτην."

[432] Darkó, **I**, 111.

[433] Darkó, **I**, 116.

with this calendar, which the Egyptians had "discovered from the stars."[434] Chalkokondyles also emphasized the religious learning of the Egyptians and their application of the laws of Mohammed:

> The Emperor (of the Egyptians) is considered by the nations in Asia and by the nations of Libya (Africa) and by those in Europe to be the archbishop both with respect to their religion and with respect to the laws of Mohammed as a great many of his (subjects) are taught the laws of Mohammed's religion and he is considered to be the archbishop since olden times. And the law of Mohammed is promulgated most correctly by means of (the judicial) writings of these (the archbishops).[435]

In this way, Chalkokondyles drew attention to the practice of Islamic jurisprudence and the role of the Abbasid caliph in that process. This laudatory emphasis on learning, in particular on religious learning, despite the exposition's brevity, was in stark contrast with traditional Byzantine views of Islam.

Hence, Islam received a positive review by Chalkokondyles, who emphasized its legitimacy as indicated in Islamic law and departed from Byzantine tradition that denied that Islamic scriptures were divine revelation and that Mohammed was a prophet.[436] However, in the *Apodeixis*, Islam was legitimate only in a relative sense as one of the multiple ways in which human beings organize themselves socially. Religion, particularly the Islamic religion, in the *Apodeixis* is foremost a cultural and administrative structure and its mystical and otherworldly qualities are not elaborated.

One should be aware that in accepting Islam as lawgiving, Chalkokondyles was not adopting an essentially Islamic view of that religion. Rather, he viewed the Islamic religion

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[434] Herodotos, 2.4.

[435] Darkó, **I**, 132. "νομίζεται δ' οὗτος ὁ βασιλεύς ὑπό τε τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ ἐθνῶν καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν τῆς Λιβύης καὶ δὴ καὶ ὑπό τῶν ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ ἀρχιερεύς τε τὰ ἐς τὴν θρησκείαν αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ ἐς τοὺς νόμους τοῦ Μεχμέτεω, παμπόλλων αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ διδασκομένων τοὺς τῆς θρησκείας αὐτοῦ νόμους, καὶ ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν παλαιοτέρων ἀρχιερεύς τε ἐνομίσθη καί γράμμασι τοῖς τούτων ἀποδείκνυσθαι ἀκριβέστατα δὴ τὸν τοῦ Μεχμέτεω νόμον."

[436] Vryonis, "Byzantine Attitudes toward Islam During the Late Middle Ages."

from a unique vantage point that combined all relevant information on the topic. Indeed, a portion of the information on Islam in the *Apodeixis* was introduced in the context of Byzantine systems of knowledge. In the section on Islam, Chalkokondyles wrote that, "On Aphrodite's day all go to the temples and pray communally." Thus, he combined the calendar, deriving from Romance languages, which referred to Friday as Aphrodite's day/"veneredi," with information he had on Islam.

Furthermore, practices that were alien to Christianity and to Byzantine culture occupied center stage in the sections on Islam. Thus, Chalkokondyles mentioned polygamy, the Islamic practice that requires a divorced woman to marry another man before contracting marriage with her former husband, the ban on alcohol, almsgiving, fasting during Ramadan, dietary restrictions, and Islamic burial patterns. The question of Christ's divinity, that central conceptualization that separates Islamic theology from Christian theology, was also one of the items he mentioned:

> They consider Jesus to be the apostle of God and to have come forth from the angel Gabriel and Mary, who was a virgin and did not have intercourse with any man to give birth to Jesus. (They consider) Jesus to be some hero, greater than human.[437]

Even when the question under scrutiny involved the divinity of Christ, Chalkokondyles refrained from passing judgment, thus mirroring the cultural relativism of Herodotos. Chalkokondyles also referred to the Prophet Mohammed as a hero, as we shall see, and the repeated use of the same word for both Jesus and Mohammed created equivalence between the two systems of belief.

Chalkokondyles' synopsis of Islam, in contrast to Byzantine tradition and the polemical works by Palamas, Manuel II, and Kydones, did not follow a certain program to refute the Islamic faith. In fact, Chalkokondyles researched and compiled a wide range of

[437] Darkó, **I**, 114, "Ἰησοῦν δὲ θεοῦ τε ἀπόστολον γενέσθαι νομίζει, καὶ ἐξ ἀγγέλου τοῦ Γαβριὴλ καὶ ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας, παρθένου τε οὔσης καὶ μηδενὶ ἀνδρὶ συγγενομένης γεννῆσαι Ἰησοῦν, ἥρωά τινα μείζω ἢ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον·"

information on Islam in this synopsis to highlight its "otherness." Some of this information came from Byzantine tradition, but the Historian did not limit his exposition to that tradition alone[438], which also hints at the Herodotean methodology of relying on multiple sources coming from different traditions to create a seamless and continuous story. Furthermore, a cursory look at Herodotos' descriptions of the Persian and Egyptian religions demonstrates that the ancient historian, similar to Chalkokondyles, emphasized aspects of those systems that were unfamiliar and foreign to Greek culture, such as the sacred status of cows in Egypt. In fact, Herodotos makes clear the degree to which this custom must have appeared inherently strange to the Greeks as he writes that the Egyptians do not kiss Greeks on the mouth nor do they use Greek culinary utensils because Greeks consume cow meat. In adapting Herodotos to the fifteenth century, Chalkokondyles constructed an explanatory account and translated an alien cultural value system, complete and systematic in itself, by focusing on the differences with Christianity to render it comprehensible to those coming from the latter tradition. Chalkokondyles explicitly stated in the context of the confrontation between the coreligionists Timur and Bayezid that these two systems, Christianity and Islam, were the only universal religions:

> The entire world, that is known to us, is divided into two religions, the (religion) of Jesus and their own religion, which is governed as the enemy of this one (Christianity). The remaining religions have not been established as either an empire or as any sort of rule.[439]

One should also note that while retaining its "otherness," Islam was not unknowable because centuries of contact between Byzantium and Islam had resulted in the production of a vast body of material in Greek. Although this material was probably accessible to Chalkokondyles

[438] Chalkokondyles'exposition on Islamic practices was most probably put together from the testimonies of oral informants.

[439] Darkó, **I,** 96 διακεκρίσθαι γὰρ ἐς δύο σύμπασαν θρησκείας τήν γε ἐγνωσμένην ἡμῖν οἰκουμένην, τήν τε τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν σφῶν αὐτῶν θρησκείαν, ἐναντίαν ταύτῃ πολιτευομένην· τὰς γὰρ λοιπὰς τῶν θρησκειῶν οὔτε ἐς βασιλείαν οὔτε ἀρχὴν ἡντιναοῦν καταστῆναι."

he parted ways with that tradition in a significant manner and envisioned Islam in the same mold as Christianity, that is, as a social system. Chalkokondyles view of Islam and Christianity was similar to that of Plethon. Plethon presented Hellenism as a philosophical religion, hearkening back to classical Greek ideas and gods to arrive at unchanging truth[440], Chalkokondyles presented Islam and Christianity as social systems which rose and fell as a consequence of their success at adaptation to current affairs.

A distinctive mark of Chalkokondyles' narrative on Islam was the systematic reference to Mohammed as "the hero"/"ὁ ἥρως," a value-laden term in Greek culture with an illustrious classical literary history since the time of Homer. This usage was unique among Byzantine authors. Similar to the use of the Greek terms "lawgiving"/" ἡ νομοθεσία" and "lawgiver"/"νομοθέτης" in the Islamic context, the Prophet's status as the warrior champion was translated into a Greek conceptual framework. Hence, in the *Apodeixis*, Christianity and Christians are the enemies of the Hero, while Islam is the religion of the Hero.[441] Chalkokondyles frequently employed this term in speeches by Muslim characters, fictive rhetorical devices expressing the point of view of the orator but also in his own descriptions and commentary on events. The rhetorical speeches were often delivered to a Muslim coreligionist enemy and invoke the Prophet/"ὁ ἥρως" to emphasize the shared value system. Thus, Bayezid replied to Timur's ambassador:

> Tell your King that You (Timur) and those in Asia (Minor), following our religion, should feel gratitude to me who is fighting for the Hero against our enemies.[442]

Mahmud Angelovic, vizier to Mehmed II, campaigned against Ismail, the ruler of

[440] See Chapter 1: Apollo, Artemis, and Hellenic Philosophy in the Renaissance.

[441] Darkó, **I,** 96, 97, 99, 112, 148; **II,** 114, 158, 240, 241, 245, 246.

[442] Darkó, **I**, 97. "Ἀπαγγείλατε τοίνυν τῷ ὑμετέρῳ βασιλεῖ, ὡς ἔμοιγε ἀγωνιζομένῳ ὑπέρ τε τοῦ ἥρωος πρὸς τοὺς ἡμῖν πολεμιωτατους χάριν ἂν εἰδείης σύ τε καὶ οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν τετραμμένοι θρησκείαν."

Sinope, along with the Ottoman ruler. Arriving in Sinope before Mehmed II, he discussed the terms of surrender with Ismail. Both Angelovic as well as Ismail, stressed that the Ottomans and Ismail followed the religion of the hero. Ismail, in the narrative of Chalkokondyles, responded to Mahmud Angelovic:

> O Mahmud, it was incumbent on the king to march out against the enemies of the hero and not against those who are of the same race and faith. It is not right that a man who is of the same race and with whom we have a treaty should want to take preemptive action against us.[443]

In both instances, when Bayezid replied to Timur's ambassador and when Ismail had an audience with Mahmud Angelovic, Chalkokondyles' understanding of *ghaza* reflected historical realities. Chalkokondyles succinctly related that the Ottomans as well as other Islamic principalities, such as the Timurid Empire, Ismail's Sinope, and the Akkoyunlu believed themselves to hold a covenant with the Prophet Mohammed and that their military campaigns against non-Islamic peoples were lawful. Thus, the Akkoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan's mother in her speech to Mehmed II was critical of the Ottoman ruler's aggressions against his coreligionists, which she said was outlawed by God and by the Hero:

> You do not act well against us, belonging to the same people (as you) and being servants of the Hero. Destiny arranged a covenant (for us) with him (the Hero). For he (the Hero) will not overlook us who are being greatly insulted by you and circumvent this wrong you do to us.[444]

The Prophet Mohammed as "hero" was a recurring motif that was elaborated in relation to Ottoman military activity in the *Apodeixis* and may be understood in the context of the Ottoman ghaza ethos as well as the prominence of the ghazis in early Ottoman history.

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[443] Darkó, **II**, 241.

[444] Darkó, **II**, 246. "καὶ σὺ ἡμᾶς τούσδε ὁμοφύλους μὴ καλῶς ποιεῖς, δούλους ὄντας τοῦ ἥρωος, πρὸς ὃν τὰς συνθήκας ἡ μοῖρα ἐτάξατο οὐ γὰρ περιόψεται ἡμᾶς ἐκ σοῦ περιυβριζομένους καὶ ἠδικημένους περιωοστεῖν."

The nature of the early Ottoman state and the role of ghaza with respect to the rapid territorial gains the Ottomans accrued in the span of two centuries has been debated in contemporary Ottoman studies.[445] Paul Wittek, who published "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire" in 1938, analyzed Ottoman success in relation to other post-Seljuq Turkish principalities in Asia Minor in the fourteenth century and concluded that the Ottoman state's frontier location on the border with the Christian Byzantine state was the determining factor in its long-term ability to attract religiously oriented Muslim warriors, the ghazis, assimilate them into the emerging polity, and expand its territories at the expense the Byzantine state.[446] Wittek defined ghaza as religious warfare and based his findings mainly on a reading of the Ottoman section in Ahmedî's epic poem *İskendername*, which as we have seen belonged to the tradition of Ottoman lore that Chalkokondyles utilized.

Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, whose historiographical method, according to Kafadar, is to be understood in the context of the Durkheimian tradition, emphasized the shared Turkish culture of the various segments in early Ottoman society and the cohesive force of tribal allegiances that helped supplant the fragmented Byzantine state that was marred by extended civil wars.[447] Kafadar has shown that while Wittek's thesis has found general favor in the West, Köprülü's emphasis on tribalism had, until recently, been criticized in the same circles, but adopted in Turkish scholarship. However, anthropological studies on the ethnogenesis of tribes have revealed that tribalism is an inclusive phenomenon that does not require

[445] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*. R. P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington, 1983). Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York, 2003).

[446] Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938).

[447] Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, "Anadolu'da İslamiyet," *Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* (1922); Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu* (Ankara 1959); Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Etnik Menşei Mes'eleleri," *Belleten* 7(1943).

consanguinity and which can be successfully applied to the early Ottomans.[448] With hindsight, Chalkokondyles' insightful account of Ottoman origins, with its focus on Oguz genealogy, appears to parallel the Turkish sources, both oral and written, which Chalkokondyles utilized and upon which Köprülü built his theory of tribalism.

Kafadar, who produced the widely accepted analysis of the nature of the early Ottoman state, has not only synthesized and refined the secondary literature in a chapter devoted to "The Moderns," but has also offered us a new working definition of the concept of ghaza by undertaking a reading of all the relevant primary sources while remaining sensitive to their historicism:

> With respect to ghaza, the first thing to be noted is that it is not synonymous with jihad ….. a difference between jihad and ghaza was maintained whereby the latter term implied irregular raiding activity whose ultimate goal was (or at least the warriors and their supporters could imagine that it was) the expansion of the power of Islam. Ghaza, after all, had the original sense only of a "predatory raid" or "excursion into foreign territory.[449]

Kafadar also warns us against a neat division between ideological rhetoric, focusing specifically on religious motivation, and the material gains incurred by the actual ghazis in the form of booty and slaves. Departing from Wittek's formulation, Kafadar maintains that religious motivation does not provide a monocausal framework, but rather delineates the intellectual contours of the militant ethos to which the ghazis belonged.[450] Lowry, on the other hand, argues that the drive for material gain rather than religious idealism was the determining aspect of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Ottoman history. He finds corroborating evidence for this thesis in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Byzantine historians including Chalkokondyles because they do not mention the ghazis.[451] However we

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[448] Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*.

[449] Kafadar, 79-80.

[450] Kafadar, 55-57.

[451] Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, 47.

have seen that Chalkokondyles often invoked the Prophet Mohammed as hero in the context of Ottoman warfare against Christians. Further, Chalkokondyles' Muslim rulers repeatedly profess that they undertook battle in the Prophet's name. Thus, Chalkokondyles was knowledgeable about the self-representation of the Ottomans as pious Muslims who undertook religious warfare against Christians.

There is also reason to assume that Chalkokondyles was using the term "hero" as a translation of "ghazi." In fact, Chalkokondyles did use the term "hero" not only for the Prophet Mohammed but also for the Ottoman military leaders. This reference comes in the sections on Murad I in Book I. Chalkokondyles writes that Murad I's son Savcı had collaborated with Andronikos, the son of the Byzantine Emperor John V, to jointly rebel against their fathers. Savcı gathered the European contingents of the Ottoman army along with the Byzantine army and faced his father Murad I in Pikridion, near Byzantion. Chalkokondyles has Murad I deliver a speech to the Ottoman military leaders who were encamped with his son Savcı and the Byzantine army. In the *Apodeixis*, Murad I first invokes each Ottoman military leader by name to praise their past deeds and then begins his speech with the following words:

O Heroes! Where have you gone, deserting me, your father?[452]

It was the European Ottoman army, composed of Ottoman warlords who were distinguished by their military presence in the Christian Balkans, that was the audience of Murad I. Elsewhere, Chalkokondyles described the raiding activities of the Ottoman warlords in the Balkans and wrote that they had first set foot in Europe under Murad I, counting Evrenos as a member of this military group.[453] In the fifteenth-century Ottoman sources, Evrenos' title is

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[452] Darkó, **I,** 40. "Ἄνδρες ἥρωες ποῖ δὴ οἴχεσθε, ἀπολιπόντες ἐμὲ τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν."

[453] Darkó, **I**, 92-93.

"ghazi,"[454] making it apparent that the group of warlords under discussion represents the ghazis. Hence, the vocative "O heroes" in Murad I's speech was in reference to the ghazis who had crossed over into Europe during his rule, and the translation of "ghazi" into "hero" should be understood as part of Chalkokondyles' classicizing discourse. The reference to both the Prophet Mohammed and to the ghazis as "heroes" can be read as indicating the religious militant ideology among these warlords in the Balkans. Indeed, we have seen that Bayezid's reply to Timur's ambassador indicates that war against the Christian enemy was undertaken to keep the covenant with Mohammed and this type of heroism was tinged with religiosity.

Although Chalkokondyles was informed concerning how the Ottomans portrayed themselves as pious Muslims, undertaking holy war, he was also quick to draw our attention to the material benefits, such as booty and slaves. More often than not he called the Ottoman raiders as "horse-runners" and referred to their desire for riches. The reference to the Prophet Mohammed as "hero" on the other hand came embedded in the speeches of the Muslims. Thus, Chalkokondyles presented us with the ideological framework of ghaza and the self-representation of the Ottoman raiders. However, he often drew attention to the material goods and slaves that they captured in continuous warfare.

Finally, Chalkokondyles ascribed importance to Islam as a social system both in its regulatory capacity and in its ability to create collective bonds between coreligionists. Furthermore, the Prophet Mohammed plays a dual role in the *Apodeixis*: he is both the lawgiver, the architect of a vast social organization that is the first step in empire building, and the hero, the warrior champion whose militant war ethos is a guide to future military leaders of the Islamic faith to expand the home of Islam and conquer Christendom. These two roles also play a prominent role in Islamic self-perception. After all, the foundation of Islamic

[454] Oruç Bey, ed. N. Atsız, *Oruç Bey Tarihi* (İstanbul, 1972), 40, 41.

jurisprudence is built on the divine revelation to the Prophet Mohammed, embodied in the Koran, and on the deeds and sayings of the Prophet, the *Sunnah*. It is easy to see why Chalkokondyles would translate the distinguished position of the Prophet in Islamic jurisprudence with the term "the lawgiver"/"νομοθέτης," the philosopher-originator of a legal system. However, one encounters this first role of the Prophet Mohammed as "lawgiver" and Islam as "lawgiving" principally in the sections on Arabia and Egypt and seldom in the rest of the *Apodeixis*. Chalkokondyles did not emphasize the legislative aspects of Islam in the context of Ottoman history. On the other hand, the Historian did elaborate the role of religious ideology in Ottoman military affairs by using the motif of the hero in keeping with fifteenth-century Ottoman self-representation as ghazis.

Religion in the *Apodeixis* appears to be only one of the factors underlying the cultural/political/administrative differentiation between peoples similar to Herodotos' expositions on various religious systems. That is to say, Chalkokondyles, unlike Doukas, did not consider religion to be the determining element, although it certainly is a distinguishing one. Thus, his favorable review of Islam, in keeping with Plethon's teachings and Renaissance attempts at finding a middle way between Islam and Christianity such as those of George Amiroutzes and Gennadios Scholarios, may be understood in the context of Herodotean relativism. Chalkokondyles' familiarity with the Ottoman viewpoint is also evident in the use of the term "hero." We will now turn our attention to other forms of political structures associated with the barbarian "other" in the *Apodeixis* that help to explain Chalkokondyles' conceptualization of the Ottoman state at the end of the fifteenth century.

Ottoman Administrative Structures

How did Chalkokondyles conceptualize Ottoman identity? Did Chalkokondyles consider loyalty to a homeland to be an essential component of Ottoman identity? Or did he configure Ottoman identity in ways that were not geographically specific? We

will begin by analyzing a particular anecdote on the operations of the Ottoman military and will proceed with an examination of the Ottoman institution of the *devşirme* (the periodical levy of Christian children for training to fill the ranks of the Janissaries and to occupy posts in the Palace service and in the administration[455]), and finally the Ottoman budget.

The anecdote is not a report on one of the more significant Ottoman military operations, sieges, or field battles, but it contains a rare instance of autobiographical detail provided by the historian. Nevertheless, there is an insight in this anecdote concerning the nature of the Ottoman military. Midway through his history, Chalkokondyles related a story involving his family, his birth-city "Athens," the Florentine rulers of that city known as "the Acciajuoli," the Ottoman ruler Murad II, the city of Byzantion, the Greeks, and the Ottoman noble family of Turahanoğlu.[456] According to Chalkokondyles, following the murder of Antonio I Acciajuoli, the Florentine Duke of Athens, his widow sent an embassy to the "βασιλεὺς" (Murad II) to ask that Murad II entrust the city to her and to her relative, George Chalkokondyles, father of Laonikos.[457] The envoy was George Chalkokondyles himself, who began the journey to the Ottoman court with thirty-thousand gold coins and a mission to obtain the right to rule over Attica and Boeotia. Meanwhile, however, two relatives of the deceased duke (Nerio II and Antonios II) took over Athens through deceit, according to Chalkokondyles. Establishing themselves as tyrants with the help of the leading men of

[455] Encyclopedia of Islam, V. L. Ménage "Devşirme" (Leiden, 1954-2009).

[456] Darkó, **II**, 92-95.

[457] Darkó, **II**, 93: "ἥ τε γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἔπεμπεν ἐς βασιλέα τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπιτραπῆναι αὐτῇ τε καὶ τῷ τῆς πόλεως ἀμείνονι, ἑαυτῆς δὲ προσήκοντι, πατρὶ δὲ ἡμετέρῳ." William Miller, "The Last Athenian Historian: Laonikos Chalkokondyles," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 42, no. 1 (1922). D. G. Kampouroglou, *Οι Χαλκοκονδυλαι* (Athens1926). Concerning the embassy of George Chalkokondyles to Murad II's court; p 95-99, details of the blood-ties between the Chalkokondyli family and the Melissini family, to which family Maria Mellisini, the widow of Antonios I Acciajuoli, belonged.

the populace, Nerio II and Antonios II expelled Acciajuoli's widow and the Chalkokondyli family from Athens. George Chalkokondyles, having arrived at the Ottoman military camp, met with Murad II who ordered Chalkokondyles to hand over the land to which Chalkokondyles had a hereditary claim. As the thirty-thousand gold coins did not achieve much and learning that Murad II had already sent an army against Boeotia, capturing Thebes, George Chalkokondyles decided to escape to Byzantion and sailed to the Peloponnese from there. George Chalkokondyles could not avoid the men of Antonios II and Nerio II, however, who arrested George Chalkokondyles and handed him over to Murad II. Murad II remitted George Chalkokondyles of the accusations brought against him by the Acciajuoli. At that time, the Ottoman general Omar, who belonged to the noble Turahanoğlu family, was already leading the army of Thessaly against Thebes and Attica. The Ottomans ravaged and plundered the Attica countryside, carrying off much booty because the Acciajuoli were allied with the Greeks from the Despotate of Peloponnese. Under these circumstances, Nerio II concluded a peace agreement with the Ottomans, but consequently the Greeks campaigned against Athens and blockaded the city. In turn, Turahan, on order of the Ottoman ruler, campaigned against the Peloponnese, but these events happened much later, the historian remarks.

One of the striking aspects of this brief anecdote concerning Laonikos' native Athens and his immediate family was the depiction of the Ottoman ruler as the supreme authority in a geographical region inhabited by Greeks and Italians and not by Turks. In this narrative, Murad II decided the outcome of disputes as early as the 1430s, predating the Ottoman conquest of the entire Peloponnese by 1460.[458] Even at that early date, the Ottoman ruler

[458] Kampouroglou, 103. The first embassy of George Chalkokondyles to the Ottoman court occured in 1435, the year in which the Chalkokondyli family was exiled from Athens and moved to Mistra.

exercised control over this territory, and more generally over the Balkans, by means of the military structures of the Ottoman State. While Murad II himself initially did not campaign in the Peloponnese in this instance, rather delegating authority to members of the Turahanoğlu family, the Ottoman military was efficacious enough to control the yet unconquered territory.

In this account, the Ottoman state is described as a finely tuned military machine, geared to invade, plunder, and conduct well-organized sieges of cities. Further, it is significant that Chalkokondyles did not specify the location of Murad II's military camp visited by George Chalkokondyles. In describing the military confrontation between Murad II and Hunyadi, the historian would draw attention to the ways in which the Ottoman administrative/military structures supported a highly mobile army.[459]

In Chalkokondyles' narrative, Ottoman history is described as an empire-building process similar to the Persian Empire in Herodotos. A component of that process was the incorporation of Byzantine lands, of those territories in Asia Minor and the Balkans that were controlled by Franks, Venetians, Genoese and other western peoples into the Ottoman polity. Exploiting the existing tensions between various rulers in this politically fragmented geography, as indicated in this anecdote by Florentine rule over Attica and Byzantine rule over Peloponnese, the Ottomans supplanted these states/colonies and brought under their rule a major portion of these lands and peoples by the closing years of the fifteenth century. Imposing payments of tribute, political alliances, and, of course, military campaigns were some of the strategies employed by the Ottomans in their bid for imperial power.[460]

What, then, were the underlying social and administrative structures that gave rise to Ottoman success in building an extensive empire? According to Chalkokondyles, Skythian and nomadic origins were components of Turkish identity, which contributed to Ottoman

[459] Darkó, **II**, 103. Chalkokondyles devoted attention to the ways in which pack animals were organized to transport and distribute armaments to the soldiers as they campaigned.

[460] Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest" *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 103-129.

military power. We have seen that the historian argued that the Turks were related to the Skythians because of their origin and by their language and customs. Chalkokondyles did not directly refer to the Ottomans as "Skythians;" rather, he described Turkish origins as nomadic and described various nomadic military tactics used by the Ottomans. In this respect, Chalkokondyles' historical analysis allowed for change over time as he did not conflate ancient categories with modern phenomena, but rather used the former in an effort to understand the present better. The use of displacement, such as in the institution of the devşirme as an Ottoman strategy, rather than nomadic traditions, is a more correct estimation of Chalkokondyles' investigation.

The Ottomans Turks were not proper "Skythians" and Chalkokondyles reserved that name to refer to actual nomadic peoples living throughout Eastern Europe, which he referred to as the marketplace.[461] He was perhaps referring to the long-distance trade routes that connected Asia, the Middle East, and Europe with this designation. Chalkokondyles wrote that the "Skythian" race, that is, the Tatars of the Golden Horde and the Mongols, is the greatest, most powerful, and most noble race, comparing to no other in the world. Had they not been scattered throughout the world making a living mostly by raiding and had they instead been satisfied living in the same land, choosing to settle there under one ruler and abandoning their raiding activities, no other people would have been able to resist the "Skythians" and all would have been forced to come to terms with them.[462] Nomadism and

[461] Hans Ditten, *Der Russland-Exkurs Des Laonikos Chalkokondyles*, 13-15. Chalkokondyles referred to the peoples settled from the Don River through the inner Asian steppes as "Skythians." In particular, Chalkokondyles included among Skythian peoples the Empire of the Golden Horde, the Crimean Tatars, and the Çagatay in Turkestan.

[462] Darkó, **I**, 126. "ὃ δὴ γένος μέγιστόν τε καὶ ἰσχυρὸν καὶ γενναιότατόν ἐστιν, οἷον οὐδενὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐθνῶν παραβάλλειν, ἂν μὴ πολλαχῇ ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην κατά τε Ἀσίαν καὶ Εὐρώπην ἐσκεδασμένον ἄλλῃ τε τῆς αὐτῶν βασιλείας ᾠκίσθη, ὡς τῇ ἐπιδρομῇ τὰ πολλὰ χρησάμενον· ᾗ δὲ χώρᾳ ἠρέσκετο, ταύτῃ ἐναπολειφθὲν ᾤκησεν. εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐφρόνει κατὰ τάδε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνοικοῦν χώραν, καὶ ὑφ᾽ ἑνὶ γέ νοιτο βασιλεῖ, οὐδένες οἱ τῶν ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ἐνίσταντο ἄν, ὥστε μὴ συνομολογεῖν αὐτῷ." The potential irresistability of the Skythians is a quotation from Herodotos,

raiding as primary economic activities are the two counts on which Chalkokondyles had a negative view of the Skythians, arguing they would have been better off being settled. Chalkokondyles detailed raiding activity in his exposition on the Tatars of the Golden Horde. Taking many Circassians, Mingrelians, and Russians as war-captives, the Crimean "Skythians" sold these people off for little money as slaves to Genoese and Venetian merchants in and around the city of Kaffa. In this way they make their living, wrote Chalkokondyles.[463]

Plunder and the selling of war captives is a recurring activity in Chalkokondyles' history, accompanying all Ottoman military conquests as well. In the latter phases of Ottoman centralization, such activity was more directly governed and supervised by the Ottoman administration.[464] Chalkokondyles, conscious of the transformation in Ottoman administrative structures over time from a more "nomadic" to a more centralized nature, related the activities of the warlords in the Balkans, whom he had referred to as "heroes" in Murad I's speech, in the earlier part of the *Apodeixis*.

Chalkokondyles wrote that Yakub was the first of these Ottoman "generals" in Europe. The following account is Chalkokondyles' description of the decentralized Ottoman military activity in the Balkans.

> Then, Yakub, when Argos was enslaved, led the army. After these, Evrenos immediately reached great power, invading into the Peloponnese and into coastal Macedonia up to the Albanians. Evrenos achieved great and distinguished deeds in the Ottoman ruler's name, but was not appointed as general by the Ottoman ruler. Rather, Turks followed him to war wherever he would lead to be successful in war and to enrich the army. For this so-called horse-runners of the nation have no wage nor are they appointed by the Ottoman ruler, but rather they live off plunder and booty. They follow wherever someone would lead them against the enemies; each one

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5.03. "Θρηίκων δὲ ἔθνος μέγιστόν ἐστι μετά γε Ἰνδοὺς πάντων ἀνθρώπων· εἰ δὲ ὑπ' ἑνὸς ἄρχοιτο ἢ φρονέοι κατὰ τὠυτό, ἄμαχόν τ' ἂν εἴη καὶ πολλῷ κράτιστον πάντων ἐθνέων κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἐμήν· ἀλλὰ γὰρ τοῦτο ἄπορόν σφι καὶ ἀμήχανον μή κοτε ἐγγένηται· εἰσὶ δὴ κατὰ τοῦτο ἀσθενέες."

[463] Darkó, **I,** 126-127.

[464] Kafadar, 114-117, 138-144.

> immediately rides and leads the horse to the booty. Whenever they are in enemy territory, they receive a signal from the general, they mount and lead the horses, galloping very fast, with nothing standing in their way, and disperse in threes to plunder the enslaved people and anything else that they advance upon. I learned that those, who crossed over into Europe with Murat, son of Orhan, and under Bayezid, this is how they advanced. In this way, they choose to make a living for themselves and some straightway advance to great wealth in a short while. They settled everywhere in Europe from the city of Skopje up to the land of the Triballi and the land of Mysians and across Macedonia, after these many settled around Thessaly.[465]

The account begins by describing Turkish raiding activity that is similar in nature to the "Skythian" activity. Appropriately, in the following section, Chalkokondyles relates that some "Skythians"/Tatars from Wallachia sent an embassy to Bayezid asking to settle in this frontier zone. Bayezid initially fulfilled their request and settled them on the frontier, allotting each commander a portion of the land, but some time afterwards, fearing lest these "Skythians"/Tatars revolt, the Ottoman ruler had them killed.[466] State intervention was initially missing in all of this raiding activity; the Turkish raiders are neither paid wages nor appointed, which Chalkokondyles explicitly highlights. Yet, by the time of Mehmed II, Ottoman fiscal and administrative structures were highly centralized. Chalkokondyles gives

[465] Darkó, **I**, 92-93. "Ἰαγούπης μὲν ὀυν, ὡς τὸ Ἄργος ἠνδραποδίσατο, ἀπήγαγε τὸν στρατόν. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα Βρενέζης τε αὐτίκα ἐπὶ μέγα ἐχώρει δυνάμεως, ἐμβάλλων τε ἐς τὴν Πελλοπόννησον καὶ ἐς τὴν παράλιον Μακεδονίαν ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἀλβανούς, μεγάλα καὶ ἐπίσημα ἔργα ἀποδεικνύμενος τῷ τοῦ βασιλέως οἴκῳ, στρατγὸς μὲν οὐκέτι ἀποδειχθεὶς ὑπὸ βασιλέως, τῶν δὲ Τούρκων ἑπομένων αὐτῷ, ὅποι ἂν ἐξηγοῖτο, ὡς εὐτυχεῖ τε γενομένῳ τὰ ἐς πόλεμον καὶ πλουτίζοντι τὰ στρατεύματα, ὅποι ἂν ἐπίοι στρατευόμενος. τοὺς γὰρ δὴ ἱπποδρόμους καλουμένους τοῦ γένους τοῦδε, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἔχοντας ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως, ἐπὶ διαρπαγήν τε καὶ λείαν ἀεὶ διωσθέντας ἔπεσθαι, ὅποι ἄν τις ἐξηγῆται αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους, αὐτίκα ἕκαστον ἱππεύοντα τε καὶ ἕτερον ἀγόμενον ἵππον ἐς τὸν ὑπόδρομον τῆς λείας, ἐπὰν δὲ ἐν τῇ πολεμίᾳ γένωνται, σύνθημα λαμβάνοντες ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ, ἀναβάντες, οὓς περιάγουσιν ἵππους, θεῖν ἀνὰ κράτος, μηδέν τι ἐπέχοντας, καὶ σκεδαννυμένους σύντρεις διαπάζειν ἀνδράποδα, καὶ ὅ τι ἐς ἄλλο προχωροίη. ταύτῃ ἐπίσταμαι τούς τε μετὰ Ἀμουράτεω τοῦ Ὀρχάνεω καὶ τοὺς τότε δὴ ἐπὶ Παιαζήτεω διαβάντες ἐς τὴν Εὐρωπην ὠθῆσαι τε καὶ ταύτῃ ἑλομένους σφίσι βιοτεύειν, καὶ επιδόντας παραχρῆμα ἐνίους μέγα ὀλβίους ἐν βραχεῖ γίνεσθαι, ἀπανταχῇ τε τῆς Εὐρώπης οἰκήσαντας, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Σκοπίῶν πόλεως ἐπὶ τὴν Τριβαλλῶν χώραν καὶ Μυσῶν καὶ κατὰ τὴν Μακεδονίαν, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα περὶ Θετταλίαν οἰκῆσαι πολλούς." Kafadar, 16. Initially, the Ottoman Turks, as allies of Kantakouzenos, crossed over to Thrace under Orhan's rule in 1352 and acquired Kallipolis in 1354 as their stronghold, conducting their military operations into the Balkans using that base. However, under Murad I, this base was lost, only to be regained in 1376-1377.

[466] Darkó, **I**, 93-94.

an overview of this system, which will be described in some detail at the conclusion of this section.

However, even when Ottoman centralization had taken root to a significant degree, the Ottoman military still retained and put to use some nomadic tactics, particularly the cavalry formation of battle according to Chalkokondyles' account. Chalkokondyles writes that the Ottoman use of this nomadic military tactic played a decisive role in their success at the Crusade of Varna in 1444 when the Ottoman army faced the Polish-Hungarian forces of János Hunyadi, George Brankóvić of Serbia, and King Vladislav III of Hungary.[467] Choosing not to immediately engage with the enemy, the Ottoman army retreated and fled back to the imperial military camp. Meanwhile, the army of the Serbs, holding the left flank of the Crusader army (καὶ οἱ Παίονες εἶχον τὸ δεξιόν. οἱ δὲ Δᾶκες τὸ εὐώνυμον.) and seeing the retreating Asian Army of the Ottomans, considered themselves the victors. The Serbs, however, were mistaken in their evaluation, as the Ottomans were only fighting in their customary nomadic way:

> It is customary for this race, which is to say according to the tradition of Skythians, who are the most nomadic of all among those we know, to flee and to regroup, and easily turn back to battle, and to defeat the enemy easily at the right moment.[468]

Thereupon, Hunyadi advised King Ladislav to pursue the retreating enemy, but the Serbian army, having plundered the Ottoman imperial treasures left behind, ceased fighting and went back to their own camp. In this way, the Ottomans eliminated a portion of the enemy forces. Thus , Chalkokondyles partially attributed the Ottoman success at Varna to this nomadic tactic.

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[467] Darkó, **II,** 101-108.

[468] Darkó, **II**, 104. "εἰώθει γάρ γένος, μετά γε Σκύθας τοὺς νομάδας πάντων δὴ μάλιστα, ὧν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν, φεῦγον αὖθις ξυνίστασθαί τε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπανιέναι ῥᾳδίως καὶ αὖθις ἐς τὴν μάχην, καὶ τρεπόμενον εὐπετῶς, ὅποι ἂν αὐτῷ λυσιτελοίη."

Significantly, in Chalkokondyles' narrative, displacement appeared as a strategy in forging Ottoman identity. Employing the classical structural opposition between being migratory and being autochthonous, which we analyzed in the exposition on Turkish origins, Chalkokondyles made it clear that the Turks had come to occupy their present geography, which historically belonged to the Hellenic people, only during the late medieval period. Moreover, homeland, a major component of the ways in which most Western European and Byzantine communities defined themselves according to Chalkokondyles, was conspicuously absent in one of the Ottoman administrative and military structures, the devşirme.[470] That may well be why Chalkokondyles found it appropriate to describe the Ottoman devşirme, a system that significantly relied on displacement, in the context of Murad II's siege of Constantinople, the common patris of the Byzantines.[471]

The devşirme, as Chalkokondyles related without citing this Turkish name for it, was an administrative/military institution that provided manpower for the *kapıkulu* army.[472] Chalkokondyles wrote that children living in Europe were captured by the Ottomans and sent to Asia that they may live there for a few years and learn Turkish. Each year, these children were gathered again and placed on ships in Kallipolis that

[470] Kafadar, 141, "The sociopolitical order created by these frontier conditions developed a general reluctance to recognize an aristocracy, a freezing of inheritable distinction in specific lineages, even after settling down. A system like the *devşirme*, whereby children of non-Muslim peasant families were recruited, "Ottomanized," and then brought to the highest positions of government, could be conceivable only in a state born of those frontier conditions."

[471] Darkó, **II**, 7. Magdalino has drawn attention to Constantinople as the administrative center of the Byzantine world and its importance in forging an exclusivist Constantinopolitan identity. Paul Magdalino, "Constantinople and the Outside World," in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. D. C. Smythe (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2000) p 149-162. Kaldellis, who has provided one of the most detailed accounts of the role of Hellenism in Byzantium, has argued that Romanitas was the determining factor in transforming Byzantion into Constantinople, the New Rome, and Roman identity, while identifying with the capital, nevertheless remained "ideologically independent." Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, 79-82.

[472] Darkó, **II**, 7-9.

were enlisted to carry those wishing to cross over to Europe from Asia. Each child was given a shilling (ὀβολὸς) and a frock each year. After a short period, these children were enlisted in the kapıkulu army (ἐς τάς θύρας αὐτοῦ.) Some were given a wage that was only sufficient to live on, while others were given more. They were organized into groups of ten or fifty people, and they lived communally, eating together and staying in tents after sunset. They pitched their tents around the Ottoman ruler's tent, each one closely situated to the other, and no one else was allowed to pitch tents in this area except for the ruler's children, the treasurers, and those in charge of the privy chamber.[473] Principally relying on recruits rather than on native elements in Ottoman Turkish society, the Ottoman army was organized around the person of the Ottoman ruler, as evident in the layout of the tents. Interestingly, Chalkokondyles did not mention the conversion of the recruits. He emphasized the non-clan based organization of the military in the aforementioned military confrontation between Murad II and Hunyadi. Chalkokondyles contrasted the organization of the Ottoman military with the forces under Hunyadi:

> (Ottoman) horse-runners do not organize according to any battle formation other than according to their troops. The foot-soldiers are well-ordered on the wings of the horse-runner army. The Paionians, on the other hand, are organized both according to regiments and also according to clans. The Paionians hold the right and the Dacians, the left.[474]

Thus, the Ottoman military was not organized according to ethnic allegiance whereas the Hungarian army was organized both according to ethnicity as well as regiments.

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[473] Darkó, **II**, 8. Chalkokondyles singled out the treasurers and those in charge of the privy chamber, which correspond to the hierarchical organization of the Ottoman system of pages in the fifteenth century under Mehmed II. Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace ın the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge and London, 1991), p 113-14.

[474] Darkó, **II**, 103. Tr. AA. "τὰ γὰρ ἱππικὰ στρατεύματα οὐκ ἔχει τάσσεσθαι ἄλλῃ πῃ ἢ κατὰ ἴλας, ἐπεὶ τὰ πεζικὰ ἔχει καλῶς παρατάσσεσθαι ἐπὶ κέρᾳ, οὐ μέντοι γε οἱ ἱππεῖς. Παίονες δὲ παρετάσσοντο καὶ οὗτοι κατὰ λόχους καὶ φρήτρας· καὶ οἱ Παίονες εἶχον τὸ δεξιόν. οἱ δὲ Δᾶκες τὸ εὐώνυμον."

In the context of the organization of the military camp, Chalkokondyles also described the appointments of the kapıkulu into various regiments. Distinguishing the inner-core of the kapıkulu, located around the ruler's imperial tent, from the rest of the army, Chalkokondyles cites various military posts in no particular order: the *imrahor* /"ἀμουραχόριοι," the "wine-pourers who are called *"şarapdar"*/"οἰνοχόοι οἱ λεγόμενοι παρ' αὐτῶν σαραπτάριοι," *emir-ül-alem (*standard bearers*)*/σημαιοφόροι οἱ λεγόμενοι ἐμουραλάμιοι, viziers/"βεζίριδες", "the chiefs of the kapıkulu"/"οἱ τῶν θυρῶν πρυτανεῖς" and the *silahdar*/"συλικτάριδες," who number three hundred. In addition, Chalkokondyles referred to a group of mercenary soldiers in this list of kapıkulu, "καρίπιδες (gariban)/foreigners, who come from Asia, Egypt, and Libya" seeking service in the Ottoman army, and who were hired for a year or less. Chalkokondyles wrote that eight hundred of these people were called *ulufeciyan*/"αλοφατζίδες", or "hired," and two hundred of them were cavalry.[475]

Counting those foreign mercenaries from distant lands among the kapıkulu, who were themselves captive children removed from their families and homes, Chalkokondyles agreed with Ottoman terminology for these peoples.[476] This institution thus used displacement in creating an Ottoman military identity among all ranks of the army, including the highest posts. In fact, Chalkokondyles was explicit concerning the fates of the children of the high-ranking commanders. These children were cast out of the chamber by the Ottoman ruler and stationed in the countryside. The Ottoman ruler

[475] Darkó, **II**, 9: "μετὰ δὲ τούτους καρίπιδες οἱ ἐπήλυδες καλούμενοι, ἀπό τε Ἀσίας καὶ Αἰγύπτου καὶ δὴ καὶ Λιβύης αὐτῷ ἐς τὰς θύρας παραγενόμενοι, καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀντιποιούμενοι ἔναντι βασιλέως, μεμισθωμένοι αὐτῷ, ὁ μὲν πλείονος, ὁ δὲ ἐλάττονος. τούτων δὲ ἔχονται ἀλοφατζίδες οἱ μισθωτοὶ καλούμενοι, ἀμφὶ τοὺς ὀκτακοσίους. τούτων δὲ αὖθις ἔχονται οἱ σπαχίδες καλούμενοι, ἀμφὶ τοὺς διακοσίους."

[476] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtından: Kapukulu ocakları*, (Ankara, 1943-1944).

chose to have them there as they were the children of "noble"/servicing men, "ἀνδρῶν παῖδας ἀγαθῶν γενομένους."[477]

As such, the devşirme system, as Chalkokondyles described it, was a product of two distinct historical developments. First, the nomadic/"Skythian" origins of the migratory Ottoman Turks permitted the use of displacement as a strategy in forging an Ottoman identity. Further, having developed into a centralized state by the fifteenth century, the Ottomans used such nomadic origins to their benefit in developing the devşirme system. Indeed, this system, as described by Chalkokondyles, could not have been conceived without such extensive centralization. The collection of these devşirme children from their families, their "Ottomanization," and their eventual incorporation into the Ottoman military in various posts relied on the centralized administrative structures of the Ottoman state.

Chalkokondyles gave an overview of this centralization when he described the fiscal and administrative structures of the Ottoman state under Mehmed II's rule.[478] This report is contained in the closing pages of Book VIII, which was concerned with two chief political events, the capture of Constantinople in 1453 and its aftermath as well as the unsuccessful Ottoman siege of Belgrade in 1456. Vryonis provided a translation of the appropriate section and compared Chalkokondyles' report to the information provided by the Genoese Iacopo de Promontorio, who was in the Ottoman court for many years.[479] I would like to suggest an alternative source, the law code of

[477] Darkó, **II**, 9. "οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν οἱ τῶν ἀρχόντων παῖδες, ὧν τοὺς μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ κοιτῶνος ἐκβαλὼν ἐς ταύτην αὐτοὺς καθίστησι τὴν χώραν, τοὺς δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος ἐνταῦθα ἔχει ὡς καθίστησι τὴν χώραν, τοὺς δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος ἐνταῦθα ἔχει ὡς ἀνδρῶν παῖδας ἀγαθῶν γενομένους."

[478] Darkó, **II**, 197-201. : 423-432.

[479] Ibid., 427.

Mehmed II called the Kānûnnâme-i âl-i Osman, as a source one might use to compare and contrast Chalkokondyles' report.[480]

The Ottoman *kanunnames* were the first codification of dynastic law that was independent of the *sharia* in Islamic history. The word "kanun" derives from the Greek word κανών, perhaps signifying the influence of Byzantine imperial law-making tradition in addition to the Near Eastern and Central Asian traditions. The word was used long before the Ottomans in Islamic states. Two kanunnames, the first law codes applicable to the whole empire, were compiled under Mehmed II. The first kanunname was issued immediately after the conquest of Constantinople, dealing with the *reaya* (tax paying citizens) and primarily with taxes to the *timariots*. The second kanunname, compiled in 1476, addressed state organizations, high ranking state officials, their duties, promotions, and salaries. At the core of the application of kanun is the concept of the sovereign as the sole authority in the Ottoman realm, and thus someone who was all powerful and answerable to none but God.

This comparative approach evaluating Chalkokondyles' account of the Ottoman budget in light of Mehmed II's kanunname is useful because Chalkokondyles related that he gathered this information from the secretaries of the Ottoman ruler, "καὶ λογίζεσθαι μὲν οὐ πάνυ ῥᾴδιον, πλὴν τῶν τοῦ βασιλέως γραμματιστῶν, ᾗ δὴ ἐπυθόμην·...,"[481] the same officials who would have used that law-code. Moreover, the inclusion of the Ottoman budget in the *Apodeixis* was also related to Chalkokondyles' Herodotean model. Herodotos had included the Persian budget in Book III as part of Darius' organization of the Persian Empire into

[480] Fatih Sultan Mehmed, *Kānûnnâme-i Âl-i Osman : (tahlil ve karşılaştırmalı metin)* ed. A. Özcan (Istanbul, 2003).

[481] Darkó, **II**, 201. The secretaries mentioned by Chalkokondyles are members of the *defterdar* office (imperial treasury), rather than the *nişancı* (imperial chancery), since they compute the revenues of the state, which is not an easy matter according to Chalkokondyles.

provincial governorships.[482] Chalkokondyles no doubt envisioned Ottoman centralization in a manner similar to Herodotos, that is, as an expansionist imperial program.

Chalkokondyles' report contained detailed information not found in Mehmed II's law-code concerning the revenues accrued by the Ottoman state. Mehmed II's law code, on the other hand, specified the ways in which those revenues were distributed, which information Chalkokondyles partially provided. Based on Chalkokondyles' report, Vryonis undertook a comprehensive analysis of the Ottoman budget, detailing both the revenues and the expenditures of the Ottoman state under Mehmed II's rule. By comparing this report with Chalkokondyles' exposition on earlier Ottoman history, it is also possible to demonstrate the transformation of the Ottoman state towards centralized structures and discuss the nature of that centralization in Chalkokondyles' narrative.

Chalkokondyles began the synopsis by introducing the Ottoman military/administrative structures and the division of the state into banners, each of which was governed by commanders. These commanders were overseen by two great generals (*beylerbeyi*), one stationed in Europe, the other in Asia. Alongside the banner commanders, there were also the governors of large towns. The military structures during Mehmed II's rule present a departure from earlier mechanisms of power sharing. By this time, military officers were appointed by the central government and received their pay either directly from the imperial treasury or from the revenues collected from the extensive imperial lands in Europe and Asia, which Chalkokondyles refers to as "χάσια" in the Ottoman terminology.[483] The revenues for the imperial treasury accrued from taxes imposed on land, livestock, trade, mines, and, significantly, from one-fifth

[482] Herodotos, 3.89-98.

[483] Darkó, **II**, 200, "χάσια γὰρ ἀνὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν τε καὶ Εὐρώπην αὐτῷ ὡς πλεῖστά τε καὶ ἄριστα."

of war captives,[484] demonstrating that Ottoman centralization did not exclude plunder and enslavement.

The military administration was hierarchically structured and commanders followed their superiors wherever the Ottoman military campaigned. The "heroes"/horse-runners, who belonged to an earlier generation of Ottoman warriors who were only loosely connected to the Ottoman ruler and whom Chalkokondyles had discussed in the context of the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans, no longer had the same status in the Ottoman military by the time of Mehmed II. In the latter part of the fifteenth century the "horse-runners"" were appointed by Mehmed II over territory that they would raid:

> The Turks who live beside this land have led away many slaves from it. They were plundering slaves and transporting them on to Europe and Asia from all the cities there of which we know. And from the time that he settled the city of Skopje, Isa, the son of Ishak, who supervised that city on the king's behalf, plundered the land of the Illyrians for a long time and more thoroughly than anyone else of whom we know, and carried away more slaves than one would have ever expected that land to be able to bear.[485]

Centralization was both military as well as administrative. In the report on the Ottoman budget, Chalkokondyles also provided a description of the imperial council (*divan*), citing the activities of the οἱ ἡγεμόνες (*viziers?*), the secretaries of the imperial treasury (*defterdar*), and the secretaries of the imperial chancery (*nişancı*). Chalkokondyles left out components of the Ottoman imperial administration, namely the religious and judicial offices. In the *Kanunname*, the şeyhülislam is cited as the first of the religious scholars; he holds the highest ranking in palace protocol along with the

[484] Vryonis, "Laonicus Chalcocondyles and the Ottoman Budget": 425-26.

[485] Darkó, **II**, 280. "καὶ πλεῖστα δὲ ταύτης τῆς χώρας ἀνδράποδα ἀγόμενοι οἱ Τούρκων ταύτην ὅμορον οἰκοῦντες τὴν χώραν. πασῶν δὲ τῶν πόλεων ἀρχῶν, ὧν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν, ἀνδράποδα ἔστε τὴν Εὐρώπην καὶ ἐς τὴν Ἀσίαν ληϊσάμενοι διεβίβαζον. καὶ ἐξ ὅτου τὴν Σκοπίων ᾤκισε πόλιν, καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ἰσαάκεω παῖς ἐπιτροπεύων ὑπὸ βασιλέως ταύτην τὴν πόλιν, ὡς πλεῖστα, ὧν ἡμεῖς ἴσμεν, διὰ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐληΐζετο τὴν Ἰλλυριῶν χώραν, καὶ ἀποφέρεσθαι ἀνδράποδα, ὅσα μὴ ἄν ποτε ἐλπίσαι ἐνεγκεῖν τὴν χώραν ἐκείνην."

teacher of the Ottoman ruler and commands the respect of all Ottoman administrators including those with the highest positions.[486] Furthermore, in his description of the Ottoman imperial council, Chalkokondyles left out the two kazı-askers, of Europe and Asia, the second highest-ranking officers in the imperial council and protocol after the viziers.[487] The kazı-askers were the highest authorities in charge of the Islamic judiciary. The law code specifies the procedure for appointing the kazı-asker:

> Those professors of the religious high education institutions (*medrese*) who have a salary of fifty silver coins are seated above all the chiefs (*ağa*). Once they are appointed as professors of the Sahn (the Fatih Medrese), then they are qualified to be appointed as judges with a salary of five hundred silver coins. Following this, they are appointed as kazı-asker.[488]

By leaving out Ottoman religious and judicial centralization, concerning which the law code provided some detail, Chalkokondyles envisioned the Ottoman state in the fifteenth century differently than some fifteenth-century Ottomans, such as the ulema or the kadis, would have observed. Chalkokondyles did not engage with Ottoman religious and legal administrative structures to any degree when describing Ottoman centralization, and this contrasts with his exposition on the Mamluk. In this report, Ottoman centralization was primarily of a military nature. The report in some ways may be termed a war budget as it detailed the revenues and expenditures required for mobilization. Chalkokondyles' appraisal of the Ottoman state fared well with Plethon's conceptualization. In a letter to Manuel II concerning the Hexamilion composed c. 1418, Plethon indicated that the Byzantines were not prepared to defend the

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[486] Ed. Özcan, 5, "Ve şeyhülislam ulemanın reisidür. Ve mu'allim-i sultan dahi kezalik serdar-ı ulemadır. Veziria'zam anları üzerine almak ri'ayeten lazım ve münasibdür. Amma müfti ve hoca sair vüzeradan bir nice tabaka yukarudur ve tasaddur dahi iderler."

[487] Ed. Özcan, 5-6 "Ve bir cem'iyyet-i ali ve bir mecma'-ı ahali olsa ehl-i Divan'a ahardan alem karışmayup evvela vüzera, anlardan sonar kadı`askerler, andan sonra defterdarlar ve defterdan aşağa…"

[488] Ed. Özcan, 11 "Elli akça müderris cümle ağaların üstüne oturur. Sahn'a vardıktan sonar beşyüz akça kadı olup, andan kadı`asker olurlar."

Peloponnese against the Ottomans because of the current malaise of political institutions. The Ottomans, on the other hand, were quite capable of launching an attack:

> Today the barbarians that are most fearful in our eyes have devised a state. Although it is not good for anything else, it still is geared towards increasing the citizenry and putting together a formidable power for warfare. In this they appear to fare very well.[489]

A common Ottoman homeland is conspicuously missing in Chalkokondyles' definition of Ottoman identity. Displacement, on the other hand, figures prominently in the nomadic (Skythian) origins of the Ottomans and in the development of Ottoman institutions, particularly the military institution of the devşirme.

Conclusion

In contemporary Western historical discourse, the early Ottoman State is most often referred to as a finely tuned military machine distinguished by territorial conquests and empire building on a grand scale. Indeed, the central question with respect to the early Ottoman State that occupies the minds of most Western Ottomanists concerns the nature of that war effort. What were the distinguishing characteristics that account for the stellar rise of the Ottomans from an inconspicuous frontier principality in Asia Minor to the dominant administrative unit in the Balkans and the Middle East? Some scholars have stressed the importance of plunder, war-captives sold as slaves and material gain in general, which attracted not only Muslim but also Christian warriors into the fold of the inclusive, expanding and flexible early Ottoman State. Other scholars have argued that the early Ottoman warriors, driven by religious zeal and by the Islamic religious ideology of ghaza, expanded their territories at the expense of the Christian powers in the Balkans as well as against their co-

[489] Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, vol. 3, 310. "οἱ νῦν φοβερώτατοι οὗτοι ἡμῖν βάρβαροι, πολιτείᾳ κεχρημένοι, εἰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο τι μὴ καλῶς ἐχούσῃ, ἀλλ' οὖν πρός γε πόλεων ἐπαύξησιν καὶ τὸ πολέμου κράτος οὐ φαύλως ἐχούσῃ, εὖ μάλιστα δοκοῦσι φέρεσθαι."

religionists in Asia Minor. Still others have drawn attention to the Central Asian Turkic imperial traditions of state-building and war-making, arguing that the early Ottomans were recipients of such traditions. Other pertinent historical questions concerning this geography and period have been treated as handmaidens in solving the puzzle of the military success of the early Ottomans. Thus, Ottoman land tenure and economic, legal and religious systems have all been studied in connection with the Ottoman military machine.

However, the puzzle of the Ottoman military success story remains unsolved and is worthy of historical analysis. What are the underlying reasons for the selective attention on the military capacities of the early Ottomans? The answer, in some part, lies with the nature of historical investigation. Historians are largely dependent on the source material, which comes in various formats including literary and visual sources, archival material, architecture, oral information, archaeological findings and so forth. Students of history not only analyze, verify, and critically assess their source material, but they also significantly replicate it. It is also a truism that each researcher brings her/his own formative influences into the equation, and this is an aspect of historical investigation. It is almost banal to note that the various modern evaluations of the early Ottomans depend on fifteenth-century sources, but this disclaimer is necessary for the following reason: while Ottoman narrative sources are relatively scarce for this period, there is a wealth of Greek sources, with the result that a significant portion of our source material was composed by individuals, such as Chalkokondyles, who did not belong to Ottoman social circles. Their gaze was that of an adversary, whose ways of living, social norms, and environment were threatened with extinction.

In describing the transformation of the Ottoman polity from decentralized nomadic origins to a highly bureaucratic and centralized imperial state in the fifteenth century, Chalkokondyles relied on his own formative influences to offer an explanatory

account. Being educated in the Greek classics, Chalkokondyles employed a classicizing discourse and depended on inherited classical categories to understand the Ottoman state. In particular, Chalkokondyles relied on Herodotos' account of the Persian Empire. However, Chalkokondyles' adoption of Herodotos as a model rather than Thucydides or Polybios, who were also classical Greek historiographical inspirations to the Byzantine historians, makes it evident that his classicizing style was revolutionary in accommodating the new realities of the fifteenth century, such as the "horse-runners/"heroes," who emulated the Prophet Mohammed. We have seen that Chalkokondyles' contemporary Kritoboulos did not hesitate to employ Roman ideas in his panegyrical account of Mehmed II. However, Chalkokondyles conceptualized the imperial ambitions of the Ottomans using the lens offered by Herodotos and in the image of the Persian kings rather than the lawful Roman imperium. Chalkokondyles, who is cited and extensively used by Ottomanists, no doubt significantly contributed to our contemporary vision of the Ottoman military machine.

3. The Small Barbarian or Kinsfolk: Universal Historiography for a Fragmented Geography

Introduction

Chalkokondyles conceptualized Christianity and Islam as two social systems which regulated human affairs with constitutions, going so far as calling Islam "law-giving". He, further, set up one as the rival of the other. He, also, partially adopted the rhetoric of Christianity as universal religion to present the ideal of a unified state. In the latter half of the fifteenth century[490] when Chalkokondyles was composing the *Apodeixis*, this ideal was far from the truth as Christian states were divided along political, ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines so that Italian city-states were often at war with each other; The Hundred Years War pitted the English against the French; The Bohemian followers of Jan Huss were engaged in war against the papal forces. However, the legacy of the Roman Empire, both east and west, provided fifteenth-century statesmen, such as the Roman Emperor Sigismund, and theologians, such as Pius II and Bessarion, with a model to emulate.[491] No doubt, this was partly rhetoric but it also provided a certain long-term vision to the exercise of politics in the fifteenth-century, when, for example, the election of Roman Emperors was closely related to their ability to wage war against the "barbarian Turks".[492] We have seen that Chalkokondyles arranged the narrative of the *Apodeixis* around the military campaigns of the Ottomans. However, this does not do full justice to the dizzying array of peoples concerning whom he provided information.

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[490] A. Kaldellis, "The Date of Laonikos Chalkokondyles' Histories,""*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 52.1 (2012): 111-136.

[491] D. Angelov and J. Herrin, "The Christian imperial tradition – Greek and Latin," *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History,* ed. Bang and Kolodziejczyk (Cambridge, 2012), p 149-174. Political universalism in the medieval period made much use of the rhetoric of universal Christianity as well as the legacy of Roman universalism.

[492] See Chapter 4, "Relinquishing the Claim to Roman Heritage" for the uses of the ideology of Romanitas.

The *Apodeixis*, on first sight, appears quite modern in spite of its classicizing terminology. That is because Chalkokondyles arranged the information on various peoples by recourse to ethnicity, language, customs and geography in an inherently Herodotean analysis. He wrote concerning the English, the French, the Spanish, the Germans, the Russians, the Hungarians, the Czech, the Romanians, the Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Albanians, the Bosnians, the Venetians, the Genoese, the Milanese, the Florentines. Thus, Chalkokondyles' ethnic units greatly overlap with present day nation-states (with the exception of the Italian city-states.) Was this a historical accident or is there more to it than meets the eye? Is it possible to call the *Apodeixis* a universal history?

The manuscript tradition of Chalkokondyles' work confirms that the History was indeed received as universal historiography: a mid sixteenth-century manuscript copy of the History bears the title "οἰκουμενική ἱστορία."[493] Chalkokondyles brought together numerous states and peoples in a historical narrative that made use of structural oppositions between Christianity and Islam, Roman imperium and tyranny, civilized and barbarian, kinsfolk and foreigner. When we remember that Chalkokondyles, along with his teacher Plethon, believed in the coming of a new age of political/religious Hellenism that would end rivalries and bring long lasting peace, one better understands his reasons for composing a universal history.[494] The use of the genre of universal history allowed Chalkokondyles to draw our attention to the connections between various peoples and geographies, allowing us to envision a unified future polity.

[493] Darkó, **I**, xxi.

[494] See Chapter 1: Apollo, Artemis, and Hellenistic Philosophy in the Renaissance, for a discussion on Plutarch's Zoroastrian oracle that was adopted by Plethon and Laonikos Chalkokondyles and that predicted the coming of a new age of universal Hellenism.

Searching for the Appropriate Universal Model

Herodotos is considered by some to be the first universal historian even though his concept of universality is grounded in the clash between the Persians and the Greeks and flows from an interest in explaining these events, rather than in using the universal lens of the Roman Strabo and Polybios or the Christian Eusebios.[495] Alonso-Nuñez, who worked extensively on the genre, states, "universal historians strictly speaking are only those who address the history of mankind from the earliest times, and in all parts of the world known to them."[496] Thus, according to Alonso- Nuñez, Herodotos' History had the kernel of the idea of universal history in terms of geography, as it included Persia, Egypt, Scythia, and India in addition to Greece and Asia Minor, and in terms of time, as seen in its treatment of ancient history in the context of Egypt and Scythia. However, Herodotos did not fully conform to this definition because the ancient historian constructed a narrative around the Persian invasions rather than looking for patterns in a universal manner. Chalkokondyles' groundbreaking interpretation of Herodotos in the fifteenth century, focusing on customs, language, geography, and political constitutions as organizing structures, alerts us to the fact that this

[495] Alonso- Nuñez, who considers Herodotos to have laid the groundwork for universal historiography, refers to ancient tradition, especially Polybios, in denying him the title of universal historian. J. M. Alonso- Nuñez, "Herodotus' Conception of Historical Space and the Beginnings of Universal History," *Herodotus and His World: Essays from a Conference in Memory of George Forrest* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 145-152. Fowler, seeking to explain the composition of universal historiography, examines the dynamics of local oral traditions and literacy: Robert L. Fowler "Early Historie and Literacy," *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus* ed. Nino Luraghi, (Oxford, 2007), 95-116. Immerwahr examines the form of Herodotus, both the larger units and the individual logoi, and one of his conclusions is that the unity of the Persian Empire in contrast to the diversity of the Hellenic states is the most basic division. Thus, the universal vision of Herodotos builds on the opposition between Persia and Greek city-states: Henry R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus,* (Ohio, 1966). By the late antique period, Hellenistic universal historiography had developed into a well-established genre. Mortley, tracing the universalizing strains in Greek philosophical thought, also shows the various ways in which Eusebios appropriated Hellenistic and pagan ecumenic ideals, synthesized them with Christianity and documented the transformation of Christianity into an establishment institution: Raoul Mortley, *The Idea of Universal History from Hellenistic philosophy to Christian historiography* (New York, 1996).

[496] J. M. Alonso- Nuñez, "The Emergence of Universal Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries BC," *Purposes of History: Studies in Greek Historiography from the 4th to the 2nd Centuries BC*, ed. Verdin, Schepens, and De Keyser, (Leuven, 1990), 173.

historiographical perspective of Herodotos and Chalkokondyles could be perceived to be just as universal as Eusebios and Polybios when the historical conditions demanded such an arrangement of the material at hand. In previous periods, both the Roman Empire and Christianity had functioned as integrating factors in their own ways, allowing their historians to compose holistic works with a wide-ranging vision of time and space. These works, however, are quite distinct and unlike each other except for the fact that they all aim at presenting universal politics.

The Roman Empire, and after Constantine I the Eastern Roman Empire, functioned as a centralized state, with an established capital, taxation system, educational institutions, and legal framework. It, thus, brought together numerous ethnicities in an extended geography. Polybios, the model for Byzantine historians, had started his narrative from that time when events became connected on a world-scale for an extended period and found the establishment of the Roman Empire to be that defining process. In his narrative, the idea of universal Empire allowed for the weaving together of events and time occurring throughout the West and the East. In a famous passage, he described the Roman constitution to be composed of a combination of three types of rule: kingship, aristocracy, and democracy and wrote that it owed its success to this combination.[497] For Strabo, also writing under the Roman Empire, geography was the unifying framework and Strabo excluded past events in the extant Geography.

In contrast to the Roman universal historians, the temporal unity of human events was emphasized by Christian historians, who began their narratives with the Creation. The Christian message as the universal religion for all of humanity created a framework for Eusebios, writing in the Hellenic tradition for the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, to synthesize the concept of the barbarian with Christian transcendentalism. Thus,

[497] Polybios, **VI,** 4.

the different forms of Greek universal historiography, as opposed to more local visions, were intimately connected with the intellectual context of the practitioners, each of whom attempted to attain a universal vision, but were also shaped by the age in which they lived.

The various elements of Chalkokondyles' universalism hearken back to Herodotos but also build on and transform the more traditional Byzantine adaptations regarding Empire and Christianity. As we saw in Chapter 2, Chalkokondyles grappled with the imperial ambitions of the Ottomans and employed Herodotos, with his model of the imperial and tyrannical Persian Empire, rather than the Roman Polybios to explain the expansion and establishment of the Ottomans as well as counter the claims of Mehmed II who presented himself as Caesar and Emperor on Roman style medals. However, this is not to say that Chalkokondyles abandoned the Roman model of universalism. In Chapter 4, we will see that by relocating Romanitas to Rome rather than Constantinople, which had been performed by generations of Byzantine historians but was no longer a functional alternative for Ottoman adversaries after 1453, Chalkokondyles employed the Roman-barbarian dichotomy in his pro-Latin presentation to undermine the continuity claim of the new rulers of the "Second Rome," that is, Ottoman Kostantiniyye. In Chapter 2, we have also seen that Chalkokondyles presented Christianity as a universal element, unifying both the Orthodox and Catholic worlds diachronically and in the fifteenth century. However, while for Eusebios Christianity was the only such religious system, Chalkokondyles envisioned Islam and Judaism to be comparable universal religions. Thus, Chalkokondyles did not fully operate under the universalizing umbrella of either Roman imperialism or the Christian religion, but drew on these historic models and combined them with a Herodotean vision to offer a new universal historiography that was suitable for the fifteenth century.

Chalkokondyles' universal vision of historiography was influenced by the fifteenth-century cultural geography of Greece and the Aegean, the homeland of the historian.[498] An Athenian in his own words, Laonikos grew up in Athens under Florentine rule. When the Chalkokondyli family was exiled, they moved to Mistra, the capital of the Despotate of the Peloponnese. While in the fifteenth century the Despotate remained one of the few remaining possessions of the Byzantines, Mistra was originally founded by the Frankish occupiers in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade. The acculturation process between the Franks and the Byzantines was captured in the anonymous Chronicle of Morea, which survives in Greek, Italian, French, and Aragonese versions and bears witness to the multilingual and multicultural nature of this society.[499] Venetian involvement in the Fourth Crusade, which had led to the establishment of Frankish Morea, had also been instrumental in allowing the Venetians to consolidate their power in the Near East, establishing multiple colonies in the Aegean and on the Black Sea coast. Even the recapture of Constantinople by the Nicaean Emperors did not turn back the tide of Italian economic and political influence in the Byzantine Empire, and by the fifteenth century, Venice ruled over most of the Aegean islands. The largest of the Aegean islands, Crete, was a Venetian colony until its conquest by the Ottomans in the seventeenth century, and the island served as a major port that connected the East with Italy. The Ionian Islands, which were Angevin possessions in the fourteenth century, were eventually colonized by the Venetians. Genoa, Venice's old competitor in the Mediterranean, also continued its influence in the Aegean after the Fourth Crusade to which it had contributed and which had opened up the Black Sea trade to Genoa. Chios was a Genoese possession and Lesbos, Phokaia, Thasos, Lemnos, Samothrace, and Imbros were ruled by the Genoese family of the Gattilusi, who intermarried with the Palaiologoi in the

[498] William Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, (Cambridge, 1921). Miller gives a detailed and classical political account of Venetian and Genoese presence in Greece in the late medieval period.

[499] Teresa Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea: Historiography of Crusader Greece* (Oxford, 2009).

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Angevins, in addition to major portions of the Peloponnese, also held the Ionian Islands in the fourteenth century, which they then lost to the Venetians in the fifteenth. In the fourteenth century, the Catalan Company raided Macedonia and Thrace and controlled Athens and Thebes, which they then lost to the Florentines. Thus, the geography where Laonikos Chalkokondyles grew up was hotly contested between various Western polities as well as by the Byzantines. The historic engagement of these Western entities in this region had led to a new kind of cosmopolitan society with economic and political ties to Italy, France, and Spain. From the eleventh century onwards the establishment of trans-regional trade routes extending from the west, particularly Italy, to the eastern Mediterranean had provided closer contact between the Byzantines and western polities.[500] The political map of the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, however, was much more complicated than earlier. Thus, Chalkokondyles provided a detailed description of the influence and dominance of the French, Genoese, Venetians, Neapolitans, and Florentines in Attica, the Peloponnese, and the Aegean islands in the context of Mehmed I's wars and peace-treaty with the Venetians.[501] Chalkokondyles' choice of emphasizing the prominence and influence of the Western polities in the Near East in his greater historical narrative was no doubt influenced by the particular circumstances of his homeland.

Chalkokondyles' universal vision also bears the stamp of the fifteenth-century crusades that were undertaken exclusively against the Ottomans. The letter of Pope Nicholas V to Constantine XI Palaiologos, written in the aftermath of the Council of Florence-Ferrara and which was translated from Latin to Greek by Theodore Gazes, portrays a vision of a united front against the Ottomans by rallying around the papacy, which one may also argue is

[500] A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis, "The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System," *Gender, Society, and Economic Life in Byzantium,* (Hampshire, 1992).

[501] Darkó, **I**, 192-195.

a vision of contemporary Europe in the making as it was, so some hoped, being forged as a response to the Ottoman consolidation in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.[502] Likewise, one may observe similar tensions regarding Christian unity and real political discord in the famous letter of Pope Pius II to Mehmed II. In this letter, which was written in the aftermath of 1453, Pius II encouraged the Ottoman Sultan to convert to Christianity, promising in return the political leadership of the Western world that was embroiled in internecine quarrels.[503] While Nicholas V's letter was written in the aftermath of the Council of Florence-Ferrara, when the union between the two churches and the raising of a crusader army to defeat the Ottomans were still a possibility, Pius II's letter was written in a milieu when the Ottoman threat to Western Europe had become an actuality. Bisaha argues that Pius II had no interest in either converting the Sultan or even sending this letter. Rather, the Pope addressed a Western audience by using this rhetorical device that they might become united in the face of Ottoman danger. Bisaha points out that Pius II greatly relied on the concept of Europe in opposition to the barbarian Turks in constructing his argument.[504]

This pan-European vision was similar to that of Chalkokondyles. Nicholas V had stressed a common Mosaic and Christian past between the Catholics and the Orthodox, while Chalkokondyles relied to some extent on the universality of Christianity but also greatly focused on the Greco-Roman tradition. Chalkokondyles started out the *Apodeixis* by relating and modifying the story of the four Empires that Herodotos had narrated. He glossed over the establishment of Christianity and the conversion of the Roman Emperors. In presenting the various different polities of his time, Chalkokondyles had recourse to classical Greek political

[502] Nicholas V, "Epistula ad imperatorum Romanorum Constantinum translata de voce Latina in vocem Graecam Theodoro Ghazae," *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, vol. 4, 48-63.

[503] Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Epistola ad Mahomatem II* ed. and tr. Albert R. Baca (New York, 1990).

[504] Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II's Letter to Sultan Mehmed II: a Reexamination," in *Crusades*, vol. 1, (2002), 183-200.

theory. Chalkokondyles applied the term Hellene to the Byzantines. In his letter, Nicholas V also made references to the Hellenic past of the Byzantine people, consistently referring to them as "Hellenes" in the Greek translation of Gazes, which no doubt had secured Nicholas V's approval. Furthermore, in the letter, Nicholas V called on a great number of Western peoples as "witnesses" for the union of the Churches: Iberia (Castile, Aragon, Portugal, and Navarre), the British, Irish, and Scottish islands, Germany, the northern lands of the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes, Poland, the Celts, and of course Italy.[505] Meaningfully, this list of Western nations greatly overlapped with Chalkokondyles' exposition on Western lands and peoples. Chalkokondyles, growing up in Florentine Athens and cosmopolitan Mistra, with personal connections to crusade propagandists such as Cyriac of Ancona, and having the requisite classical education under the neo-Hellenist Plethon, was in a unique position to concoct a new historiography in the long-lost idiom of the first universal historian, Herodotos.

Ottomans as Persians and Western Peoples as Hellenic City-States

Chalkokondyles organized the *Apodeixis* around the rise of the Ottoman Turks in a manner similar to how Herodotos used the Persians and conceptualized the Christian resistance to the Ottomans through the lens Herodotos offered, that is, as a politically divided non-barbarian world that can at crucial points come together against the barbarian. In fact, Herodotos' History has been interpreted as being strongly influenced by the Peloponnesian War, which, at the time of its writing, was being waged between Hellenic city-states rather than against an external enemy.[507] According to this interpretation, Herodotos glorified the unification of the Hellenic city-states as a response to the Persian invasion, which had

[505]Nicholas V, "ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ," *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά,* vol. 4, 59-60.

[507] Sara Forsdyke, "Athenian Democratic Ideology and Herodotus' 'Histories," *The American Journal of Philology* 122 (2001): 329-358*;* John L. Moles, "Herodotus and Athens" in Bakker, de Jong and van Wees, *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, (Leiden, 2002), 33-52; Philip Stadter, "Herodotus and the Athenian Arche," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa,* 22 (1992): 789-809.

occurred in the previous generation, to criticize the state of affairs in his own day. Herodotos' critique of tyranny and imperialism in the context of the Persian invasions was connected with contemporary concerns regarding Athenian imperialism. Moreover, just as there were multiple independent Hellenic city-states in the fifth century BC, each with its own governing structure and political and religious culture, the Christian world (Chalkokondyles considered religion to be a defining element of the non-barbarian peoples similar to the way in which Herodotos viewed Hellenic identity) was not unified under the umbrella of one overarching political structure in the late fifteenth century.

Chalkokondyles often referred to the fragmented political scene to explain the Christian world's ineffectual stand against the Ottomans, and he captured its divided nature in a striking passage. In Book 10, the last Book of the *Apodeixis*, Chalkokondyles wrote of the Pope's reply to the Venetian ambassador, who sought the Papacy's help for a concerted war against the Ottomans after Mehmed II had conquered not only Constantinople but also Mistra and the Empire of Trebizond, the remaining autonomous Hellenic political structures. According to Chalkokondyles, the Pope answered the Venetian ambassador, saying, "It is necessary at first to do away with the small barbarian and then to spring upon the big (barbarian)."[508] Chalkokondyles further explained that the Pope was at the time engaged in a war with the Italian city-republic of Rimini, which the Pope had referred to as the "small barbarian" in his reply to the Venetian ambassador. By referring to the city of Rimini as "the small barbarian," Pius II, as the supreme representative of the Roman Church, employed the Roman-Barbarian dichotomy for his own political gain. Indeed, Chalkokondyles was knowledgeable about Pius II's replies to criticism concerning the failure of an anti-Ottoman crusade. The Pope had tied the Malatesta regime in Rimini to the barbarian Ottomans:

[508] Darkó, **II**, 295. "ἀναγκαῖον πρῶτον αὐτὸν τὸν μικρὸν βάρβαρον ἐκ μέσου ποιεῖσθαι, εἶθ' οὕτως ἰέναι καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν μέγαν, σημαίνων τὸν Ἀριμίνου ἡγεμόνα, πρὸς ὃν πόλεμος ἦν αὐτῷ, διενεχθέντα ἐπὶ τρόπῳ, ὃν παραλιπεῖν ἄξιον. διὰ δὴ ταῦτα αἰτίαν ἐπιφέρων τοιαύτην ἐπολέμει."

> Before attacking the Turks we must bring about peace at home. To this all our mind, all our thought have been bent. We fought for Christ when we defended Ferrante. We were attacking the Turks when we battered the lands of Sigismondo (Malatesta).[509]

One even senses that Chalkokondyles was critical of Pius II in this instance, as the historian wrote, "Thus the Pope delayed the Venetians, as he was engaged in war with his own kinsfolk.[510]

In 1466, when Sigismund Malatesta, who was participating in the Venetian campaign against Ottoman Mistra, returned to Rimini with the remains of Plethon, he had them interred in the recently renovated San Franceso Cathedral, which Pius II had denounced as being adorned with "pagan demons"/"infidelium daemones."[511] Plethon's dubious legacy as either a neopagan or a classically oriented Christian was therefore represented in his final resting place, echoing the inherent tensions in the Renaissance.

Moreover, the presentation of the conflict between Rimini and the Papacy, dubbed the feuding kinsfolk, resembled the ways in which Herodotos had conceptualized a family of Hellenic city-states that were at times at war with each other. This portrayal of the conflict was not an isolated instance, but rather a recurring pattern occurring across the whole geography of the non-barbarian world, as we shall see. What, then, were the elements of the shared culture that led Chalkokondyles to conceive of these myriad different polities as a unit

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[509] Pius II, *Commentaries*, tr. Florence A. Gragg, vol. 43, (Northampton, 1957), 818-819. Indeed, Sigismondo was accused by the Venetians of collaborating with the Ottomans when the artist Matteo de' Pasti, travelling to Constantinople on an embassy from Rimini, was arrested in Candia in 1461 with maps of Italy sent by Sigismondo to Mehmed II. Julian Raby, "Pride and Prejudice: Mehmed the Conqueror and the Italian Portrait Medal" *Studies in the History of Art,* 21 (1987), 171-194.

[510] Darkó, **II**, 295. "Καὶ οὕτω μὲν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς διεκρούσατο τοῖς Οὐενετοῖς, ἔχων ἐμφύλιον οἰκεῖον πόλεμον."

[511] F. Masai, *Plethon et le Platonisme de Mistra*, (Paris, 1956), 364-365. When Leon Battista Alberti, who was commissioned by Sigismondo Malatesta, was drawing up the plans for the renovation project for the Cathedral, Cyriac D'Ancona was present in Rimini and supplied the text of the Greek votive inscription "ΘΕΩΙ ΑΘΑΝΑΤΩΙ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΙ ΠΟΛΕΙ ΤΟΝ ΝΕΩΝ." M. A. Lavin, "The Antique Source for the Tempio Malatestiano's Greek Inscriptions," *The Art Bulletin*, 59.3 (1977), 421-422. Appropriately, Matteo de' Pasti supervised the construction of the Cathedral in the absence of Alberti. Julian Raby, "Pride and Prejudice," 175.

in opposition to the Ottomans? In what ways did Chalkokondyles' conceptualization of the fifteenth century differ from that of his contemporary Byzantine historians, and in what intellectual context should we understand this wide-ranging vision of historiography?[512]

Chalkokondyles portrayed the tensions in the non-barbarian world and he also cast his vote for one particular Italian city-state: Venice. Venice played a similar role as Athens played in Herodotos. With its long historical engagement and attachment to the Byzantine world, Venice emerged as a refuge for Byzantines in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquests. Byzantine communities appeared in both the city of Venice and in the Venetian colonies, especially Crete, and Chalkokondyles' praise of Venice is best understood in the context of these Byzantine communities, that had ties to such individuals as Bessarion.

However, Venice was but one actor among many polities that included other Italian city-states such as Florence, Genoa, Milan, and Naples. Furthermore there were other non-barbarian groups such the Spanish kingdoms, the English, French, Germans, Hungarians, Serbs, Bulgars, Russians. While there was a certain hierarchy and expressed preference on the part of Chalkokondyles between these polities and groups, his vision rested not on a particular point of view, such as that of the Venetians, but on the relation of these polities to the war between the Hellenes and the barbarian Ottomans.

Beginning with the organization of the historical material, Chalkokondyles' depiction of the various Western polities was integrated into the composition by means of their relation to the main theme of the *Apodeixis*, which Chalkokondyles had defined in the Prooimion as the final demise of the Hellenes and the rise of the Ottomans. The construction of the narrative, as outlined in Chapter 2, relied on Herodotean style digressions and synopses,

[512] Donald M. Nicol, "The Byzantine View of Western Europe," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 8 (1967): 315-339. Nicol writes: "One thing that astonished the reader of Byzantine historians particularly of the later period is their evident ignorance of the history and geography of western Europe; another thing is their boundless pride in their city, their Empire and their traditions." On both counts, Chalkokondyles was an exception to the generic "Byzantine historian of the late period."

which shed light on the events occurring in the Balkans and Asia Minor. Moreover, while the main narrative thread, which concerns the rise of the Ottomans, followed a chronological order beginning with the establishment of Ertugrul in Bithynia and continuing down to the time of Mehmed II, Chalkokondyles also used flashbacks and elaborated earlier themes in the synopses and digressions when tackling non-Ottoman polities. Thus, Chalkokondyles introduced the Council of Florence-Ferrara in the opening pages and gave a more complete account of the same event in Book VI following a more chronological order.

Similarly, Venetian involvement in the Fourth Crusade is mentioned in the opening pages, but one must wait until Book IV for a fuller exposition of that event in the context of Venetian history, politics, and administrative structures, which took its cue from Mehmed I's wars with Venice over Venetian possessions on the Ionian coast. In this synopsis, Chalkokondyles engaged in detail with various aspects of Venetian history, such as Baiamonte Tiepolo's failed coup d'état in 1310, that do not appear on the surface to directly bear upon Venetian involvement in the eastern Mediterranean.[513] In the final chapter, Chalkokondyles once again gave detailed information on the Venetians, this time concerning Venetian military encounters with Mehmed II, and concluded the *Apodeixis* in the winter of 1463-1464 with the capture of Limnos by the Venetians. The conclusion of the narrative with this series of wars, which were waged in the Peloponnese and on the Aegean islands and were to last until 1479, bears testimony to the privileged position Venice occupied in the *Apodeixis*.

Similarly, Chalkokondyles mentioned the Genoese in the context of their involvement in the Byzantine civil war of 1380-1381 in Book II, but the synopsis on Genoa, detailing its geography, history, and politics, was given in Book V following Chalkokondyles' statement that the Genoese were closely allied with Murad II. Chalkokondyles then detailed the conflict

[513] Darkó, **I**, 187.

between Genoa, Napoli, and King Alfonso (1396-1458) of Aragon and Valencia, which led the Historian to give an extended account of Spain, its geography and politics in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as well as the kingdoms of Aragon, Valencia, Castille, Navarre, and Sicily and their connections with the Italian city-states. Concluding Book V with this exposition on the western Mediterranean, Chalkokondyles justified the digression:

> So far, these have been written as an explanation for they pertain to the entire subject of the composition. However, I now return to where it was left off when I made the digression.[514]

It is therefore clear that the structure of the *Apodeixis*, with detailed narratives on subjects not appearing to be immediately related to the Hellenes and the Ottomans, but taking their cue from events in the Near East, was a conscious choice on the part of Chalkokondyles, who conceived of a particular form of universal historiography as interrelated themes that can also be read as self-contained stories. What, then, were the unifying threads and organizing principles that allowed stories such as the dragon killing young Milanese men[515] or the social habits of English women[516] to be related to the larger theme of the Hellenes and the Ottomans?

Rivals Facing the Big Barbarian

One such unifying thread that runs throughout the *Apodeixis* is rivalry, both political and military, between the various non-barbarian polities, including the Hellenes and other

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[514] Darkó, **II**, 57, "Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐς τοσοῦτον ἐχομένῳ τῆς τοῦ λόγου συμπάσης ὑποθέσεως ἀναγέγραπται ἐς ἀπόδειξιν· ἐπάνειμι δέ, ὅθεν τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐποιησάμην, ἄχρι τοσοῦτον διενεχθείς."

[515] Darkó, **I**, 180-181. Chalkokondyles' exposition on Florence begins with a story about a dragon that killed the young men working in the fields around the city. Chalkokondyles explains the establishment of seigniorial rule in Milan by recourse to this story. The symbol of the serpent was associated with the Visconti family and Milan, as the serpent devouring a Saracen or alternatively a child appears on the Visconti coat of arms and on Milanese monuments. Chalkokondyles, familiar with this potent image, narrated the rise of the Visconti by including a story wherein Filipo Maria Visconti, the English condottiere Mariangeli according to Chalkokondyles, defeats the dragon and is invited by the Milanese to be their ruler.

[516] S. Moraitis, "Sur un passage de Chalcondyle relative aux Anglais," *Revue des Etudes Grecques,* 1 (1888): 94-98.

Christian states, which interfered with their ability to unify in response to the Ottomans and correspond to the theme of the competing Hellenic city-states in opposition to the barbarian Persians in Herodotos. This theme on the divided nature of the non-barbarian world is first introduced in Book I and runs through all ten Books of the *Apodeixis*. The religious controversy between the Romans and the Hellenes, that is the schism between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches, was the earliest indication of the discord in the non-barbarian world; this topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The political rivalries in the non-barbarian world did not pertain solely to the Schism. Continuous warfare was a pervasive phenomenon throughout the Western world, including the Italian peninsula, Spain, across Germany and Hungary, and in Eastern Europe, both historically as well as in the fifteenth century. Chalkokondyles devoted considerable attention to the dynamics of these rivalries in a pan-European manner, being careful to link these different regions to each other. Concerning the Italian city-states, Chalkokondyles wrote of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, although he professed that he was unable to trace the roots of this divisive factionalism that plagued every Italian city-state, pitting city against city as well as leading to civil war.[517] Chalkokondyles also gave an extended analysis of the rivalries between Genoa and Venice[518], between Milan and Venice[519], and between Naples and Florence,[520] as well as describing the shifting set of alliances between Genoa, Napoli, and Milan. Chalkokondyles connected the Italian peninsula with France and Spain, using the over-lordship of the French kings in Naples,[521] the campaigns of Alfonso in Italy, and

[517] Darkó, **II**, 70-71.

[518] Darkó, **I**, 177-179.

[519] Darkó, **I**, 179-181.

[520] Darkó, **II**, 44.

[521] Darkó, **II**, 44.

Alfonso's professed genealogical connections to the French throne.[522] Through the fifteenth-century Crusades against the Ottomans, France and Italy were also connected to the Hungarians, Germans, Serbs, and Wallachians, and of course, Chalkokondyles referred to all of these peoples with classical names to create a sense of continuity with the Greco-Roman past.[523] However, Chalkokondyles was quick to dispel any romantic notion of unity during the Crusade of Nicopolis in 1396, as he painstakingly described the linguistic, customary, and political differences between the Crusaders.

Byzantine Emperors Seeking Western Help

The two embassies by the Byzantine Emperors, John V in 1369-1371 to Venice and Manuel II in 1400-1401 to Italy, England, and France were appeals by the Byzantines to the Western Christian polities for help against the Ottomans; both embassies were unsuccessful. Chalkokondyles recorded both, first the embassy of John V in some detail and then that of Manuel II in extensive fashion, pertaining to the politics in the West and to the reasons why these embassies were ultimately ineffectual.

Concerning John V's travel to Venice in 1369, which was to last until 1371, Chalkokondyles erroneously wrote that John V also travelled to France on the same occasion, confusing it with Manuel II's later embassy. According to this account, John V borrowed money from the Venetians before embarking on his trip to France, but was unable to repay the loan on his return trip. The Venetians, according to the *Apodeixis*, detained John V for his debt, and the Byzantine Emperor asked his son Andronikos, who was acting as regent in Constantinople, to send the necessary funds for his release. Andronikos, however, refused, and it was John V's younger son, Manuel, governor of Thessalonica and the future Byzantine

[522] Darkó, **II**, 47-57.

[523] Darkó, **I**, 64-74. A detailed analysis of the Crusade of Nicopolis is found in Chapter 4.

Emperor, who put together the resources to save his father.[524] This account was considerably different from that supplied by Doukas, but it showed some correspondence with Demetrios Kydones' letter from Venice to Constantine Asan in the Peloponnese in 1370-1371. The Catholic convert and Byzantine official Kydones was possibly the teacher of Plethon, having deep insight into both the Latin and Hellenic traditions.[525] Kydones accompanied John V on the trip to the West. Despite his pro-Latin stance, or more probably due to his extensive knowledge of the West, Kydones was critical of Venice in his letter, writing that "small change was the most prized thing for the merchant," for which reason the Venetians put pressure on John V when he was unable to repay the loan. Ryder, who published on Demetrios Kydones, writes that the exact circumstances of their journey back to Constantinople were unclear.[526] Chalkokondyles' contemporary historian Doukas, on the other hand, gave a cursory treatment of John V's trip to the West, writing that he "gladly received from the Italians and Germans many treasures to be used for the defense of the City, and then he returned."[527] It is clear that the pro-Latin sentiments of both Doukas and Kydones did not lead them to portray John V's visit to Italy in the same light. While Kydones, who was knowledgeable about the details of Venetian mercantile priorities, lamented the dire conditions of the Byzantine delegation, Doukas, missing crucial information about John V's visit to Venice, wrote of the event as a rose garden. Chalkokondyles' depiction of the same embassy, unlike Doukas', makes it clear that Chalkokondyles did not hesitate to lay bare the discord between the Venetians and the Byzantines, both of whom belonged in the non-

[524] Darkó, **I**, 46-47.

[525] Masai, 62-63. Christos Baloglou, *Georgios Plethon—Gemistos: On the Peloponnesian Affairs*, Byzantine Text—Translation—Comments, (Athens, 2002), 38-39.

[526] J. R. Ryder, *The Career and Writings of Demetrios Kydones: A Study of Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Politics, Religion and Society* (Leiden, 2010), 183-184.

[527] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 77.

barbarian camp, when Venetian mercantile priorities interfered with their assumed alliance with the Byzantines against the Ottomans.

Manuel II's extended visit to the West, that was undertaken when Constantinople was under the eight-year long siege by the Ottoman armies of Bayezid, made him the only Byzantine Emperor to visit England and France.[528] This provided Chalkokondyles with the opportunity to provide a synopsis on France and England, including information on geography, customs, history, and the current political events in these lands, although the Historian only recorded that Manuel II visited France and not England.[529] He wrote that the French King, namely Charles VI although Chalkokondyles did not mention him by name, was suffering from madness when Manuel II visited him in Paris, and this is the overt reason the Historian provided for the failure of the embassy. However, Chalkokondyles also devoted space in this synopsis to the hostilities between France and England in the context of the Hundred Year Wars, recounting the story of Jeanne d'Arc.[530] Chalkokondyles also noted that the two countries have comparable traditions wherein the monarchs do not rule absolutely and cannot easily deprive someone of land. He was careful to note, however, that the English and the French belonged to different linguistic communities and had dissimilar war ethos.

Chalkokondyles, unlike Doukas, was knowledgeable about the dynamics of the Western world to the extent that he was able to incorporate such detailed information in the *Apodeixis*. Concerning Manuel II's travels in the West, Doukas had simply written that:

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[528] C. Dendrinos, "Manuel II in Paris (1400-1402): Theology, Diplomacy, and Politics," ed. M. Hinterberger and C. Schabel. *Greeks, Latins, and Intellectual History 1204-1500,* 397-422. John W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus 1391-1425: A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship*, (Rutgers University Press, 1969), 123-199. Donald M. Nicol, "A Byzantine Emperor in England: Manuel II's visit to London in 1400-1401," D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (London, 1972), 204-225.

[529] Darkó, **I**, 79-90. Alain Ducellier, "La France et les iles Britanniques vue par un byzantin du XVe siècle: Laonikos Chalkokondylis," *Économies et sociétés au moyen âge; mélanges offerts à Edouard Perroy* (Paris, 1973), 439-445.

[530] According to Ducellier, Chalkokondyles' narrative was not favorable to the French.

> Traversing all of Italy, he went from Provence that is France to Germany. All the kings and dukes and counts honored him and rewarded him with gifts as though he were a demigod. Traveling through France and crossing the borders of Alamania, he returned to Venice.[531]

Chalkokondyles conveyed the sense that France and England, although belonging in the same non-barbarian world as the Byzantines (Manuel II had expected to find aid there against the Ottomans), nevertheless were of a different world with its own rules and clashes. Manuel II, in his letter from London to the esteemed Byzantine scholar and ambassador Manuel Chrysoloras, eloquently captured both this affinity and the essential difference between these lands and the Byzantines when he wrote that Henry IV was "the King of Great Britain, of a second civilized universe, you might say" (ὁ τῆς Βρετανίας ῥὴξ τῆς μεγάλης, τῆς δευτέρας, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, οἰκουμένης).[532] The journey of a Byzantine Emperor to London and Paris for the first time in Byzantine history had prompted cultural mediation, which Manuel II attempted in his letters, opening up Byzantine intellectual horizons to this far-flung corner of Europe. The dispersion of Mistra intellectuals after the fall of the Peloponnese in 1460 further facilitated the Hellenic dialogue with England and France, as we find the "Spartan" George Hermonymos in England in 1475 and in Paris after 1476, where he taught Greek to Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Budé, among others.[533] The echoes of Manuel II's visit ultimately found its niche in the universal vision of Chalkokondyles, who was sensitive to the formative influences of war on the strengthening of ethnic feelings.

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[531] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 87.

[532] Manuel II Palaeologus, ed. and tr. George T. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, (Washington DC, 1977), 102-103.

[533] S. Lampros, "Λακεδαιμόνιοι Βιβλιογράφοι", *NE*: 325-331. Reuchlin (1455-1522), in particular, has been associated with Stoic philosophy, which, as we have seen, played a role in Plethon's and Chalkokondyles' understanding of history.

The Dividing Line between Non-Barbarian and Barbarian

A passage bearing on the political fragmentation of the West comes in the section on the pre-1204 history of Venice and concerns an account of the hostilities between Pope Alexander III and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, in which Venice became an involved party. Chalkokondyles wrote that Frederick I Barbarossa's aggression had forced the Papacy to move to the Western lands, and it was Venetian naval power that brought it back to Rome.[534] In this passage, Chalkokondyles referred to Barbarossa as the "Emperor of the Barbarians," in a pun over his name. Fittingly, this reference corresponds with the twelfth-century letter Cardinal William of Pavia had sent to Emperor Manuel I Komnenos asking the Byzantines to support Alexander III, wherein the Cardinal had written that the "tyrannical barbarians," referring to Frederick I Barbarossa's forces, had greatly afflicted the Church and usurped the title of Emperor.[535]

Clearly, the dividing line between barbarian and non-barbarian was an effective ideological construct of Greco-Roman tradition, which was inherited, used, and reused

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[534] In the Bonn edition, 188, the corresponding section reads: "Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ ὑπὸ Βαρβαρόσσης βασιλέως τῆς Ἰταλίας πρὸς ἑσπέραν χώρας [πρὸς] τὸν Ῥώμης ἀρχιερέα ἐκπεσόντα τε τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς Ῥωμαίων πόλεως, κατήγαγόν τε τὸν ἀρχιερέα, καὶ πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα πολεμήσαντες, ὥστε ἐμπεδῶσαι τῷ ἀρχιερεῖ τὴν ἀρχήν, ναυμαχίᾳ τε ἐπεκράτησαν καὶ κατήγαγον." Darkó, **I**, 177. Darkó adopted Tafel's correction, which reads "Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ ὑπὸ Βαρβαρόσσης βασιλέως" (emphasis added). I would like to argue based on William of Pavia's letter that the correction is not necessary because all of the manuscripts that Darkó has utilized refer to Barbarossa as "The Emperor of the Barbarians." The appropriate translation would be: "After these things happened and during the reign of the Emperor of the **Barbarians**, when the Archbishop of Rome (Alexander III), being deprived of rule was driven out of Italy and out of the city of the Romans towards western lands, they (the Lombard League) brought the Pope back, and waged war against the Emperor (Frederick I Barbarossa) in order to establish the Pope to rule, they were victorious in a navy battle, and brought back (Alexander III)." Further, Tafel and Darkó's "correction" is illustrative of early twentieth-century Central European views on the barbarian-civilized divide and the legacy of Frederick I Barbarossa.

[535] *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, **XVI**, (Paris, 1878), 55: "et quanta eidem ecclesiae a barbarorum tyrannide fuerint inflicta gravamina, ex quo imperatorium nomen noscitur ab illis usurpatum." For the complex web of relations between Manuel I Komnenos, Alexander III, and Frederick I Barbarossa see Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180* (Cambridge, 1993).

both in the Byzantine Empire and in the West to bolster one's position against powerful foes who at times claimed their share of the inheritance of the Roman imperium. Revisiting the main theme of the barbarian Ottoman Turks with this point in mind, Chalkokondyles' occasional use of the term "barbarian" for Mehmed II in speeches by Venetians, who were urging for Venetian war against the Ottomans, deserves particular attention.[536] Significantly, Chalkokondyles refrained from using the term "barbarian" for any Ottoman ruler in the main text of the *Apodeixis*, although he generally referred to the Ottomans as a collective identity as a barbarian people. Such usage perhaps indicates that Chalkokondyles understood the category of the barbarian to be a social/ethnographic phenomena.

The distinction between Venetian speeches and the portions that may be more readily identifiable with Chalkokondyles' authorial voice should be explained by recourse to the gravity of the danger Mehmed II's aspirations posed to Venetian interests. Mehmed II did not only fashion himself as universal monarch as the evidence of his extant artistic program demonstrates, but he also undertook to eliminate the Venetian presence in the Near East.[537] Similar to the threat Frederick I Barbarossa had posed to the Papacy in the twelfth century, Mehmed II's claim to universal rule in a divided geography prompted the invocation of the distinction between the barbarian and the non-barbarian in Venetian eyes, according to Chalkokondyles.

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[536] Darkó, **II**, 295, 297.

[537] For the most recent treatment of Mehmed II's syncretic artistic program incorporating Byzantine, Turco-Mongol, Persian, and Italian traditions, which is a visual manifestation of his universal imperial ideology, see Gülru Necipoglu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II's Constantinople," *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 1-81. Eadem, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Kostantiniyye: Creation of a Cosmopolitan Capital and Visual Culture under Sultan Mehmed II" *From Byzantion to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital* (Istanbul, 2010), 262-277.

This division between the two worlds of the barbarian and the non-barbarian, was the most basic structure in the *Apodeixis*.[538] However, Pius II's reference to Rimini as the "small barbarian" in the *Apodeixis* and Chalkokondyles' use of the title "Emperor of the Barbarians" for Frederick I Barbarossa demonstrate that Chalkokondyles directed the accusation of being barbarian not only against the Ottomans but also against Christians on select occasions in that geography that was riddled with anxiety over differences. A comparison with Herodotos is particularly insightful, as the accusations of tyranny directed against Athens and Corinth[539] parallel the charges of being a barbarian directed against Frederick I and Sigismondo Malatesta. Indeed, Chalkokondyles' reference to Christian barbarians fits with the notion of "internal Turks," dissenters in the Christian realm who were accused of being "worse than the Turks," which Housley has been able to identify in fifteenth and sixteenth-century European discourse.[540]

Given that Chalkokondyles' version of universal historiography did not rely on one unifying political structure, what were the organizing principles that guided the composition of the *Apodeixis* and how was Chalkokondyles' universal vision different from previous models of universal historiography and closer to our own?

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[538] Similarly, Herodotos' conceptualization of self and other has been interpreted as a mirror, wherein the image of the barbarian is not only contrasted with the Hellenes, but Hellenic identity is also constructed out of its dialogic relation with barbarian customs and an ethical world-view. Consequently, "Herodotus' audience would not, then, have found it a total surprise to find Self in Other and Other in Self." Christopher Pelling, "East is East and West is West – Or Are They? National Stereotypes in Herodotus," *Histos* 1 (1997), electronic publication, http://www.dur.ac.uk/Classics/histos.

[539] Vivienne J. Gray, "Herodotus and Images of Tyranny: The Tyrants of Corinth," *The American Journal of Philology* 117 (1996), 361-389. K.A. Raaflaub, "Philosophy, Science, Politics: Herodotus and the Intellectual Trends of His Time,"" ed. Bakker, de Jong, van Wees, *Brill's Companion to Herodotus,* (Leiden, 2002), 149-186.

[540] Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400-1536* (Oxford, 2002), 131-159.

Organizing Principles: Ethnicity, Geography, and Language

Given that the non-barbarian world Chalkokondyles set out to describe was fraught with military and political rivalry, the Historian had to devise new organizing principles in addition to Roman and Christian ideologies to create a framework for expounding the interconnected events on the great canvas of universal historiography. Just as he had revived a Herodotean notion of Empire, Chalkokondyles also looked to Herodotos to make sense of the myriad different ethnic and political entities, concentrating on ethnicity, geography, political structures and language in his excursive synopses.[541] These categories provided longe-durée structures, language and geography being the most fundamental ones.[542] They allowed Chalkokondyles to navigate between the distant past and the fifteenth century, offering both a diachronic and classicizing discourse to explain how a particular people came to be.

Chalkokondyles used geography as a framing device to explore the moral content of the non-barbarian category. As a preliminary observation, the dividing lines between barbarian and non-barbarian peoples in the fifteenth century are roughly geographically distributed: peoples living in the British Isles and in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary, the Balkans, and, of course, Greece were not barbarians. In contrast, those peoples inhabiting the

[541] One of the most famous sections in Herodotos is the refusal of the Athenians to relinquish the fight against the Persians when Mardonios offers them an agreement and the subsequent Athenian reply to the Spartans invoking religion, kinship, language, and customs as common denominators of Hellenic identity (Herodotos, 8.144). In the recent review of Hellenism from the classical period until the twenty-first century, symposiasts were asked to reflect on Herodotos' four markers of identity: "blood, language, religion, and customs," making clear that Herodotos' interest regarding ethnicity continues to inform our understanding of identity. Katerina Zacharia, "Herodotus' Four Markers of Greek Identity," *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity* ed. K. Zacharia (Aldershot, 2008), 21-37.

[542] Herodotus is not only considered by the Annales school to be their preferred classical model, but the school also considers their method "a rediscovery of the natural and traditional territory of the historian" in the Herodotean guise. A. Burgiere, "The New Annales: A Redefinition of the 1960's," *Review Fernand Braudel Center* 1 (1978), 195-205.

northern regions of the Black Sea, the regions around the Caspian, Asia Minor minus the Empire of Trebizond, and Asia were barbarians.

However, the non-barbarian world itself was also differentiated along geographical lines, even when a shared world-view facilitated the construction of a pan-European ideal. In a speech by Victor Capella, speaker for the war party in Venice, which Chalkokondyles included in Book 10, the Historian captured the dynamics of that geographical-political differentiation. Victor Capella urged for war against Mehmed II in an impassioned appeal to the Venetian senate in the aftermath of 1453, referring to other members of the non-barbarian world who were being defeated by Mehmed II and criticizing Venetian mercantile priorities:

> In dealings with the Despots of the Peloponnese who sent embassies so that we aid them as they make war, we overlooked the Peloponnese when it became completely devastated by that ruler (Mehmed II). Even now, when the ruler of the Illyrians beseeched (us) to help him and when (we owed him) not a small amount of gratitude on account of (previous) aid, we overlooked and he was utterly destroyed by the Turks. Each of these, whom we abandoned, *brings shame and disgrace before all the other (nations) across Europe*, when for the sake of trade and shameful profit, we betrayed the races who *share the same habits of life (with us)* when they are being destroyed by this ruler.[543]

It is clear that Europe did not merely function as a geographical designation devoid of any ethical substance; rather, Chalkokondyles established it in opposition to the imperialistic and barbarian Ottomans. Furthermore, Victor Capella's emphasis on "shameful profit" and "same habits of life" shows a correlation with Kydones' letter from Venice, which we have previously discussed. This emphasis illustrates that Chalkokondyles, as a pro-Latin Byzantine intellectual similar to Kydones, communicated a sense of entitlement and demanded Venetian help for the Hellenic cause because both peoples belonged in the larger geographical-political

[543] Darkó, **II**, 293. Tr. AA. Emphasis added: "μετὰ δὲ διαπρεσβευομένων τῶν Πελοποννήσου ἡγεμόνων, ὥστε τιμωρεῖν σφίσι πολεμουμένοις, περιείδομεν τήν τε Πελοπόννησον ὑπὸ τῷ βασιλεῖ τῷδε ἀνάστατον γενομένην. καὶ ἄρτι δὲ τοῦ Ἰλλυριῶν βασιλέως κελεύοντος ἀμύνειν αὐτῷ καὶ χάριν κατατίθεσθαι οὐ μικρὰν τῆς βοηθείας ἕνεκα, περιείδομεν καὶ αὐτὸν διαφθαρέντα ὑπὸ Τούρκων. τούτων ἕκαστα ὑφ᾽ ἡμῶν προϊεμένων αἰσχύνην φέρει καὶ ὄνειδος ἐς τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην, ὡς τῶν ἐμπορίων ἕνεκα καὶ αἰσχροῦ κέρδους προϊέμεθα γένη ὁμότροπα ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦδε φθειρόμενα."

camp of "Europe." Thus, that geographical designation subsumed religious and ethnic divisions, such as that between the Catholic Venetians and the Orthodox Hellenes.[544]

Furthermore, Chalkokondyles portrayed Capella in a positive manner, underlining his loyalty to the Byzantines, who "share the same values as the Venetians." In this way, Chalkokondyles was able to support the myth of Venice as the most just and durable state.

On the one hand, the geographical distinctions within Europe contributed to that sense of fragmentation, but at the same time, they coalesced in terms of identity. The references to the Hellenes and the Illyrians in Victor Capella's speech build on the synopsis on Venice in Book 4 wherein Chalkokondyles had introduced the subject with a geographical overview in his usual manner. In that synopsis, he had written that the Venetians are the most ancient of the races on the Ionian coast and that "they used to first inhabit the bay of Ionia, at a distance from the Illyrians before they came down to Italy."[545] Later in the same synopsis, Chalkokondyles wrote that many noble Hellenes, who were wrongly accused and banished from "Hellas," had settled in the safety of Venice.[546] Thus, Venice's historical geography was intimately connected to both the Illyrians and the Hellenes, whom Victor Capella had accused Venice of abandoning. Thus, Chalkokondyles reinforced kinship ties within the non-barbarian world by employing geographical dispersion theories.[547]

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[544] Nicolo Barbaro's eyewitness account of the fall of Constantinople (the Venetian surgeon was in Constantinople on a Venetian galley in 1453 and actively participated in the defense of the city) provides ample documentation for Venetian sympathies for the plight of the Byzantines as well as the general reluctance of the Republic to become too embroiled in the war with Mehmed II. Nicolo Barbaro, *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople 1453*, tr. John Melville-Jones (New York, 1969). For an account of the relations between the Byzantine Empire and Venice that makes extensive use of Venetian archival documents, see D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: a Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988).

[545] Darkó, **I**, 174, "δοκεῖ δὲ τοῦτο τὸ γένος παλαιόν τε γενέσθαι καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν Ἰόνιον Εὐγανέων κράτιστον δὴ εἶναι καὶ γενναιότατον. ᾤκουν δὲ τὸ πρῶτον χώραν τὴν πρὸς τῷ μυχῷ τοῦ Ἰονίου ἀπὸ Ἰλλυριῶν καθήκουσαν ἐπὶ Ἰταλίαν…"

[546] Darkó, **I**, 175.

[547] In the ancient world, diplomacy made great use of mythical kinship ties. According to Jones, who traced such relations from archaic Greece to late antiquity, diplomacy produced truthful

When we remember that Chalkokondyles had produced a similar analysis in his search for Ottoman lineage, linking them with the barbarian Skythians through linguistic affinity and explaining their present geography by recourse to an assumed migration, it becomes apparent that geographical dispersion theories and the idea of an ancestral homeland with an accompanying native language established the theoretical framework within which Chalkokondyles conceived of the barbarian and non-barbarian worlds and provided some of the distinction between the two.[548] Similarly, he had insight into the interrelatedness of the Slavic languages and argued that:

> I know this well: While these nations (the Triballi, the Mysians, and the Illyrians) are at variance with each other with respect to names, their customs are not. Still now they clearly use the same language and dialect. As they have spread over Europe, they settled in many places, elsewhere (one branch) settled in some part of Laconia in the Peloponnese, near Mount Taygetus and Tainaron. Clearly, some members of the tribe, inhabiting (a geography spreading) from Dacia to Mount Pindus, also came down to Thessaly. Both are called Vlachs. I am not able to fully recount or say which of these arrived before the other. Thus, in this state of things I know that the Triballi (the Serbs), the Mysians (the Bulgars), the Illyrians (the Bosnians), the Croats, the Poles, and the Sarmatians (the Russians) speak the same language. If it is necessary to state a conjecture regarding this matter, it would be that this race is one and of the same stock. As a result of the effect of time, they have come to differ from one another in their customs and arrived to inhabit a different land.[549]

Chalkokondyles contrasts the wide-range of geographical locations the Slavs occupy in the fifteenth century with that primordial homeland that is buried in the depths of mythical time.

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representations of self-perception rather than fictive accounts. That is even when these kinship ties were forgeries, they still communicated information concerning the ethnic groups. Such kinship ties were invoked in diplomacy between Hellenic city-states and between Romans and their subjugated peoples. However in the context of diplomacy with barbarians such images were not employed. Christopher Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1999).

[548] See Chapter 2.

[549] Darkó, **I**, 34. "τοσόνδε μέντοι ἐπίσταμαι, ὡς τοῖς ὀνόμασι ταῦτα δὴ τὰ γένη διεστηκότα ἀλλήλων ἤθεσι μὲν οὐκέτι, γλώττῃ δὲ καὶ φωνῇ τῇ αὐτῇ χρώμενοι κατάδηλοί εἰσιν ἔτι καὶ νῦν. ὡς μέντοι διέσπαρται ἀνὰ τὴν Εὐρώπην, πολλαχῇ ᾤκησαν, ἄλλῃ τε δὴ καὶ ἔν τινι τῆς Πελοποννήσου χώρας τε τῆς Λακωνικῆς ἐς τὸ Ταΰγετον ὄρος καὶ ἐς τὸ Ταίναρον ᾠκημένον. ᾗ δὴ καὶ ἀπὸ Δακίας ἐπὶ Πίνδον τὸ ἐς Θετταλίαν καθῆκον ἐνοικῆσαν ἔθνος. Βλάχοι δὲ ἀμφότεροι ὀνομάζονται· καὶ οὐκ ἂν δὴ ἔχω διεξιέναι, ὁποτέρους ἂν τούτων λέγοιμι ἐπὶ τοὺς ἑτέρους ἀφικέσθαι. οὕτω δὴ κἀνταῦθα τούς τε Τριβαλλοὺς καὶ Μυσοὺς καὶ Ἰλλυριοὺς καὶ Κροατίους καὶ Πολάνους καὶ Σαρμάτας τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπίσταμαι ἱέντας φωνήν· εἰ δέοι ταύτῃ τεκμαιρόμενον λέγειν, εἴη ἂν τοῦτο τὸ γένος ταὐτό τε καὶ ἓν καὶ ὁμόφυλον ἑαυτῷ. ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ καιροῦ ἐς ἤθη τε διενηνεγμένα ἀλλήλων καὶ ἐπὶ χώραν ἄλλην ἀφικόμενοι ᾤκησαν."

In this manner, the Venetians and the Slavs share a similar migratory pattern as the barbarian Ottoman Turks, with none of these three peoples being autochthonous to their present geography.[551]

Probing deeper into the nature of what Chalkokondyles means by the term migratory, one must turn to a famous passage in Herodotos, which was marked with the sun symbol in the Laurenziana manuscript:[552]

> These were the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians, the former of Doric, the latter of Ionic blood. And indeed these two nations had held from very early times the most distinguished place in Greece, the one being a Pelasgic, the other a Hellenic people, and the one having never quitted its original seats, while the other had been excessively migratory;[553]

Chalkokondyles probably marked the passage with the symbol of Apollo to emphasize the ways in which this Idea/God constructed an overarching Hellenic identity by merging multiple ethnic designations. In this passage, Herodotos went on to explain that the Pelasgians, to whom the historian traces the lineage of the Athenians in this passage but about whom he provided ambivalent stories elsewhere, were initially barbarian, but having lost their barbaric language they became Hellenized.[554] The original Hellenic peoples, the Spartans, however, were not initially settled in the Peloponnese, but had migrated there after much wandering around Greece. Indeed, Herodotos is quick to present a dynamic and fluid Hellenic identity, one that is foremost constructed around a common language, when he states that the Hellenic peoples were augmented by additions from barbarian tribes who

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[551] Another barbarian group, the "Libyans," was composed of North African Muslims that crossed over into Spain and represent another story of migration in Chalkokondyles. For the uses of that migration story, see Chapter 4 below.

[552] Laur. Plut. 70.6 fol. 13v.

[553] Herodotus, *The History*, tr. G. Rawlinson. Book **I**. 56.

[554] C. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Herodotos (and others) on Pelasgians: Some Perceptions of Ethnicity," *Herodotus and His World*, ed. Derow and R. Parker (Oxford University Press, 2003), 103-144.

became Hellenized, adopting the Greek language as their own.[555] While this passage correlates well with Chalkokondyles' construction of non-barbarian identity, where Christianity tempered with Greco-Roman tradition is the common "language" (for the general case and vernacular languages for the particular ethnic groups) rather than aboriginal location, how did other fifteenth-century Hellenes interpret the opposition between migratory and autochthonous and the relation of this dichotomy to issues of ethnicity?

By way of introduction, one may recall Plethon's statement in his lecture notes, which have reached us in a fragmentary state.[556] In these notes, Plethon wrote that the Hellenic language is that thing which is common to every Hellene, although it is divided into four dialects: Aeolic, Doric, Ionic, and Attic. He further stated that the Aeolic departs from the Doric much more so than Ionic does from Attic as the Athenians were, in ancient times, Ionians. It is clear that Plethon was closely following Herodotos on this note and had assimilated the information that the ancient historian provided.

We have further evidence for this intertextual reference in an often-quoted passage that has not yet been associated with the ancient historian. In the introduction to his advisory letter to Manuel II concerning the Peloponnese written in 1418, Plethon defined the components of Hellenic identity:

> We, whom you lead and rule over, are Hellenes by descent, as the language and the hereditary education bear witness. It is not possible to find some other land that is more intimate or related to the Hellenes than the Peloponnese and the part of Europe that touches upon it, as well as the islands that lie across. For the same Hellenes appear to have always inhabited this land since that very time mankind started recording. While no other peoples dwelled (there) previously, foreigners have not occupied it. While many other people have set out from a different land, they have come to dwell in another land and settling (there) they drove out others. And the same

[555] Ibid. Rather than searching for the "real" Pelasgians, Sourvinou-Inwood sees the Pelasgian references as part of a mythic construction of Hellenic and barbarian identity that allows the reader to access the fluidity of self-representation in classical Greece.

[556] George Gemistos Plethon, ed. M. Scialuga, "Un'inedita grammatica greca alle soglie dell'età moderna: il περὶ παιδείας di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone," *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 129. (Turin, 1995): 12.

> people have in turn been affected in the same way by others. On the contrary, the Hellenes appear to have always inhabited this land, and setting out from this land due to population pressure, they have come to dwell in not a few other places, but they have not abandoned this land. Of the entire land, the Peloponnese, itself, bears affinity with the first and most well-known praised races of the Hellenes...[557]

Plethon then stated that the settlers of Byzantion and Rome were themselves from the Peloponnese. As such, they were colonies of the metropolis.

This passage has been extensively studied by Byzantinists in the context of Hellenic identity in the Renaissance.[558] Vacalopoulos related the passage to Hellenic nationalism and to geography. Drawing our attention to Plethon's formulation of ethnicity and language, Vacalopoulos also argued that the philosopher's program of reform for the Hellenic peoples was not utopian but rather grounded in the cohesive and diachronic Hellenic identity.[559] Livanios, on the other hand, found Plethon's formulation of Hellenic identity which primarily rests on geography and language, to be strikingly modern. However, Livanios also argued

[557]S. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά,* vol. 3, 247-248. tr. AA. "Ἐσμὲν γὰρ οὖν ὧν ἡγεῖσθέ τε καὶ βασιλεύετε Ἕλληνες τὸ γένος, ὡς ἥ τε φωνὴ καὶ ἡ πάτριος παιδεία μαρτυρεῖ· Ἕλλησι δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν εὑρεῖν ἥτις ἄλλη οἰκειοτέρα χώρα οὐδὲν μᾶλλον προσήκουσα ἢ Πελοπόννησός τε καὶ ὅση δὴ ταύτῃ τῆς Εὐρώπης προσεχὴς τῶν τε αὖ νήσων αἱ ἐπικείμεναι. Ταύτην γὰρ δὴ φαίνονται τὴν χώραν Ἕλληνες ἀεὶ οἰκοῦντες οἱ αὐτοὶ ἐξ ὅτου περ ἄνθρωποι διαμνημονεύουσιν, οὐδένων ἄλλων προενῳκηκότων οὐδὲ ἐπήλυδες κατασχόντες, ὥσπερ ἄλλοι συχνοὶ ἐξ ἑτέρας μὲν ὡρμημένοι, ἑτέραν δὲ οἰκοῦσι κατασχόντες ἄλλους τε ἐκβαλόντες καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑφ' ἑτέρων τὸ αὐτὸ ἔστιν ὅτε πεπονθότες, ἀλλ' Ἕλληνες τήνδε τὴν χώραν τοὐναντίον αὐτοί τε ἀεὶ φαίνονται κατέχοντες καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης ὁρμώμενοι περιουσίᾳ οἰκητόρων ἑτέρας τε οὐκ ὀλίγας κατασχόντες, οὔτε ταύτην ἐκλιπόντες. Συμπάσης δὲ ταύτης τῆς χώρας αὐτὴ Πελοπόννησος ὁμολογεῖται τὰ πρῶτά τε καὶ γνωριμώτατα ἐνεγκοῦσα τῶν Ἑλλήνων γένη…" Barker, 198-199. Nicol, however, does not link Plethon's review of Hellenic identity with the revival of Herodotos by the Mistra circle in the fifteenth century and dismisses this passage as "fancy that Hellenism might be reborn on Hellenic soil" and as "romantic evocations of ethnic continuity." Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453* (Cambridge, 1993), 343.

[558] N. P. Peritore, "The Political Thought of Gemistos Plethon: A Renaissance Byzantine Reformer," *Polity,* 10.2 (1977): 173-174. B. Tatakis, *Byzantine Philosophy,* tr. N. J. Moutafakis (Cambridge, 2003), 235.

[559] A. Vacalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek Nation: The Byzantine Period, 1204-1461,* tr. I. Moles, (New Jersey, 1970), 126-135.

that Plethon parted ways with the universality of Christianity and thus was the odd man out and without a following.[560]

While at first glance Plethon appears to lay undue emphasis on autochthony, he, too, principally defined Hellenic identity by recourse to language similar to Herodotos and Chalkokondyles, as we have seen in the teaching notes. What set the Hellenes apart from the Venetians, the Slavs, or the Ottomans, was not an idiosyncratic definition of ethnic identity peculiar only to the Hellenes, but rather that they have retained their primordial homeland. In fact, Plethon's autochthonous Hellenes do not contradict Herodotos, as he also traced the first migratory Dorians, the original Hellenic race, to the environs of the Peloponnese, that is, "the part that touches upon Europe." It is noteworthy that the migratory Dorians initially only moved around Hellas and not elsewhere in Herodotos' description. The relevant passages in Herodotos describing the wanderings of the original Hellenic race, the Lacedaimonians, are marked, making it clear that one of the owners of the manuscript had paid close attention to it.[561] The continuity with the first races of the Hellenes (Plethon was perhaps making an implicit reference to Herodotos by using the plural, acquiescing to the Herodotean description of the ethnogenesis of the Hellenic tribes) thus rested on linguistic continuity and the transmitted educational system with a view to preserving that language.[562] The passage strongly suggests homeland as a category of self-definition.[563] However both Herodotos and

[560] D. Livanios, "The Quest for Hellenism: Religion, Nationalism, and Collective Identities in Greece, 1453-1913," *Hellenisms,* ed. K. Zacharia, (Aldershot, 2008), 237-269.

[561] Laur. Plut. 70.6 fol. 13v.

[562] Angeliki E. Laiou, "From Roman to Hellene," *The Byzantine Fellowship Lectures- Number One*, ed. N. M. Vaporis (Brookline, 1974). Laiou traces the development of a "Greek national consciousness, that is, the identification of a group of inhabitants of a certain geographical area in terms of language, history, tradition and interests" to the late Byzantine period as well as to their identification with the ancient Greeks of the same period.

[563] P. Magdalino, "Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium,"*NeoHellenism,* (Melbourne, 1992), 1-29. Magdalino wrote concerning the twelfth century, 19 "Thus within the constraints imposed by

Plethon considered linguistic unity to be equal or even superior to the idea of a patris in constructing Hellenic identity. After all, when Herodotos was composing The Histories, Hellenes had come to occupy many locations outside of Greece proper and they did not consider themselves to be Greek solely based on the idea of a primordial homeland but also on the basis of the language they spoke.

Bessarion, who was a student of Plethon in Mistra between 1425 and 1433, had composed an enkomion on his native city, Trebizond, before he emigrated to Rome in 1439, and this enkomion also builds on similar formulations of identity that rest on geographic and linguistic principles.[564] Fond of this lengthy composition of his Byzantine period, Bessarion included it in an autograph manuscript as part of the famous donation of 1468 when the aged Cardinal bequeathed his extensive book collection to the Venetian Republic, which was to form the nucleus of the Marciana Library. In the enkomion, a grand sweep of historical narrative, Bessarion on the one hand conformed to the standards of epideictic composition as formulated in the late antique tracts attributed to Menander Rhetor[565], but he also deeply engaged with what it meant to belong to a city, reconstructing a Hellenic and in particular, an originally Athenian past for fifteenth-century Trebizond. "Trebizond boasts of having the city of the Athenians as its metropolis" wrote Bessarion, continuing to qualify Athens as "the trophy of the Hellenes, mother of letters, teacher of this noble language."[566] According to Bessarion, the city of Trebizond was founded by colonists from Sinope, who were, in turn, settlers from Miletos, "the citizens of the most powerful city of Asia, the ornament of the

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medieval conditions and values, there was, I suggest, both genuine nationalism and genuine Hellenism in Byzantium…"

[564] Bessarion, "Εἰς Τραπεζοῦντα," ed. Lampsidis, *Archeion Pontou* 39 (1984): 3-75.

[565] *Menander Rhetor*, ed. D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson, (Oxford, 1981).

[566] Bessarion: 24 "Αὕτη πρώτην τοῦ γένους ἀρχην καὶ μητρόπολιν, εἰ δεῖ τὰ πρεσβύτερα πρότερα λέγειν, ἀττικὴν καὶ τὴν Ἀθηναίων ἀυχεῖ πόλιν, τὴν τροφὸν τῶν Ἑλλήνων, τὴν μητέρα τῶν λόγων, τῆς καλλίστης ταύτης φωνῆς τὴν διδάσκαλον.''

Ionians," who were initially Athenians settling in that city.[567] Bessarion supplied a historical account of Ionian settlements in Miletos, narrating the on-going struggle between the "Asian barbarians" and the "free Hellenes." Citing the Asian barbarians by name—Phyrgians, Mysians, Bithynians, Paphlagonians, Pamphylians, and Carians—referring to their wars with the Hellenes, and recording their kings, Bessarion preserved not only Hellenic history but also the memory of the antagonists of the Hellenes in the process of constructing the history of Trebizond. Geography, too, played a role when Bessarion proceeded to describe the location of Trebizond, a maritime city, as being situated in a middle position on the Black Sea, and explained the significance of that location in preserving the city from the succeeding races of the barbarians, such as the Skythians, Cimmerians, and Lydians.[568]

Bessarion singled out language, in addition to geography, as playing an indisputable role in conserving Hellenic identity for Trebizond. When the Romans subjugated Asia Minor and established the rule of monarchy in Trebizond and the rest of the land, they "recognized the Hellenic language to be adorned with the most correct and most pure knowledge and thought" and developed a precise and accurate understanding of and sympathy for the Greek language, and for Hellenic culture.[569] Roman identity was infused with Hellenic ideals, Bessarion tells us, and it was not out of compulsion that the city of Trebizond became incorporated into the Roman Empire. The city adopted Roman political rule, "judging it to be most profitable and finding only them (the Romans) to be worthy of authority."[570] Similar to

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[567] Ibid.: "Ἀπώκισαν μὲν γὰρ αὐτὴν Σινωπεῖς, τοὺς δ᾽ αὖ, οἰκισθέντες ὑπ᾽ Ἀθηναίων, Μιλήσιοι, τὰ κράτιστα τῆς Ἀσιας, τὸ πρόσχημα τῶν Ἰώνων..."

[568] Ibid.: 28-29.

[569] Ibid.: 50, "Τήν τε γὰρ φωνὴν Ἕλλησιν ἐς τὸ ἀκριβέστατόν τε καὶ καθαρώτατον ἐξησκημένην Ῥωμαῖοι ἠπίσταντο τήν τε γνῶσιν καὶ φρόνησιν..."

[570] Ibid.: 51, " Ἡ ἡμετέρα δ᾽ἐν πᾶσι τε τοῖς καιροῖς καὶ παντοίαις μεταβολαῖς ἡ αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτοὺς μένει, τὸ Ῥωμαίοις ὑπείκειν προὔργου παντὸς εἶναι κρίνουσα καὶ μόνοις χρῆσθαι δεσπόταις αὐτοὺς ἀξιοῦσα..."

his teacher Plethon, Bessarion envisaged Hellenic identity to be molded out of geographical and verbal rememberings, preserved in literature and transmitted from one generation to the next by Hellenic paideia.

In a famous pronouncement, Scholarios, Plethon's archenemy, declared himself "a Christian," refusing to be labeled on the basis of a hometown or the languages he knew.[571] Although Scholarios admitted to being a "Byzantine" who had relocated from Thessaly and had been educated in Greek and Latin, these designations did not sufficiently provide the identity markers to distinguish him from his Jewish counterpart in this dialogue. When the Christian persona, representing Scholarios, examined his Jewish counterpart and the Jewish creed, the conversation commenced with the question "Are you a Jew?" The answer came in the affirmative, and the Christian proceeded to refute that answer:

> You are not a Jew. For the land of the Jews is Jerusalem and the adjoining land around it, which was formerly called Judea. Now that land is no longer Judea, neither are you from that land but rather from Prousa, or if you happen to be, from Ephesos, or Byzantion, or Thessaly. Just as someone who was born in Ephesos, is not from Thessaly, thus neither are you from Judea, if you were born in a place other than Judea.[572]

Similarly, Scholarios' Christian persona admitted to knowing Latin and Greek, but stated that he did not consider himself a "Latin" or a "Hellene," but rather he identified himself on the basis of creed.[573] Angelou drew the readers attention to the particular context of the dialogue. The question posed to the protagonist was one of religious identity and not an appellation or

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[571] Gennadios Scholarios, *Refutatio Erroris Judaeorum*, ed. M. Jugie, L. Petit, and X.A. Siderides, *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, vol. 3. (Paris, 1930), 251-304.

[572] Ibid. 252, Tr. AA. "Οὐκ εἶ Ἰουδαῖος. Ἰουδαίων μὲν" γὰρ τόπος, Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ ὁ περὶ αὐτὴν προσεχὴς χῶρος, Ἰουδαία καλούμενος πρίν· νῦν δὲ οὔτε Ἰουδαία ὁ τόπος ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, οὔτ' ἐκεῖθεν εἶ σύ, ἀλλὰ Προυσαεύς, εἰ τύχοι, ἢ Ἐφέσιος, ἢ Βυζάντιος, ἢ Θετταλός. Ὥσπερ οὖν ὁ ἐν Ἐφέσῳ γεγεννημένος οὐκ ἔστι Θετταλός, οὕτως οὐδὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος εἶ, ἐν ἄλλῃ γῇ καὶ μὴ ἐν Ἰουδαίᾳ γεγεννημένος."

[573] Ibid. 253, "Κἀγὼ γὰρ τὴν λατινικὴν οἶδα γλῶτταν· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐρῶ Λατῖνος εἶναι, διὰ τὸ μὴ φρονεῖν ὡς Λατῖνοι φρονοῦσι, λέγω δέ, περὶ ὧν ἡμῖν διαφέρονται· καὶ αὖθις, Ἕλλην ὢν τῇ φωνῇ, οὐκ ἄν ποτε φαίην Ἕλλην εἶναι, διὰ τὸ μὴ φρονεῖν ὡς ἐφρόνουν ποτὲ Ἕλληνες· ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδίας μάλιστα θέλω ὀνομάζεσθαι δόξης."

linguistic knowledge.[574] Thus, Scholarios' Christian persona did not adopt the designation of Hellene or Latin. Otherwise, he would have meant pagan or Catholic, given the specific circumstances of the dialogue. Angelou also argued that Ottoman society was stratified on the basis of religious identity and not geographical or ethnic identities. This dialogue which was composed c. 1464 reflected the ways in which the Ottomans administered the empire. Elsewhere, Scholarios had no qualms about referring to himself as a "Hellene." In pre-1453 texts, Scholarios had referred to Demetrios Palaiologos, contemporary fifteenth-century subjects of the Byzantine Empire, as well as the Komnenian and Laskarid Byzantines of the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries as Hellenes.[575] Scholarios also referred to Constantinople as the patris of "present-day Hellenic peoples.[576]

Livanos, on the other hand, has drawn attention to the use of the term Hellene to refer to communal identity in Scholarios. The designation Hellene both indicated the ancients as well as the Byzantines. Thus Scholarios was ambiguous in his usage and Constantinople was at once the capital of the Empire of the Romans as well as the homeland of the Hellenes. Finally the loss of patris, Constantinople, further problematized these associations.[577] In short, Scholarios, unlike Plethon and Chalkokondyles, did not develop a systematic approach to the question of Hellenic identity and continued to use the term "Hellene" to refer to the subjects of the Eastern Roman Empire, to the Greek Orthodox, to ancient pagans, and to Greek-speaking peoples.

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[574] A. D. Angelou, "*"Who am I?"* Scholarios' answers and the Hellenic identity," *Philhellen,* ed. Constantinides, Panagiotakes, Jeffreys, and Angelou, (Venice, 1996), 1-19.

[575] Ibid. 2-4.

[576] Ibid. 5.

[577] C. Livanos, *Greek Tradition and Latin Influence in the Work of George Scholarios,* (New Jersey, 2006), 89-94.

Scholarios' definition of identity and his formulation of faith were integral components of the underlying reasons as to why he chose to burn Plethon's Laws, that he stated in his explanatory letter.[578] According to Scholarios' famous description, Plethon was educated by

> a Jew, who was really a Hellene, not only for a long time, but complying with him, Plethon strove after and was supported by him. He was one of the most powerful at the court of the barbarians. Ellisaios was his name.[579]

Thus, the accusation Scholarios directed against Plethon invoked the very vocabulary that Plethon and his circle had revived. In other words, although Scholarios had referred to himself as a Hellene in other contexts, Scholarios adopted Plethon's vocabulary when he accused Plethon with paganism. In this instance, Scholarios associated paganism with close study and emulation of pagan Hellenic literature, ancient Greek religion, and political Hellenism, that was organized by recourse to ethnic, linguistic, and geographical identities. Finally, Scholarios further criticized Plethon because he had studied at the "court of the barbarians."

Geography of Western Cities

Similar to Strabo and unlike Herodotos, Chalkokondyles oftentimes began the historical exposition on an ethnic group with a geographical overview that provided an ethnic/political group with its location, defined in a connected whole. Thus, Chalkokondyles wrote that:

> Germany starts from the Pyrenees Mountains, from where the Tartessos River flows into the western ocean. And there is upper Germany, beginning it goes down as far as Cologne and Argentina, the so-called cities. From where it extends to the ocean

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[578] George Gennadios Scholarios, *Oeuvres completes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1935), 151-155.

[579] Ibid,, 153, "Ἐκείνῳ δὴ τῷ φαινομένῳ μὲν Ἰουδαίῳ, ἑλληνιστῇ δὲ ἀκριβῶς, οὐ μόνον ὡς διδασκάλῳ πολὺν συνὼν χρόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπηρετῶν ἐν οἷς ἔδει καὶ ζωαρκούμενος ὑπ' ἐκείνῳ· τῶν γὰρ τὰ μάλιστα δυναμένων ἦν ἐν τῇ τῶν βαρβάρων τούτων αὐλῇ· Ἐλισσαῖος ὄνομα ἦν αὐτῷ·"

> around, with the Celtic on the left and the Dane on the right as far as the British isles.[580]

Similarly, he described the Iberian Peninsula in an extended geography:

> This realm begins in the land of Valencia. The city of Valencia is large and prosperous, and holds the royal court of the king of Valencia. This city is located at a distance from the straits by the Pillars of Herakles of about seven hundred stades, and faces the island of Sardinia. After it is the land called Aragon, and it stretches to Barcelona. This follows upon the land of Aragon and stretches to Provence, in France.[581]

Thus, Chalkokondyles' vision incorporated the historical reality and experience of empire building and the connected Roman geography. In this way, a country, a people, and a city existed in a web of relations with other territories, ethnicities, and cities. Location was expressed as a socially, linguistically, and historically constructed reality, inscribed into a matrix with no fixed points, but rather existing in relation to other locations.

Geography was also intimately related to the rhetoric of slavery and freedom, of being barbarian and its counterpart. One finds striking evidence for this association in a passage by Herodotos whose language of prosperity and freedom was often quoted by Chalkokondyles:

> Bias of Priene, who was present at the festival, recommended (as I am informed) a project of the very highest wisdom, which would, had it been embraced, have enabled the Ionians to become the happiest and most flourishing of the Greeks. He exhorted them "to join in one body, set sail for Sardinia, and there found a single Pan-Ionic city; so they would escape from slavery and rise to great fortune, being masters of the largest island in the world, exercising dominion even beyond its bounds; whereas if they stayed in Ionia, he saw no prospect of their ever recovering their lost freedom.[582]

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[580] Darkó, **I**, 64, "Ἡ δὲ Γερμανία ἄρχεται μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πυρηνίου ὄρους, ὅθενκαὶ ὁ Ταρτησὸς ῥέων ἐπὶ τὸν πρὸς ἑσπέραν ὠκεανόν. καὶ ἔστι μὲν ἡ ἄνω Γερμανία, ἐφ' ὅσον δὲ προϊοῦσα καθήκει ἔστε Κολωνίαν καὶ Ἀργεντίην, πόλεις οὕτω καλουμένας. τὸ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν καθήκει ἐπὶ ὠκεανὸν τὸν περὶ Κέλτικήν τε ἐπὶ δεξιὰ καὶ περὶ Δανίαν ἐπ' ἀριστερά, ὡς ἐπὶ τὰς Βρετανικὰς νήσους."

[581] Darkó, **II**, 49-50, "Ἄρχεται δὲ αὕτη ἀπὸ Βαλεντίας τῆς χώρας. καὶ ἡ Βαλεντία πόλις ἐστὶ μεγάλη τε καὶ εὐδαίμων, καὶ βασίλειά ἐστιν ἐν αὐτῇ βασιλέως Βαλεντίας. ᾤκηται δὲ αὕτη ἡ πόλις ἀπὸ τοῦ πορθμοῦ τῶν Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν διέχουσα σταδίους ἀμφὶ τοὺς ἑπτακοσίους, ἀντικρὺ Σαρδόνος τῆς νήσου. μετὰ δὲ ἡ Ταρακῶν καλουμένη χώρα διήκει ἔστε ἐπὶ Βαρκενώνην. ταύτῃ διαδέχεται τῆς Ταρακῶνος χώρα ἐπὶ Προβεντίαν τὴν Γαλατίαν."

[582] Herodotos, 1.170, tr. Rawlinson: "Βίαντα ἄνδρα Πριηνέα ἀποδέξασθαι Ἴωσι χρησιμωτάτην, τῇ εἰ ἐπείθοντο, παρεῖχε ἄν σφι εὐδαιμονέειν Ἑλλήνων μάλιστα· ὃς ἐκέλευε κοινῷ στόλῳ Ἴωνας ἀερθέντας πλέειν ἐς Σαρδὼ καὶ ἔπειτα πόλιν μίαν κτίζειν πάντων Ἰώνων, καὶ οὕτω ἀπαλλαχθέντας

Thus, to be prosperous, "εὐδαιμονήσειν" was equated with living freely according to Herodotos. The neo-Latin poet Manilius Rhallus (c. 1447-1523), son of Plethon's disciple Kabakes, also devoted one of his poems to the theme of exile from his native "Sparta", and made abundant use of these Herodotean and classical Greek images.[583] Rhallus wrote:

> May he perish who has placed himself under the authority of a master and has bent his neck, that of a free man, under an unworthy yoke.[584]

In similar guise, Chalkokondyles often invoked the concepts of prosperity and freedom to praise Western cities and their constitutions, setting them apart from barbarian ethnicities and political structures. According to Chalkokondyles:

> There is Paris, which is in the Kingdom of the Kelts, a city that is abundant in prosperity and wealth.[585]

London was similarly described:

> London, the city that exceeds in power all the cities on this island, does not lag behind the cities in the West in any way with respect to wealth and prosperity.[586]

In Belarus:

> Towards the ocean, there is the so-called city of Ougradi, which is governed by aristocracy, having wealth and surpassing all other cities of Sarmatia in prosperity…[587]

σφέας δουλοσύνης εὐδαιμονήσειν, νήσων τε ἁπασέων μεγίστην νεμομένους καὶ ἄρχοντας ἄλλων· μένουσι δέ σφι ἐν τῇ Ἰωνίῃ οὐκ ἔφη ἐνορᾶν ἐλευθερίην ἔτι ἐσομένην."

[583] Rhallus was the son of Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, the loyal disciple of Plethon whom we have come across in the context of Plethon's *Nomoi*. In 1480 Kabakes copied Plut. 70.06, the Herodotos manuscript with Laonikos' inscription, and dedicated it to his son.

[584] Fred J. Nichols, "The Exile's Grief: Manilius Rallus", *Journal of the Institute of Romance Studies* vol. 2 (1993): 130.

[585] Darkó, **I**, 79, "ἔστι δὲ Παρίσιον πόλις, ἐν ᾗ τὰ Κελτῶν βασίλεια, εὐδαιμονίᾳ τε καὶ ὄλβῳ προφέρουσα."

[586] Darkó, **I**, 87, "Λονδρῶν δὲ ἡ πόλις δυνάμει τε προέχουσα τῶν ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ταύτῃ πασῶν πόλεων, ὄλβῳ τε καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ οὐδεμιᾶς τῶν πρὸς ἑσπέραν λειπομένη…"

[587] Darkó, **I**, 122, "πρὸς μέντοι ὠκεανὸν πόλις Οὐγκράτης καλουμένη, ἐς ἀριστοκρατίαν τετραμμένη, ὄλβον τε παρέχεται καὶ αὐτὴν εὐδαιμονίᾳ ὑπερφέρουσαν τῶν ἄλλων τῆς Σαρματίας πόλεων…"

Indeed, the great majority of Western cities that Chalkokondyles referred to were described in this formulaic manner, bringing to mind Herodotos' description of that idyllic location where Ionians were promised freedom and prosperity. However, Chalkokondyles rarely referred to Ottoman cities and barbarian states with this formula, except for references to Sivas, Hatay and a reference to Arabia.[588] For the most part, urban geography was an attribute of civilized identity and to be prosperous was to live in a city, which correlated with the de facto political autonomy of civic structures in the fifteenth century. Thus, Chalkokondyles synthesized the Hellenic tradition of city-states with Roman universalism in his geographical vision: while urban entities were described as prosperous and free, the geography of the civilized world could also be seen as a connected whole. However, this is not to say that civic rule was without strife. Cities such as Milan, oftentimes, degenerated into tyranny and democracy and citizens fought one another in the streets. How, then, did Chalkokondyles describe these urban entities in the greater whole and in what ways did this representation contribute to the main theme of the *Apodeixis*?

Political Organization, Customs, and Civic Allegiances

In a famous pronouncement in The Prince, Machiavelli declared that the rule of the Ottomans was inherently different from other monarchies in Western Europe in that it principally relied on the one-man rule of the Ottoman monarch:

> The entire monarchy of the Turk is governed by one lord, the others are his servants; and, dividing his kingdom into sanjaks, he sends there different administrators, and shifts and changes them as he chooses. However, the King of France is placed in the midst of an ancient body of lords, acknowledged by their own subjects, and beloved by them; they have their own prerogatives, nor can the king take these away except at his peril. Therefore, he who considers both of these states will recognize great

[588] Darkó, **I**, 135. Darkó, **I**, 118, Chalkokondyles described the city of Hatay as "great and prosperous": "τὰ δὲ Χατάϊα πόλις ἐστὶ πρὸς ἕω τῆς Ὑρκανίας μεγάλη τε καὶ εὐδαίμων, πλήθει τε ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὅλβῳ καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ εὐδαιμονίᾳ προφέρουσα τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ πόλεων πλὴν Σαμαρχάνδης καὶ Μέμφιος…"

> difficulties in seizing the state of the Turk, but, once it is conquered, great ease in holding it. The causes of the difficulties in seizing the kingdom of the Turk are that the usurper cannot be called in by the princes of the kingdom, nor can he hope to be assisted in his designs by the revolt of those whom the lord has around him. This arises from the reasons given above; for his ministers, being all slaves and bondmen, can only be corrupted with great difficulty, and one can expect little advantage from them when they have been corrupted, as they cannot carry the people with them, for the reasons assigned. Hence, he who attacks the Turk must bear in mind that he will find him united, and he will have to rely more on his own strength than on the revolt of others; but, if once the Turk has been conquered, and routed in the field in such a way that he cannot replace his armies, there is nothing to fear but the family of this prince, and, this being exterminated, there remains no one to fear, the others having no credit with the people; and as the conqueror did not rely on them before his victory, so he ought not to fear them after it.[589]

That the Ottoman monarch ruled alone, in contrast to Western polities, was previously put forward by Chalkokondyles in keeping with his Herodotean analysis of the Ottoman Empire. According to Plato[590] (to whom Chalkokondyles made an implicit reference in his discussion of tyranny as we shall see), the best constitution is a combination of all existing forms. For example, Sparta had a king, that is a monarch, the council of elders, an oligarchic structure, and the ephors, a democratic element. Thus, the success of Sparta was sealed by its administrative, political, and legal institutions. As we shall see, Chalkokondyles presented the Venetian constitution by reference to this mixed constitution.

The Ottomans, on the other hand, were ruled by a tyrant who did not answer to anyone according to the *Apodeixis*. When he described Ottoman rulers, Chalkokondyles generally did not refer to any general political custom, such as oath-taking[591], or agreed upon legislation.[592] Ottoman rulers were largely lacking in principal virtues: prudence, fortitude,

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[589] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, tr. W. K. Marriott, (New York, 2009), 18.

[590] Plato, *The Republic,* B. Jowett, (Oxford, 1908), vol. 2,

[591] D. G. Angelov, "Plato, Aristotle, and "Byzantine Political Philosophy,"" *The Greek Strand in Islamic Political Thought,* ed. Aouad, Crone, Gutas, Schutrumpf, (Beyrouth, 2004): 499-523.

[592] However, Chalkokondyles did single out and praised two Ottoman rulers, the Ottoman ancestor Gündüz-Alp, as well as the Ottoman ruler Murad II for their justice. Darkó, **I**, 9-10 According to Chalkokondyles Gündüz-Alp was distinguished by his justice so that the Oghuz people chose him to arbitrate in all judicial cases. Darkó, **II**, 142. He also praised Murad II for having been a "just man.

temperance, wisdom. How, then, did Chalkokondyles explain Ottoman success? What they lacked in building a lawful state, they made up by displaying military courage according to Chalkokondyles. Thus, the occasions when Chalkokondyles praised the Ottoman rulers, he was referring to their military courage and ability to seize opportune moments to extend their domains.[593] According to Chalkokondyles, the Ottoman state was not built on the principle of citizenship but based on slavery. In fact, the Ottomans consolidated their Empire by raiding and promised the same to the "horse-runners," an anarchic group of warriors who greatly contributed in the early stages of the Ottoman state and less so under Mehmed II. According to the historian most Turks living on the Balkan frontier made their fortune by enslaving other peoples and "in conditions of despair, this race had everywhere been able to display an extraordinary virtue,"[594] that is the military virtue of courage. In Chapter 2, we have seen Plethon had attributed the current success of the Ottomans to Islamic law and had called the Islamic state "strange"/"new"/"violent" because its sole purpose was military expansion.

Chalkokondyles made an indirect reference to Plato on two occasions, concerning the military success of the Ottomans. According to Plato:

> The tale is that he who has tasted the entrails of a single human victim minced up with the entrails of other victims is destined to become a wolf. Did you never hear it? Oh, yes. And the protector of the people is like him; having a mob entirely at his disposal, he is not restrained from shedding the blood of kinsmen; by the favorite method of false accusation he brings them into court and murders them, making the life of man to disappear, and with unholy tongue and lips tasting the blood of his fellow citizen; some he kills and others he banishes, at the same time hinting at the abolition of debts

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[593] Darkó, **I**, 40. "Ταῦτα ἀκούσαντας τοὺς Σαούζεω στρατιώτας αἰδεσθῆναί τελέγεται τὴν βασιλέως φωνήν, φωνεῖν τε γὰρ διάτορον "μάλιστα δὴ ἀνθρώπων, καὶ περὶ σφῶν αὐτῶν δεδιέναι, τὴν τύχην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀρετὴν ἐξεπισταμένους." Darkó, **II**, 9. "καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀντιποιούμενοι ἔναντι βασιλέως, μεμισθωμένοι αὐτῷ"

[594] Darkó, **II**, 98. "παμπόλλων ἐν αὐτῇ ὄντων Τούρκων, καὶ ἐν πολέμοις πολλὰ πειραθέντων, καὶ τὸ πλέον τοῦ βίου σφίσιν ἐντεῦθεν ποιουμένων. ἀρετήν τε τὸ γένος τοῦτο ἐς ἀπόγνωσιν ἀφικέσθαι ἀξίαν λόγου ἐνδεικνύμενον ἁπανταχοῦ, καὶ ἀναλαμβάνειν τε σφᾶς τὸ γένος τοῦτο ὑπεμίμνησκε δαιμονίως παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα γένη.

> and partition of lands: and after this, what will be his destiny? Must he not either perish at the hands of his enemies, or from being a man become a wolf --that is, a tyrant?[595]

When Chalkokondyles praised Murad I for his good fortune and virtue, he was mainly referring to military virtue, namely courage on the battlefield. He wrote concerning Murad I: "He always seemed to be rabid for battle and insatiable when it came to spilling blood.[596] A more striking reference to the same Platonic passage was Chalkokondyles' description of the Ottoman armies under Mehmed II:

> They enslaved the small towns wholesale, but when they received the larger ones, they picked out the best people from within them for themselves. Like wolves falling upon defenseless flocks of sheep, they never have their fill of murder. The people there suffer pitiously at the hands of these beastly wolves, and so the Peloponnese was horribly destroyed, ruined by the king's men, with people dying here and there in horrendous ways.[597]

In these two instances, Chalkokondyles presented Ottoman tyranny, especially under Mehmed II who comes across as a new Xerxes in the *Apodeixis*, by recourse to a well-known passage in Plato's The Republic.

In describing Western polities, Chalkokondyles made use of classical Greek political categories. Building on the classical and Byzantine tradition of political philosophy, Chalkokondyles was on well-trodden ground. In fact, the use of political theory to substantiate the claim to lawful authority and the rhetoric of that ideology were common features of Byzantine historiography and letters.[598] However, Chalkokondyles, writing in the

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[595] Plato, *The Republic,* tr. B. Jowett, (Oxford, 1908), vol. 2, 565D.

[596] Darkó, **I** 51 ἀλλ' αἰεὶ λυττῶντι ἐοικέναι ἐπὶ τὴν μάχην, ἄπληστον δὲ αἱμάτων γενόμενον ἀπανταχῇ."

[597] Darkó, **II**, 234. "καὶ τὰ μὲν αὐτοὶ ἠνδραποδίζοντο, τὰ μικρὰ τῶν πολισμάτων, τὰ δὲ μεγάλα παρελάμβανον, ἐπιλεγόμενοι τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν πόλεων σφίσιν. ὡς δὲ λύκοι ἐπὶ πρόβατα νομέων ἔρημα ἐσβαλόντες αὐταρκῶς οὐδέποτε κορέννυνται τοῦ φόνου, ἐλεεινῶς δὲ πάσχουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν θηρίων τούτων τῶν λύκων, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἡ Πελοπόννησος ἐν τῷ τοιῷδε κάκιστα ἀπώλλυτο, διαφθειρομένη ὑπὸ τῶν βασιλέως ἀνδρῶν, οἰκτρότατα ἄλλων ἄλλῃ ἀπολλυμένων."

[598] Angeliki E. Laiou, "Law, Justice, and the Byzantine Historians: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries," *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth-Twelfth Centuries* ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Dieter Simon

aftermath of 1453, applied such learning to the Western polities rather than the Byzantine state.

In describing the Western polities, Chalkokondyles provided extensive information on political structures in addition to geography, customs, and vernacular languages. The contrast between these Western polities, particularly Western cities, with Ottoman tyranny was quite stark in the *Apodeixis*. Thus, Chalkokondyles wrote:

> Now, most of the rulers in the west are barely able to take for themselves something from the cities' revenues, but they are not really allowed to install magistrates in the cities or garrisons; rather; the locals themselves appoint their magistracies and supervise their lands by placing their own garrisons. Nor is it allowed for the king to violate tradition and make the locals do something that is contrary to ancestral custom.[599]

Closely following the Platonic schema[600], Chalkokondyles classified Western polities under the usual headings: monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. However, in Plato's schema, the three types of constitution—single-man rule, the rule of an elite few, and mass rule—existed in two versions, a perfect type and a degenerate type. When the system functioned well, monarchy appeared as the best type of rule although in its degenerate form, tyranny, it was the worst type. Similarly, aristocracy did transform into oligarchy or republicanism into democracy. As stated previously, however, Chalkokondyles only retained five types of rule rather than the original six. Republicanism was conspicuously missing in Chalkokondyles.

(Washington D.C. 1994), 151-185. Paul Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century *Kaiserkritik*," *Speculum*, 58 (1983), 326-46. Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology & Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007).

[599] Darkó, **II**, 49. "οἱ γὰρ πρὸς ἑσπέραν οἱ πλείους σχεδόν τι ἀποφέρονται μὲν καὶ τὰς τῶν πόλεων προσόδους, ἀρχὰς δὲ οὐ πάνυ τι αὐτοῖς ἔξεστιν ἐγκαθιστάναι ἐς τὰς πόλεις ἢ φυλακάς, ἀλλ' αὐτοί τε οἱ ἐπιχώριοι τάς τε ἀρχὰς μετίασι καὶ φυλακὰς καταστησάμενοι τὴν χώραν ἐπιτροπεύουσι, καὶ τὰ πάτρια σφίσι βιάζεσθαι οὐκ ἔξεστι τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους τὸν βασιλέα παρὰ τὰ σφῶν αὐτῶν ἔθιμα."

[600] Plato, *The Republic,* B. Jowett, (Oxford, 1908), vol. 2, Book VIII.

Skinner wrote that in making the transition from a bipolar structure to a multi-polar system, the Italian city-republics came to rely on Greek political theory to legitimize their rule.[601] Italian humanists found a suitable framework in Greek political theory. Black, on the other hand, argued that the distinction between scholastics, who were trained in Roman law, and the Italian humanists, employed by the city-republics, was not that clearly defined. Numerous Italian humanists were by education Roman jurists and were employed as scribes and secretaries by the Italian city-republics.[602] Most scholars today, including those that make a distinction between humanists and scholastics and those that argue that such a distinction is unclear, agree that classical political theory was not employed by Italian humanists from the beginning, that is to say, from the time these civic structures claimed autonomy and de facto independence from the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Church.[603] Rather, classical political theory came to be employed by the city-republics ex post facto.

That, however, was not the way in which fifteenth-century contemporaries evaluated the influence of classical Greek philosophers on the constitutions of the Italian city-republics. Leonardo Bruni, who is credited with having written the first modern history in his History of the Florentine People, composed "On the Constitution of the Florentines" in Greek, possibly for the benefit of the Byzantine delegation at the Council of Florence-Ferrara.[604] In this work, Bruni evaluated the constitution of Florence, which was modeled from its inception on the constitutions in Aristotle's Politics. A manuscript of "On the Constitution of the Florentines" was found in Venice with annotations by Plethon, demonstrating that Plethon's circle was

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[601] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, (Cambridge, 1978).

[602] R. Black, "Italian Renaissance Education: Changing Perspectives and Continuing Controversies" *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 52.2 (1991): 315-334.

[603] Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1988).

[604] Athanasios Moulakis, "Leonardo Bruni's Constitution of Florence," *Rinascimento,* n.s.: 26 (1986): 141-190. J. Hankins, *Plato in the Renaissance*, (Brill, 1990) vol. 2: 437. F. Masai, "L'Oeuvre de Georges Gemiste Plethon," *Bulletin de l'Academie royale de Belgique* (1954): 536-555.

familiar with this tract.[605] In this context, one should remark that Chalkokondyles, a student of Plethon, in providing his readers with an account of the Florentine constitution appears knowledgeable about Italian humanist writings at this time. Moreover, similar political tracts were composed for Venice and other Italian city-states, as well as for northern European states.[606]

In keeping with his Western contemporaries, Chalkokondyles viewed these non-Greek states with the lens offered by classical Greek political philosophy. As we shall see, the application of such learning to non-Greek political entities allowed the Hellenic audience, especially the expatriate population in Europe, to bridge the gap between their heritage and those states that were, in the fifteenth century, beginning to appropriate that classical Greek past as part of their own.[607] The application of classical Greek political philosophy was also used by Chalkokondyles in a manner similar to geography and language as an organizing principle and as an element of cohesion in the non-barbarian world. That is to say, the non-barbarian world was ideally governed with the favorable political constitutions: republicanism, aristocracy, and monarchy. However, we shall also see that just as the division between the barbarian and non-barbarian worlds was a precarious demarcation, Chalkokondyles also portrayed the revolutions in the political regimes in a way that was faithful to the Aristotelian schema.

To be governed by the appropriate political constitution was an indicator of being non-barbarian, and political structures therefore appear as an organizing principle between East and West. Analyzing Chalkokondyles' understanding of the various political

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[605] F. Masai, *Pléthon et le Platonisme de Mistra* (Paris, 1956), 68.

[606] Ed. Jill Kraye, *Cambridge Translations of Renaissance Philosophical Texts volume 2: Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1997).

[607] Ed. Hero Hokwerda, *Constructions of Greek Past: Identity and Historical Consciousness from Antiquity to the Present*, (Groningen, 2003).

constitutions associated with non-barbarian polities, we will turn our attention to three Italian city-states: Florence, Genoa, and Venice. Although the Historian gave an overview of the political organization of every people he introduced (Germany is the best governed land in the north and the West,[608] Aragon is governed as an aristocracy with ancient laws,[609] England is ruled by a monarch,[610] Transylvania is governed by the Hungarian monarch who appoints a Hungarian to rule over this land,[611] and so forth), Chalkokondyles' political exposition on these three Italian city-republics was both more extensive than the rest and also integrated into the main narrative in keeping with the fifteenth-century discourse on Florence, Genoa, and Venice. Thus, political constitutions help establish these city-states as possible foil to the barbarian Ottoman state.

Florence

When compared with contemporary Byzantine historians, Chalkokondyles' account reveals an exceptionally deep understanding of Florentine politics. Kritoboulos and Doukas do not even mention Florence in their accounts. Chalkokondyles elaborated the description of Florence in Book 6 in the context of the Council of Florence-Ferrara in 1438:

> (The Florentines) are governed in the following manner. There is a council of five hundred, which votes on affairs of the city and on declaring war and making peace and receiving ambassadors.[612]

Chalkokondyles then commented on the unusual Florentine practice of investing foreigners with authority in their government:

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[608] Darkó, **I**, 64.

[609] Darkó, **II**, 50.

[610] Darkó, **I**, 86.

[611] Darkó, **II**, 31.

[612] Darkó, **II**, 66. Tr. AA. "εὐθύνονται δὲ κατὰ τάδε. βουλή ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ἐς πεντακοσίους, περὶ τῶν τῆς πόλεως πραγμάτων τὴν ψῆφον τιθεμένη, καὶ περὶ πολέμου καὶ εἰρήνης καὶ πρεσβειῶν χρηματίζουσα σφίσι."

> They also have two resident foreigner officials who are invited and honored by the republic. One of them presides over the city to judge the accusations in the city. The other one judges the other affairs of government in the city. These foreigners are brought in so that when the republic is judging a case they do not weigh in on any one side.[613]

He also provided other information on the workings of the government:

> They have archons for the affairs of the city and they call them standard-bearers. They are appointed for three months and are entrusted with the affairs of the city and the income and the rents. And when peace and war are being decided on, they are informed and they (present the case) to the council of five hundred. The archons are chosen from the public, being commoners and craftsmen. It is possible for some foreigner to become a citizen in this city, by joining in paying the war-tax that is required in the city. When the council votes (on an issue), the archons are responsible to carry it out in the best and most perfect manner.[614]

Chalkokondyles then proceeded to give an account of the Council of Florence-Ferrara and the appointment of two Hellenic Cardinals by the Pope. Interestingly, the appointment of two foreigners as judges to preside over the affairs of the city correlates with the appointment of Bessarion and Isidore among the Cardinals. The Florentine government, as well as the School of the Cardinals, functioned with checks and balances, with no one man being invested with full authority over state affairs. Indeed, this was in keeping with Florentine self-perception, as was eloquently described by the Florentine Chancellor and historian Leonardo Bruni in the Laudatio of the City of Florence:

> The city is divided into four quarters, and two men are elected from each, so that none of them will ever lack the honor of being represented. Not just anyone is elected, but only those who have already been subjected to scrutiny and judged to be worthy of such an honor. For the government of the commonwealth, besides these eight citizens,

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[613] Darkó, **II**, 66. Tr. AA. "καὶ ἄνδρες δύο πάρεστον αὐτοῖς ἐπήλυδες, οὓς μεταπέμπεται ἡ πολιτεία, τιμῶντες. τὸν μὲν δικαστὴν ἐφιστᾶσιν αὐτῇ τῶν ἐγκλημάτων τῆς πόλεως, τὸν δὲ ἐς τὸ τὰς ἄλλας δίκας δικάζειν τῆς πόλεως αὐτὸν ἀμφὶ τὴν τῆς πόλεως ἄλλην διοίκησιν ἔχουσιν. ἐπήλυδας δὲ οὗτοι ἐπάγονται τοὺς ἄνδρας αὐτούς, ὡς ἂν μὴ πολῖται, οἵ τε δικάζοντες δίκην τινά, ἐπὶ θάτερα ταλαντεύοιντο."

[614] Darkó, **II**, 66-67. Tr. AA. "αἱροῦνται δὲ ἄρχοντας τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς πόλεως καὶ σημαιοφόρον παρ' αὐτοῖς καλούμενον, τριμηνιαίους τὴν ἀρχήν, ἐς οὓς τὰ πράγματα τῆς πόλεως τά τε χρήματα καὶ ἡ πρόσοδος ἀναφέρεται. καὶ ἐπειδάν τινες πό λεμον φέροντες ἢ εἰρήνην, ἀνηνέχθη ἐς αὐτούς, οὗτοι αὖ ἐπὶ τὴν πεντακοσίων βουλήν. τοὺς δὲ ἄρχοντας αἱροῦνται ἀπὸ τοῦ δήμου, δημότας τε ὄντας καὶ τεχνῶν τινων ἐπιστάτας. ἔξεστι δὲ καὶ ὁτῳοῦν ξένῳ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει γενέσθαι πολίτῃ, ξυνεισφέροντι ἐς τὴν πόλιν καθὰ νομίζεται αὐτοῖς. ἡ μέντοι βουλὴ ἐπειδάν τινι ψήφῳ προσκέοιτο, τοῖς τε ἄρχουσιν ἐπιτρέπει διαπράττεσθαι ὡς κάλλιστά τε καὶ ἄριστα."

> one man of outstanding virtue and authority is added…. These nine men, on whom the government of the commonwealth is conferred, are not supposed to reside outside city hall…[615]

Similar concerns, in particular freedom, republicanism, and the struggle against tyranny, inform both Bruni's and Chalkokondyles' accounts. The constitutional exercise of government is presented as the perfect antithesis of the Ottoman state where all pronouncements of war and peace as well as the reception of foreign envoys were in the strict purview of the Ottoman ruler. When Mehmed II prepared to attack Constantinople, Chalkokondyles wrote that he addressed his army as "my children." This reflected Ottoman usage and made it apparent that the Ottoman government was a patriarchy under one-man rule.[616] Thus, when Western enemies, such as the Venetians and Hungarians, referred to Mehmed II as a "barbarian," this label conveyed, among other things, an alien political vision—one in which the ruler single-handedly decided war and peace and governed without a constitution.[617] In contrast to the Florentine state, the Ottomans, according to Chalkokondyles, did not have established fundamental principles that prescribe the limits of the monarchic government which was thus a tyranny.

Genoa

While Chalkokondyles presented Florence as an ideal city-state that functioned as a harmonious whole, Genoa, which was afflicted with systemic factionalism, appeared at times as a failure and a witness to the degenerate form of constitutional government, which is a democracy in the Platonic schema:

> (Genoa) is governed neither as having turned to democracy all-together nor to aristocracy. Rather, it is a mixture of both constitutions. The rule of the city appears to

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[615] Leonardo Bruni, tr. James Hankins, "The Laudatio of the City of Florence," *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts* (Binghamton, New York, 1987): 117-118.

[616] Darkó, **II**, 157.

[617] Darkó, **II**, 290, 295, 297.

> lean to democracy at some times and to be steered by some aristocrats at other times.[618]

Chalkokondyles explained that the city was divided between four ruling families, the Doria, the Spinola, the Adorno, and the Fregosi, whose terms of office were constitutionally determined. There were also appointed officials, who must not belong to the elected family that was ruling at the time. As with Florence, the affairs of state, such as the declaration of war and peace, were decided upon by public voting. Unlike Florence, judges were not composed of foreigners, but rather appointed by the ruling family. However, there were higher courts for individuals who chose to appeal the decisions in their cases.

Following this structural exposition, Chalkokondyles then proceeded to explain Genoese history and the revolutions that worked to the detriment of the public good. Chalkokondyles wrote that when the Doria family, which was in close alliance with the Ligurians and Italians, and the Spinola family, which was allied with the French monarchs, were in disagreement, they brought in foreigners as appointed governors. However, the constitution provided a safeguard against these periods of schism, and the city never succumbed to tyranny as the Genoese expelled the foreign governors soon afterward. As an example of the first case, Chalkokondyles referred to the Duke of Milan, Filippo-Maria Visconti, during his rule over Genoa from 1421-1435 and as an example of the second case to the rule of the King of France from 1391-1399.[619] Chalkokondyles, closely following the Platonic notion of revolutions, wrote that the city was liberated from foreign rule following these periods and that the public (demos) once again elected their officials, who ruled according to ancient laws. That he chose to emphasize the constitutional basis of the Genoese

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[618] Darkó, **II**, 38-39. Tr. AA. "πολιτεύεται δὲ οὔτε ἐς δημοκρατίαν τὸ παράπαν τετραμμένη ἡ πόλις, οὔτε ἐς ἀριστοκρατίαν· ἐπιμεμιγμένη δὲ ἀμφοῖν ταῖς καταστάσεσι τοῦτο μὲν ἐς δημοκρατίαν δοκεῖ ἀποκλίνειν, τοῦτο δ' αὖ ὑπὸ ἀρίστων τινῶν διιθύνεσθαι, τὰ ἐς τὴν ἀρχὴν αὐτὴ διατιθεμένη."

[619] Alain Ducellier, "L'Europe Occidentale Vue Par Les Historiens Grecs Des XIVeme et XVeme Siecle," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 22 (1996): 119-159.

republic and to elaborate that account both structurally and by reference to the historical circumstances is noteworthy. Kritoboulos did not refer in any manner to the city of Genoa, and Doukas, who was himself an official under the Genoese, merely devoted a single sentence to the subject:

> In Genoa, which is a Republic and no one man can rule as a tyrant, it is customary every year or so to dispatch officials to the towns subject to Genoa in the East…[620]

There was, however, Byzantine precedence for writing at length on the constitution of Genoa. The thirteenth- and fourteenth-century statesman and polymath Theodore Metochites used the metaphor of the body and illness to elaborate on the Genoese constitution and politics in his tract on democracy:

> The defects of democracy can not only be illustrated by a mass of evidence from ancient history: we can also find a number of modern instances. There are many cities of Italy now living under democratic governments which suffer from the diseases, as I have argued, attend on such constitutions. No small measure of confirmation and proof is afforded at the present time by the city of Genoa, which is vexed by sedition and internally divided, in consequence of the defects of its civic body. It is exposed to extreme danger, which threatens it with utter destruction and decay beyond the reach of all medical skill and power…[621]

Metochites also detailed the ways in which factionalism destroyed civic duties and the bonds between citizens, both public and private, leading to unbridled ambition and contentiousness. Shawcross compared and contrasted Metochites' tract with the contemporary tract on political rule by Theodore Palaiologos and wrote that while Metochites' tract was ultra conservative, Theodore suggested some of the most revolutionary ideas concerning political rule. Furthermore, Shawcross argues that Theodore's ideas concerning political rule with a mixed constitution, were ultimately realized with the introduction of an assembly in addition to monarchical rule in fourteenth-century Constantinople.[622]

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[620] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 149.

[621] Barker, 174-175.

[622] T. Shawcross, ''Do Thou Nothing without Counsel'': Political Assemblies and the Ideal of Good Government in the Thought of Theodore Palaeologus and Theodore Metochites", *Al-Masaq*, 20.1, (2008): 89-118.

Finally, while Metochites' exposition is negative overall, Chalkokondyles found the constitutional basis of the Genoese government to be a bulwark against its degeneration into complete anarchy. Despite the multiple revolutions in Genoese history, Chalkokondyles nevertheless retained some element of praise for the Genoese as they recover their liberty from foreign rule. In the final analysis, Genoa, like Florence, is a constitutional and autonomous state in contrast to Ottoman rule, which brings under its tyrannical umbrella multiple subject nations.

Venice

The Historian's exposition on Western cities and civic identities provides a spectacular contrast to the imperial structures of the Ottomans and their use of dislocation as a strategy to construct Ottoman identity. This opposition is perhaps nowhere better demonstrated than in Book IV wherein Chalkokondyles devoted a major portion of the chapter to Venice and her citizens.

The synopsis on Venice begins with the aggression of the Ottoman ruler Mehmed I towards the Venetians. Having just emerged from the Ottoman Interregnum as the victor in 1413, Mehmed I concluded peace first with the Serbs and then the Byzantines, thus allowing Manuel II to refortify the Isthmus, and accepted the tribute offering from Ismail of Sinop, who had previously allied with Musa and was the losing party in the Interregnum. Rejecting the peace offer from the Venetians, Mehmed I then engaged in war against the Venetians.

Chalkokondyles first relates the foundation myth.[623] The Venetians, an ancient race, were the most powerful and the noblest among the peoples inhabiting northeast

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[623] Fifteenth-century authors styled Venice as the most durable state and as having the best type of constitution. The myth of Venice had a longevity that spanned from the medieval period until the early modern and was constructed out of Venetian self-perception, spelled out in Venetian chronicler tradition. Felix Gilbert, "Biondo, Sabellico, and the beginnings of Venetian official historiography," *Florilegium historiale, Essays presented to Wallace K. Ferguson* ed. J. G. Rowe and W. H. Stockdale

Italy.[624] Leaving their original homeland in Liguria, they settled on an insignificant island away from mainland Italy. Noble men, many of whom were Romans, Greeks, and members of other great races, settled in this city. Among these settlers were numerous military leaders who were fleeing from their enemies and who were wrongly accused by their adversaries.[625] Enduring the vicissitudes of time, Venice is one thousand years old and owes her longevity and wealth to her constitution and intricate administrative structures. Initially a democracy, Venice became an oligarchy, Chalkokondyles tells us, not because of a revolution or tyranny, but because her citizens were too concerned with their own affairs to devote time to politics and thus relegated authority to a select few, similar to Milan.[626] The historian then provides a

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(Toronto, 1971), 275-293. David Robey, John Law, "The Venetian Myth and the <De Rpublica Veneta> of Pier Paolo Vergerio" *Rinascimento* (1975): 3-59. According to Finlay, the famous myth of Venice, focusing on the Venetian republic's longevity, equitable rule, and stability, was paralleled by a countermyth, emphasizing imperialism. Robert Finlay, "The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494-1530) *The Sixteenth Century Journal* vol. 30 no.4 (1999): 931-944. The myth of Venice also held the interest of the Byzantines as Venice was deeply engaged in Byzantine affairs: Gilbert Dagron, "Le "Mythe de Venise" vu de Byzance," *Il Mito di Venezia* ed. Peter Schreiner (Roma, Venezia, 2006), 61-80.

[624] Chalkokondyles, **I**, 174-175, "δοκεῖ δὲ τοῦτο τὸ γένος παλαιόν τε γενέσθαι καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὸν Ἰόνιον Εὐγανέων κράτιστον δὴ εἶναι καὶ γενναιότατον. ᾤκουν δὲ τὸ πρῶτον χώραν τὴν πρὸς τῷ μυχῷ τοῦ Ἰονίου ἀπὸ Ἰλλυριῶν καθήκουσαν ἐπὶ Ἰταλίαν, καὶ Ἐνετοὶ μὲν τὸ παλαιὸν ὠνομάζοντο, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα Οὐενετοὶ ἐκλήθησαν. ὁρμώμενοι δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἠπείρου, τὰ μὲν προαιρέσει, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἀνάγκῃ, δηουμένης τῆς χώρας αὐτῶν, ὥστε ἐν ἀσφαλεῖ μᾶλλον ᾤκησθαι, ἐπὶ νῆσόν τινα βραχεῖαν καὶ τεναγώδη ἀπὸ τῆς ἠπείρου ἐς πεντεκαίδεκα σταδίους ᾤκησαν. ἀπὸ σμικροῦ δέ τινος ὁρμώμενοι, συλλεγομένων ἐς αὐτοὺς καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἠπείρου περιοίκων, ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ὅτι μάλιστα κακουμένων, καὶ προσγινομένων ἀεὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἠπείρου, ᾠκίσθη τε ὁ χῶρος οὗτος καὶ εὐνομήθη. ἐς μέγα δυνάμεως ἐχώρει δὲ ἡ πόλις αὕτη εὐνομουμένων τε τῶν ἐς αὐτὴν συνεληλυθότων· ἀπό τε τῆς ἠπείρου ἐπισήμων ἀνδρῶν εἴ τινα τήν τε χώραν ἀφελόμενοι οἱ πολέμιοι ἐπιδιώκοιεν, ἐνταῦθα γενόμενος ᾤκει. μεγάλης δὲ τῆς πόλεως ἐν βραχεῖ γενομένης πολλοί τε Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων καὶ ἄλλων συχνῶν γενῶν ἄνδρες, γένους ὄντες περιφανοῦς, ἤν τις ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ μὴ εὖ φέροιτο, εἴτε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντιστασιωτῶν διωκόμενοι, εἴτε ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων ἐξελαυνόμενοι, ἐς ταύτην δὴ τὴν πόλιν συνελέγοντο, ἄνδρες ἐπίσημοί τε καὶ ἀγαθοὶ καὶ παῖδες ἀνδρῶν τε ὄντες ἐπιφανῶν καὶ χώρας ἀρχόντων οὐ φαύλης.

[625] Ibid.

[626] Darkó, **I**, 182. Chalkokondyles related similar information on Milan concerning the revolution from democracy to aristocracy: "This city was in the past a democracy and was administered by the public as it seemed fit to them, by choosing the magistrates for the city. Afterwards, as the public increasingly turned to their private affairs and no longer had leisure to engage in administration as each requires time, they selected aristocrats, either by some luck or by voting. However, the city did

lengthy exposition on the administration of Venice, describing the Grand Council, the Senate, the Council of Ten, and the various mechanisms by which affairs of state were conducted.[627]

In this foundation legend, Chalkokondyles devotes much attention to the aristocratic roots of the city's founders. Just a few pages earlier, the historian had called Mehmed I "a sausage-maker"/"ὁ χορδίνης": "Mehmed the sausage-maker took refuge in Byzantion, joining Ali, son of Bayezid."[628] Chalkokondyles had previously narrated that Mehmed I had escaped to Prousa as a youth by disguising himself to avoid being killed by his brothers and had learned the profession from a sausage-maker as an apprentice.[629] The contrast between this "sausage-maker" and Venice's aristocratic founders could not be any starker.

Deriving their wealth from trade and not from land, the Venetians had many colonies in the Mediterranean, in Kerkyra, Euboea, Crete, various cities in the Peloponnese, and in Syria. Chalkokondyles remarks that the Venetians chose not to wage war against people of their own race, namely the Italians, but rather chose to engage in naval expeditions against foreign peoples.[630] Thus, the Venetians had no

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not fully turn into an aristocracy even after these…" "ἦν γὰρ αὕτη ἡ πόλις τὸ παλαιὸν δημοκρατία, καὶ ὑπὸ δήμοις τε ἅμα ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς αὐτῶν, ἃς ᾑρεῖτο, τὴν πόλιν, ᾗ ἐδόκει καλῶς ἔχειν σφίσι, διῴκουν. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, ὡς ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα σφῶν οἱ δημόται ἐτρέποντο, καὶ οὐκέτι σχολὴν ἦγον, ὥστε ἐπὶ τὴν διοίκησιν λόγον ποιεῖσθαι, ὡς ἑκάστοτε ἀναγκάζοι βουλεύεσθαι ὁ χρόνος, ἐπιλεξάμενοι τοὺς ἀρίστους, εἴτε τύχῃ τινί, εἴτε δὴ καὶ ψήφῳ ἑλόμενοι, οὕτω περὶ τούτους ἐς ἀριστοκρατίαν τὸ παράπαν ἐτράπη."

[627] Darkó, **I**, 182-4; Ducellier:144-46.

[628] Darkó, **I**, 169 "Μεχμέτης μὲν δὴ ὁ χορδίνης ἐπὶ Ἀλίην Παιαζήτεω παῖδα ἐς Βυζάντιον διεσώζετο..."

[629] Darkó, **I** 168.

[630] Darkó, **I**, 176, "καὶ Ἰταλίας μέντοι τῆς παράπλου οὐδέν, ὅ τι καὶ ἄξιον λόγου, ὑπηγάγοντο σφίσιν, ὅτι μὴ Ῥαβέννην πόλιν εὐδαίμονα τελευτήσαντος τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ ἡγεμόνος, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς τὸ ὁμόφυλον ἰέναι πολέμῳ, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους διαναυμαχεῖν."

colonies in Italy except for Ravenna. Campaigning against the Byzantines rather than the Italians, the Venetians captured the Byzantine metropolis (Constantinople).

Chalkokondyles avoided censuring the Fourth Crusade and the Venetians for their significant role in bringing about that war against their fellow-Christians, and his description of the event even goes so far as to applaud the Venetians because of their decision not to fight their compatriots. In the opening pages of the history, Chalkokondyles visited the events of the Fourth Crusade, ascribing the Latin occupation of Constantinople to the religious differences between the Westerners and the Byzantines and to the Byzantine refusal to settle those differences despite numerous Latin embassies to Constantinople. Citing only the Venetians by name, the historian wrote that many Western peoples, following the lead of the Pope, had sailed to Byzantion and captured the city by force.[631] Further, financial gain and imperial ambitions played no role whatsoever in Western hostilities, in particular Venetian, towards the Byzantines.

Chalkokondyles, however, was neither reinventing history nor providing an original analysis in this particular evaluation of the Fourth Crusade. Rather, Chalkokondyles followed the Venetian chronicler tradition, a tradition that was still alive in the fifteenth century.[632] Venetian chronicles, the earliest of which date from the beginning of the eleventh century, upheld certain time-honored clichés. The chroniclers held on to the foundation myth that Venice had always been inhabited by noble families since her original settlement. Moreover, these chroniclers without fail began

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[631] Darkó, **I**, 5, "διαπρεσβεύεσθαι δὲ αἰεὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε διαλείποντας, ὥστε τὰ ἐς θρησκείαν σφίσι ξύμφωνά τε καὶ ξυνῳδὰ καταστῆσαι ἀλλήλοις, κατὰ ταὐτὸ ξυνιόντας. καὶ μέντοι Ἕλληνας μὴ ἐθελῆσαι Ῥωμαίοις διὰ χρόνου συμφερομένοις τὰ πάτρια σφίσι καθεστῶτα συγχέαι. καὶ ἀπὸ ταύτης δὴ τῆς διαφορᾶς συχνούς τε τῶν ἑσπερίων καὶ δὴ καὶ Ἐνετούς, ἐνάγοντος ἐπὶ τάδε τοῦ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχιερέως, στόλῳ στρατεύεσθαι μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ ἐπιόντας ἐς τὸ Βυζάντιον ἀφικέσθαι καὶ Βυζαντίου τὴν πόλιν κατὰ κράτος ἑλεῖν."

[632] E. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1985), 62-65.

their accounts by relating the foundation of Venice by her settlers, just as Chalkokondyles began the synopsis on Venice with the same story. Byzantine control over this geography, as well as the exarchate of Ravenna, was conveniently left out. The chroniclers maintained that Venice had always been independent. Chalkokondyles, an heir to Byzantine tradition, must have been familiar with Byzantine control over Italy in late antiquity. However, the historian counted Venice as a free city for the entire extent of her history. Venetian chronicles maintained that Venice and her citizens were free of blame concerning the Fourth Crusade. In this version, the Venetians were not perpetrating any misdeeds, but rather were acting legitimately as they were allied with the papacy in 1204. Chalkokondyles' exposition on the events of the Fourth Crusade agrees with those of the chroniclers and not only because of the religious differences that he cited at the beginning of the history.

Chalkokondyles implicitly argued that Venice was not an imperial power and was thus unlike the Ottoman state, and yet it was similar to the Hellenic city-states at the time of Herodotos. Chalkokondyles counted Crete, Euobea, and the various colonies in the Peloponnese among the Venetian lands prior to the Fourth Crusade, although, of course, they had been acquired as a consequence of 1204. In Chalkokondyles' account, the Venetians were not motivated by financial gain during 1204, and neither did they have any imperial ambitions at any time.

Moreover, the Venetians, in their refusal to fight against their own race, present a suitable foil to the Ottomans, who practiced fratricide as a legitimate means of securing the indivisibility of their state. The Ottomans also fought against other Turkish principalities. As previously mentioned, Book IV of Chalkokondyles' history contains both the events of the Ottoman Interregnum as well as the description of Venice and her citizens. The bloody warfare between the sons of Bayezid I following the Ottoman

defeat by Timur at the Battle of Ankara in 1402 pitted brother against brother. Furthermore, Chalkokondyles had previously mentioned that fratricide was an ancient custom among the Turks:

> Inquiring about this, I have learned that this general opinion concerning brothers, that they treat each other as enemies, is not only common currency among them to this day but it was also the case under established leaders of the Oguz and I learned that it happened in former times.[633]

However, Venice had engaged in extensive warfare against both fellow Italians and fellow Catholics. Chalkokondyles therefore prefaces the post-1204 history of Venice with an account of the hostilities between the Papacy of Alexander III and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, whom Chalkokondyles refers to as "Emperor of the Barbarians" as we have seen. Frederick I Barbarossa's aggression led the Papacy to move to France, Chalkokondyles tells us, and it was Venetian naval power that brought it back to Rome.

Chalkokondyles' account of these events, however, is incorrect with respect to chronology. The historian dates these hostilities as having happened after 1204 even though the Lombard League had defeated Frederick I much earlier in 1176. Further, in this account, the war with Frederick I arose out of the Emperor's conflict with the Papacy. Significantly, the historian makes no mention of Frederick I's imperial interests in northern Italy, specifically in Venetian controlled territories. Dating these events to after 1204, Chalkokondyles strengthens his argument that the Venetians did not campaign against people of their own race. Similarly, the hostilities and ensuing battles between Venice and Genoa arise out of Genoese aggression. Concerning more recent events, Chalkokondyles narrates the war between Venice and the Dukes of

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[633] Darkó, **I**, 18-19. Tr. AA. "τοῦτο δὲ ἔγωγε ἀναπυνθανόμενος εὗρον οὐ γνώμην ταύτην περὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, χρῆσθαι σφίσιν αὐτοὺς ὡς πολεμίους, ἀποφηναμένοις νομίζεσθαι παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔτι καὶ ἐς τόνδε τὸν χρόνον· ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῶν τοῖς Ὀγουζίοις ἡγεμόνων καθισταμένων καὶ πρόσθεν γενόμενον διεπυθόμην."

Milan. Calling the Visconti the "Tyrants of Liguria," Chalkokondyles writes that the Visconti's despotic ambitions resulted in the division of Italy into warring factions.[634] Thus, Chalkokondyles exhibits a pro-Venetian bias, not only with respect to 1204 but also concerning the political claims of the Venetians vis-à-vis the Holy Roman Emperors, the Genoese, the Visconti and others in Western Europe.

Omitting Venetian imperial interests, Chalkokondyles configures Venice as a trading city, deriving its wealth from commerce and having no significant land holdings. Giving a detailed overview of Venetian administrative structures, Chalkokondyles provides information on both the political and judicial mechanisms; the historian had left out legal structures in his exposition on Ottoman centralization. The Venetian citizens themselves are invested with the authority to rule their city, collectively choosing their administrators and deciding on war and peace. In fact, Venice has an oligarchic power structure for the convenience of her citizens. As such, this discourse on Venice nicely contrasts with Chalkokondyles' assessment of the Ottoman state. Venice is, essentially, an almost perfect foil to the Ottoman state, as the latter is a land empire, deriving its wealth from military/political centralization and using the mechanisms of dislocation to ensure the loyalties of its administrators to an abstract ideal of ruler rather than to a historically meaningful location.

Conclusion

In keeping with his contemporaries, both the Mistra group and his Italian counterparts, Chalkokondyles' universal vision was groundbreaking in contextualizing the eastern Mediterranean within the larger European map. Using novel organizing principles, specifically geography, language, and political structures, Chalkokondyles' late medieval *Apodeixis* appears early modern in the twenty-first century. Predating Machiavelli's The

[634] Darkó, **I**, 181.

Prince by several decades, Chalkokondyles offered a powerful lens through which to view the Ottoman state as foil to the Western polities. However, the dividing lines between barbarian and non-barbarian were precarious in the mid-fifteenth century as Mehmed II vied with his contemporaries for the Roman legacy, and Chalkokondyles' composition betrays that apprehension. After all, the Ottoman state was also a European state with a stronghold in the Balkans. Moreover, the Ottomans put together the first standing early modern army and organized the janissaries, converting and instructing them. The devshirme, a novel institution that had no place under previous Islamic states, was extensively utilized to man a loyal army and bureaucracy. Chalkokondyles diligently portrayed the revolutions from one political regime to the next, alerting his readers to the possibility of tyranny. Indeed, he referred to various Western rules as tyrannical, making it clear that the Ottomans were not the only state governed with the worst type of rule.[635]

Chalkokondyles made extensive use of the myth of Venice, to portray this Italian city-state as the most well-governed polity with a durable constitution. Concluding the *Apodeixis* with the military events of 1463-464 and the Ottoman-Venetian war, Chalkokondyles also made clear that the main political rival to the Ottomans was the Venetians in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Byzantine State.

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[635] Francisco Sforza, for example, becomes the "tyrant of Milan" following the death of of the Milanese hegemon Carmagnola. Darkó, **II**, 73. "ὁ Μεδιολάνου ἡγεμὼν ἐτελεύτησε νόσῳ τὸν βίον καταλιπών, κατέστη δὴ ἐς διαφορὰν αὐτίκα τοῖς Οὐενετοῖς, ὡρμημένος ἐπὶ τὴν τυραννίδα Μεδιολάνου." Chalkokondyles also refers to the rule of Ferrara, Rimini, Marca, Urbino, Mantua, Milan Rome, and Napoli as tyrannical governments: Darkó, **II**, 76. "Εἰσὶ δὲ τυραννίδες ἀνὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν αἵδε, ἡ τῆς Φερραρίας, οἴκου τῶν Ἐστενσίων, καὶ οἱ τοῦ Ἀριμίνου, καὶ οἱ τῆς Μάρκης Μαλατεσταῖοι, καὶ Οὐρβίνου τύραννος καὶ Μαντούης καὶ Μεδιολάνου καὶ Ῥώμης καὶ Νεαπόλεως καὶ Ἰαπυγίας. τούτων οἱ τῆς Φερραρίας ὡς ἔχουσιν ἡγεμόνες, καὶ Μεδιολάνου καὶ Ἰαπυγίας καὶ Μαντούης." Although it is possible that Chalkokondyles might have been using the term, tyranny, in a non-negative sense in this instance, there are other instances in the *Apodeixis* to substantiate the claim that the exercise of constitutional governments was a precarious condition in the West at the end of the fifteenth century. For example, Chalkokondyles refers to the Florentine regime in Athens also as a tyranny. In this instance, it is likely that the Historian was using the term in a negative manner because the Chalkokondyli family was exiled from Athens by this very regime. Darkó, **II**, 93. "ὁ δὲ Νέριος οὗτος ἀφίκετο, ἀπὸ Φλωρεντίας τῆς Τυρρηνῶν μητροπόλεως ὤν, ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀθηνῶν τυραννίδα τρόπῳ τοιῷδε."

4. Relinquishing the Claim to Roman Inheritance

Introduction

In narrating the events of 1453 and the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman armies of Mehmed II, Chalkokondyles inserted a brief but telling paragraph on the reception of that catastrophe in the West:

> This misfortune appears to be the greatest in surpassing all the misfortunes that have taken place in the world with respect to suffering and to resemble what happened to the inhabitants of Troy; it appears that the barbarians took revenge of Troy by the utter destruction of Hellenes. And thus Romans believe such a thing to have happened to the Hellenes as a consequence of the ancient misfortune that happened to Troy.[636]

Leaving aside for now the association of Turks with Trojans, a theory that was popular in the West at the time[637] and a theory that our author appears to have been aware of, one may draw attention to the explicit distinction between Hellene and Roman. According to Chalkokondyles' greater narrative, the Hellenes of the fifteenth century were directly descended from the Hellenes who had destroyed Troy, and Chalkokondyles stressed this point throughout the History by using the same signifier, "Hellene," to refer to the ancient people as well as his fifteenth-century contemporaries. Furthermore Chalkokondyles reserved the title "Roman" to refer to the papacy and to some Western peoples, specifically the contemporary Holy Roman Empire, its German (Γερμανοί) and Hungarian (Παίονες) subjects, and the historical Roman Empire of the Carolingians.

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[636] Darkó, **II**, 166-167. Tr. AA. "δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ ξυμφορὰ αὕτη μεγίστη τῶν κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην γενομένων ὑπερβαλέσθαι τῷ πάθει, καὶ τῇ τῶν Ἰλίου παραπλησίαν γεγονέναι, δίκην γενέσθαι τοῦ Ἰλίου ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων τοῖς Ἕλλησι <πασσυδὶ> ἀπολουμένοις, καὶ οὕτω τοὺς Ῥωμαίους οἴεσθαι ξυμβῆναι, τὴν τίσιν ἀφῖχθαι τοῖς Ἕλλησι τῆς πάλαι ποτὲ γενομένης Ἰλίου ξυμφορᾶς."

[637] T. Spencer, "Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance," *The Modern Language Review,* 47.3, (1952): 330-33; James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusading Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49 (1995): 111-207.

This distinction between "Hellene" and "Roman" is elementary and most significant for correctly interpreting and contextualizing Chalkokondyles' History.[638] In fact, some historians have failed to read this famous passage correctly, believing Chalkokondyles meant "Byzantine" when he wrote "Roman."

In her book Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought, Margaret Meserve read the same passage:

> Another frequently cited proponent of the Trojan theory, the Greek historian Laonicus Chalcocondyles, describes how the "Romans" (that is the Byzantine Greeks) viewed the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. Writing several decades after the fact, Chalcocondyles says that the loss was a punishment the Greeks deserved, as a result of their brutal sacking of Troy.[639]

In his article "Pages from Late Byzantine Philosophy of History," C. J. G. Turner briefly mentioned the same passage:

> … while in the famous passage where Chalcocondyles suggests that the fall of Constantinople may be revenge for the sack of Troy (II 166, 24-167,4) he avoids mention of any agent.[640]

Turner did not pay much attention to the fact that Chalkokondyles introduced 'the revenge for Troy' as a Roman theory and not as his own interpretation.

Gibbon, too, cited the famous passage in a similar manner:

> Chalcondyles most absurdly supposes that Constantinople was sacked by the Asiatics in revenge for the ancient calamities of Troy; and the grammarians of the XVth century are happy to melt down the uncouth appellation of Turks into the more classical name of Teucri.[641]

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[638] Hans Ditten, ""Βάρβαροι Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den Letzten Byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern", *Acts of the XIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies* vol. 2 (Belgrade, 1964), 273-299. S. Vryonis, "Byzantine Cultural Self-Consciousness in the Fifteenth Century," in *Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire,* Slobodan Curcic and Doula Mouriki (Princeton, 1991), 8.

[639] Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought*, (Harvard, 2008), 33.

[640] C. J. G. Turner, "Pages from Late Byzantine Philosophy of History," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 1 (1964): 361.

[641] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Chapter 68, n63.

In this chapter, we will demonstrate that Chalkokondyles reserved the designation "Roman" to refer to Westerners throughout the History. Assuming Chalkokondyles kept to his usual usage in this passage as well, he would have been referring to Westerners when he wrote "Roman." Furthermore, whatever Chalkokondyles' personal views might have been concerning the capture of Constantinople, it is clear that he was familiar with Western/"Roman" theories explaining the fall of the city.

Based on these examples, one may note that Chalkokondyles' use of the designation "Roman" as a term of reference is not clear to many of our contemporaries who employ Chalkokondyles as a source. This chapter explains the various ways in which Chalkokondyles used the term "Roman" to refer to religious institutions, political structures, cultural/linguistic entities, or merely to indicate Latin/Italian individuals. In discussing these various usages, we hope to make it clear that there was not one fixed definition for "Roman," but rather various competing definitions. Chalkokondyles combined these "Roman" elements in his narrative in various ways (such as when the historian described the "Archbishop of the Romans" electing an "Autocrat of the Romans") to construct a larger Western identity in the History.

Chalkokondyles supplied the most detailed account of the West, that is, those lands west of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century, to be found in late Byzantine historiography, paying individual attention to the Western cities and peoples. In particular, we compare and contrast Chalkokondyles' account concerning the West and specifically "Roman" institutions and peoples with those accounts offered by Byzantines, and in particular, by the fifteenth-century Byzantine historians Michael Kritoboulos and Doukas. The evaluation of Chalkokondyles in this context help explore whether his History had a genuine prototype or similar contemporary model in Byzantine tradition.

In particular, the study of crusade literature in the fifteenth century, which was documented by Hankins in his seminal article "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the age of Mehmed II,"[642] charts a transformation that illuminates Western mentalities during this period. Hankins demonstrated that by the fifteenth century, crusade propagandists were no longer a clerical group in the service of the Church as they were in the medieval period. He also pointed out that crusade literature relied on the opposition between "barbarian" and "civilized" to provide justification for holy war against the Muslim Ottoman Turks in this period. Furthermore, Hankins drew our attention to the fact that crusading propaganda in the fifteenth century was undertaken by humanists, written in classicizing Latin, mostly addressed to secular princes, and emphasized classical virtues rather than Christian duty. In the final analysis, he showed that while medieval crusading literature was a popular genre addressing the Christian polity in religious terms, its fifteenth-century counterpart was specifically written by the educated elite for a literate audience, in particular Western rulers, using a classicizing language.

Thus, in this chapter, we explore the extent to which Chalkokondyles' narrative overlaps with contemporary humanist discourse and specifically with fifteenth-century Crusade literature. Did Chalkokondyles put the Ottoman Turks at center stage in the History as the main historical actors, and similarly, did the humanists compose their pieces in response to the Ottoman Turks and to muster Western forces against them? Investigating the uses of the "Roman" element in Chalkokondyles, particularly in opposition to the "barbarian Ottoman Turks" will help determine the underlying concerns of the Historian. Was Chalkokondyles' understanding of the term "Roman" similar to the humanists, relying on classicizing vocabulary and categories to explain contemporary religious/political institutions and mores? By closely analyzing Chalkokondyles' use of language and the repertoire of

[642] James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II."

themes and structures (military, politico-administrative, linguistic/cultural, etc.) with which the historian organized his information, we will attempt to understand his conceptualization of "Roman" and the ways in which "Roman" elements contributed to the larger themes of the History.

What is Roman?

Roman Identity and Byzantine Tradition

One should note at the outset that there is an underlying reason as to why scholars, such as Meserve, miss the mark in their reading of the mentioned passage on the "revenge for Troy." In interpreting "Roman" as "Byzantine," they would have been correct with any other Byzantine historian, with the exception of a few isolated instances arising out of inconsistency rather than a thorough rethinking and reformulating of Byzantine identity.[643] In the very long and illustrious tradition of Byzantine historiography that spans a millennium, Laonikos Chalkokondyles was the only historian writing in Greek who relinquished the Byzantine claim to Roman identity, consistently referred to the Byzantines as "Hellenes" and reserved the title "Roman" to refer exclusively to Westerners. Indeed, with the exception of Justinian, whom the historian commemorated for having rebuilt the Isthmus a second time and to whom he referred to as "Emperor of the Romans,"[644] Chalkokondyles designated all Byzantine Emperors as either "Emperors of Byzantion" or "Emperors of Hellenes." It is interesting to note that Chalkokondyles' periodization (classical Greek, Roman, late antiquity, and medieval period) corresponds in some degree to our contemporary distinction between late antiquity and the middle ages. One should add that such periodization has its

[643] Pachymeres occasionaly referred to Catholics as "Romans," stressing the Romanness of the Catholic Church. A. Laiou, "Byzantium and the West."

[644] Darkó, **I**, 173.

roots in the Renaissance, at the time when Chalkokondyles was composing his History.[645] Leonardo Bruni, in History of the Florentine People, argued that the western Roman Empire ceased to exist between Augustulus (475-476) and Charlemagne for almost three hundred years. After Charlemagne was crowned Emperor in Rome, he "restored the forgotten name and office of the empire.[646]

The Barbarian-Roman dichotomy, inherited from the classical and late antique worlds, was often employed by Byzantines to refer to themselves as civilized "Romans" and the rightful heirs of the classical world, and conversely to refer to the rest of the world as "Barbarians" and as lacking in classical virtues such as education and proper political organization.[647] In contrast to Western medieval historiography, which focused on the opposition between Christian and heathen[648] this secular opposition of "Roman versus Barbarian" was never completely abandoned by Byzantine historians, but rather served alongside the religious one. For obvious reasons, the "barbarian" designation was often employed in reference to non-Christian peoples. Then, again, Byzantine authors also applied the term "barbarian" to those Christians who did not belong in the Byzantine cultural sphere and who were settled outside the frontiers of the Empire. Notably, as late as the twelfth century, Anna Komnena (d. 1153-1154), one of the most accomplished Byzantine historians, wrote that the Crusader leader, the Norman Bohemond, was not only an upstart intent on capturing Constantinople, but that he was also a barbarian:

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[645] James Hankins, "Religion and the Modernity of Renaissance Humanism," *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism,* ed. Angelo Mazzocco, (Leiden, 2006), 137-155.

[646] L. Bruni, *History of the Florentine People,* tr. J. Hankins, (Cambridge MA, 2001) vol. 1, 81-91.

[647] A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, (Cambridge, 2007).

[648] Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon,* (Princeton, 1988).

> There (in Rome) he presented himself before the apostolic throne and in an interview with the pope stirred him to bitter anger against the Romans. These barbarians had an ancient hatred for our race and he fostered it.[649]

Anna Komnena, in fact, believed that the military leaders of the First Crusade were moved by greed and the prospect of capturing Constantinople and not by any genuine religious sentiment.[650]

There was also, however, an appreciation among Byzantine authors for the common classical heritage that they shared with Western peoples, among them Latins, Venetians, Spaniards, and most notably the Franks. This appreciation is well documented in the *De Administrando Imperio*, the tract on diplomacy composed by the tenth century Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos (945-959) to provide information on the various peoples with whom the Byzantines had relations.[651] In this work, Constantine VII explicitly made reference to the Western origins of his namesake, the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great. According to the author, Constantine the Great had singled out the Franks among all other peoples and allowed the Byzantines to intermarry with them

> because he (Constantine the Great) himself drew his origin from those parts; for there is much relationship and converse between Franks and Romans. And why did he order that with them alone the emperors of the Romans should intermarry? Because of the traditional fame and nobility of those lands and races.[652]

Constantine VII was no doubt making an allowance for contemporary realities. However, this passage also demonstrates that the Byzantines throughout their thousand-year history had some awareness of the Western origins of their Roman heritage. Demetrios Kydones (c.1324-1398), pro-union Byzantine intellectual and statesman, intending to appease the tense

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[649] Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, tr. E. R. A. Sewter, (Penguin, 1969), 389-390.

[650] Ibid. , 311.

[651] Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gy Moravcsik, tr. R. J. H. Jenkins, (Washington D.C., 1967).

[652] Ibid., 70-73.

relations between the Byzantines and the Latins, drew attention to the fact that Rome was the metropolis for Constantinople and that there were no religious differences between the two cities in former days. Constantine the Great was Roman and so were the subsequent rulers of Constantinople.[653] What then were the ways in which Byzantine intellectuals evaluated this Roman heritage in the fifteenth century?

At the time of Chalkokondyles' birth, the Byzantine state had been reduced to a shadow of its former self. It has often been noted that there were two opposing factions in Byzantium on the eve of its fall to the Turks that set forth different programs for the salvation of their compatriots. The infamous remark attributed to Megas Doux Loukas Notaras, that was immortalized by the historian Doukas, "It would be better to see the turban of the Turks reigning in the middle of the City than the Latin miter,"[654] has found its way into much of the secondary literature and is a good starting point to expound on the differences between the two factions.[655] As protracted civil wars were fought in the Byzantine Empire, as the Italians, in particular the Venetians and the Genoese carved out zones of economic influence for themselves in the Eastern Mediterranean and established trading colonies along their maritime routes such as in New Phokaia, Galata, or Trebizond, and as the Ottomans, through strategic alliances/marriages, their powerful military organization, and their dynamic social institutions, expanded on Byzantine territory and supplanted Byzantine rule, most Byzantines felt there were only two options open to them: either they would accept union with the Latin Church, thus ending the schism that separated the two churches, or they would accept Ottoman rule but preserve intact their Orthodox belief and Church structure. Mapped onto

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[653] Judith R. Ryder, *The Career and Writings of Demetrius Kydones,* (Leiden, 2010), 72.

[654] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 329.

[655] S. Vryonis, "Crises and Anxieties in Fifteenth Century Byzantium: And the Reassertion of Old, and the Emergence of New, Cultural Forms," in *Islamic and Middle Eastern Societies*, ed. R. Olson (Brattleboro, 1987), 100-125. Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium Between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge, 2009).

this binary division, the historian Doukas was pro-Unionist and Kritoboulos was pro-Ottoman. Despite their differing views on how to preserve some form of Byzantine identity, none of these historians relinquished the Byzantine claim to Roman identity.

Not surprisingly, in the fifteenth century, one does not come across any Byzantine intellectual who felt comfortable excluding the Western Christians from the civilized world. That is to say, there were no longer the likes of Anna Komnena or Niketas Choniates who dared refer to the Western Christians as "barbarian." More surprisingly, even those Byzantines, such as Mark Eugenikos or Gennadios Scholarios, who preferred to submit themselves and the Byzantine population to Ottoman rule and who rejected union with the Roman Church as a viable alternative and believed that Ottoman political dominance was the only option available to preserve their religious identity, even these Byzantine intellectuals, in no instance, referred to Westerners as 'barbarians.'

Byzantine intellectuals, however, did not fully relinquish their claim to being the political and cultural heirs of the Roman Empire. In fact, it was official Byzantine policy to call the Byzantine Emperor, "Roman Emperor," and their state as the "Roman State" until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Even after the fall of Constantinople, Byzantines did not give up this claim.

While the Byzantines continued to refer to themselves as "Romans" until the very end, some Byzantine intellectuals also increasingly used another term, "Hellene," as part of their vocabulary for self-definition. In the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade and the Latin occupation of Constantinople in 1204, the term "Hellene," which was previously equated with paganism, came to serve as an acceptable cultural/linguistic term for self-definition in addition to the more political/administrative category of "Roman."[656] In Chapter 1, we

[656] Angelov argues that the break-up of the Byzantine state in the aftermath of 1204 helped to accelerate the cultural awakening of the Byzantines in defining themselves as Hellenes. "Hellene" and "Graikos" came to be increasingly used as part of the vocabulary in official documents. However,

explored Chalkokondyles' use of the word "Hellene" as well as his understanding of "self," undertaking an analysis of Chalkokondyles in the context of the writings of Plethon and other late Byzantine intellectuals. In that circle wherein Byzantine intellectuals revived and embraced "Hellene' as a laudatory attribute, Chalkokondyles' outright rejection of "Roman" and his exclusive use of "Hellene" to define Byzantine peoples, history, and culture, fits into a larger scheme for using the Hellenic designation as part of a religious identity.

Chalkokondyles' Use of the Donation of Constantine

Writing in the aftermath of 1453 and the Ottoman conquest of all of the territory belonging to the Byzantine cultural sphere, Chalkokondyles did not reject the designation of "Roman" only as a consequence of Byzantine military and political failure. Rather, Chalkokondyles distinguished between "Hellenic" and "Roman" traditions and argued that the Byzantines belonged to the former, even as he acknowledged the historical expansion and dislocation of the Roman Empire to the East and the translation of the capital from Rome to Byzantion in the fourth century. Providing a bird's eye view of the history of the 'Hellenic' people, Chalkokondyles wrote in the opening pages:

> At that time, the Romans had achieved the greatest rule in the world, having an equal share of talent and fortune in (their) excellence. They turned over Rome to their great archbishop and crossed over to Thrace. With the Emperor leading the way, they came upon Thrace, and settled in the land that is nearest Asia; choosing Byzantion, a Hellenic city, to be their metropolis…[657]

Hellenism did not supplant the official ideology of the State, which was grounded in Roman administrative practices and Roman law. Further, Hellenism remained the ideology of a small number of highly-educated Byzantines. Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007). Kaldellis, on the other hand, argues that the concept of Hellenism did not emerge in the aftermath of 1204, but transformed into "national Hellenism." While pre-1204 Hellenism as a philosophy did not oppose Roman identity, in the aftermath of the Latin invasion, Hellenism was redefined to oppose the Roman/Latin aggressors and to provide the groundwork for a universal identity that theoretically included all Byzantines. Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition,* (Cambridge, 2007).

[657] Darkó, **I**, 4. Tr. AA. "ἐς ὃ δὴ Ῥωμαίους ἐπὶ τὴν τῆς οἰκουμένης μεγίστην ἀρχὴν ἀφικομένους, ἰσοτάλαντον ἔχοντας τύχην τῇ ἀρετῇ, ἐπιτρέψαντας Ῥώμην τῷ μεγίστῳ αὐτῶν ἀρχιερεῖ καὶ διαβάντας

This anonymous reference was to Pope Sylvester, Constantine the Great's contemporary. The Historian thus briefly invoked the "Donation of Constantine."[658] Despite its brevity, this remark underlies much of Chalkokondyles' political vision. One must then devote attention to the historical and fifteenth-century uses of the "Donation." In particular, attention will be paid to the following two questions: In what historical/political context should we evaluate this reference? And what purpose did it serve in the narrative of Chalkokondyles?

In its ubiquitous Western versions, the famous and often quoted document called the "Donation of Constantine" was interpreted to support the papal claim that Emperor Constantine had handed over all imperial (i.e., political) authority over the western Roman Empire to his contemporary, Pope Sylvester. Originally composed in the West in the eighth or ninth century, the "Donation of Constantine" had already been exposed as a forgery in 1440 by Lorenzo Valla using the newly developed philological techniques of humanist studies.[659] Valla's demonstration, however, was not only rejected by the Roman Church until the sixteenth century, but was also suppressed.

The "Donation of Constantine" was also well known among the Byzantines and was employed by them, in various instances, to support Byzantine claims to lawful political authority in 'New Rome.' The Byzantines, inverting the argument of the "Donation of Constantine," maintained that Constantine the Great had translated the Roman Empire to the

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ἐς Θρᾴκην, ὑφηγουμένου ἐπὶ τάδε τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ Θρᾴκης ἐπὶ χώραν, ἥτις ἐς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐγγυτάτω ᾤκηται, Βυζάντιον Ἑλληνίδα πόλιν μητρόπολιν σφῶν ἀποδεικνύντας…"

[658] Dimiter G. Angelov, "The Donation of Constantine and the church in Late Byzantium," in *Church and Society in late Byzantium,* ed. Dimiter G. Angelov (Kalamazoo, 2009), 91-157.

[659] Black argues that Valla's philological demonstration did not make the Donation irrelevant. Rather, the forgery itself was composed at a turning point in the history of the Western Church. The controversy over the Donation, Black writes, raged into the eighteenth century as it was a cogent symbol of the Church's temporal authority. Robert Black, "The Donation of Constantine: A New Source for the Concept of the Renaissance," in A. Brown (ed). *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy*, (Oxford, 1995).

East and consequently the Byzantines, not Westerners, were invested with imperium.[660] Michael Kerularios, installed as Patriarch of Constantinople in 1043, had used it in his bid for power against both the Papacy and the Byzantine Emperors. Using the "Donation of Constantine," Keroularios argued that he, as Patriarch of New Rome, was the inheritor of the authority Constantine the Great had conferred on Sylvester, the Bishop of Old Rome.[661] Appropriately, tension between the two Churches dates back to Keroularios' seminal Patriarchate. Moreover, Keroularios also used the "Donation" to bolster his claim to supreme authority vis-à-vis the Byzantine Emperor.

By the twelfth century, the "Donation" was being used by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I against the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. According to Kinnamos, the contemporary Byzantine court historian, Roman authority had long been missing in the West:

> Rome existed in a state of revolt, although repeatedly recovered for the Romans …. It was again rendered no less subservient to barbarian tyrants, who were entitled kings in emulation of Theodoric the first king and tyrant. As they have no claim on the lofty status of the empire, whence they propose for themselves such offices (kingship).[662]

Kinnamos continues, writing that the papal authority to appoint Emperors in the West was invalid.

According to Kinnamos, when the Pope (Alexander III) disagreed with Frederick Barbarossa, the former decided to revert to the old tradition:

> When, however, (Manuel's) agreement with the pope about the rule of Rome was rendered null, because while the emperor asserted that the throne of Rome would

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[660] Angeliki Laiou-Thomadakis, "Οι δύο εξουσίες: η διαμάχη μεταξύ Παπών και αυτοκρατόρων και οι θεωρίες των Βυζαντινῶν," *Θησαυρίσματα / Thesaurismata* 15 (1978), 106-118. P. J. Alexander, "The Donation of Constantine at Byzantium and its Earliest Use against the Western Empire," *Zbornik Radova* 8 (1963): 14-26.

[661] Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism,* (Oxford University Press, 1955). Romily J. Jenkins, "A Cross of the Patriarch Michael Keroularios."

[662] John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus,* tr. Charles M. Brand, (New York, 1976), 166.

> remain at Byzantion, the pope would not accept this but demanded that he rule in Rome.[663]

The latter passage is now interpreted as referring to the "Donation of Constantine" and to the Byzantine refusal to accept papal supremacy based on the "Donation."[664]

The use of the "Donation" by the Byzantines had been historically tied with the universality of the Roman Empire (i.e., the Byzantine Empire) and the impossibility of the existence of a Western empire that also held the Roman title. The Byzantines had stressed the relocation of the Empire's capital to Byzantion, established as a Christian Roman metropolis and renamed "New Rome." In fact, it appears that with their resourceful interpretation of the "Donation," the Byzantines turned the tables on the West.[665]

Chalkokondyles, however, did not make use of this historic Byzantine tradition of the "Donation" that invested Roman authority in the Roman (Byzantine) Empire. In the aforementioned passage, Chalkokondyles did not deny the political importance of the relocation to the East, but he was, nevertheless, careful to draw our attention to the fact that the new capital is, foremost, "Byzantion, a Hellenic city." In fact, the sentences immediately following this passage make manifest Chalkokondyles' analysis of the *translatio* and its cultural implications:

> (After relocating East, the Romans) made war against the Persians, who had caused them much suffering. And afterwards the Hellenes mixed with Romans and they (Hellenes) ultimately prevailed against (the Romans) and guarded their (Hellenic) language and customs until the very end because they (Hellenes) were much more numerous than the Romans. However, they (Hellenes) no longer called themselves according to their (Hellenic) hereditary tradition and the name was changed. And,

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[663] Ibid., 196-197.

[664] Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180*, (Cambridge, 2002), 89.

[665] Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: the Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), 240-247; D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology & Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 363-365.

> thus, the Emperors of Byzantion were proud to call themselves Emperors and Autocrats of Romans and never found it worthy to be called Emperors of Hellenes.[666]

In this passage, Chalkokondyles represents 'Hellenic'/Byzantine identity to be foremost a product of linguistic and cultural (γλῶτταν μὲν καὶ ἤθη) factors. Furthermore, Chalkokondyles' understanding of 'Roman' identity in the East, following Roman relocation to the East, was mainly political and administrative, relying on a ruling class that was not only in the minority, but one that was also superseded by the Hellenic element in the long run. In contrast, Chalkokondyles configured Roman identity as belonging truly to its homeland in the West, with all of its varied cultural, linguistic, and political components. Chalkokondyles once again made this distinction between the Hellenic and Roman elements forcefully in the following sentence, stating that the "Romans" were divided from the "Hellenes" because of religious practice. Thus, at the outset Chalkokondyles makes it clear that he does not agree with the 'Emperors of the Hellenes' concerning their self-presentation as "Emperors of the Romans." In Chalkokondyles' narrative, Roman Emperors and Archbishops were to be found in the West and not in the East, both historically and in modern times. In fact, Chalkokondyles explicitly stated in the same introduction that the Hellenes wrongfully called themselves 'Roman':

> Let what I have demonstrated thus far concerning the Empire of the Hellenes and their existing differences with the Romans, let these be proof enough that they (the Hellenes) wrongfully addressed themselves as Empire and with the same name (Roman).[667]

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[666] Darkó **I**, 4. Tr. AA. " Ἕλληνάς τε τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε Ῥωμαίοις αὐτοῦ ἐπιμιγνύντας, γλῶτταν μὲν καὶ ἤθη διὰ τὸ πολλῷ πλέονας Ῥωμαίων Ἕλληνας αὐτοῦ ἐπικρατεῖν διὰ τέλους φυλάξαι, τοὔνομα μέντοι μηκέτι κατὰ τὸ πάτριον καλουμένους ἀλλάξασθαι, καὶ τούς γε βασιλεῖς Βυζαντίου ἐπὶ τὸ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς τε καὶ αὐτοκράτορας σεμνύνεσθαι ἀποκαλεῖν, Ἑλλήνων δὲ βασιλεῖς οὐκέτι οὐδαμῇ ἀξιοῦν."

[667] Darkó, **I**, 6. Tr. AA. "Ταῦτα μὲν ἐς τοσοῦτόν μοι ἀποχρώντως ἔχοντα ἐπιδεδείχθω περί τε τῆς Ἑλλήνων βασιλείας καὶ τῆς ἐς Ῥωμαίους ἐχούσης αὐτῶν διαφορᾶς, ὡς δὴ οὐκ ὀρθῶς τά γε ἐς βασιλείαν καὶ ἐς τοὔνομα αὐτὸ προσηγορεύετο τούτοις."

Chalkokondyles then explained that the "Empire of the Hellenes" could not have been the "Roman Empire" in the fifteenth century:

> at the time of my birth, the Hellenes and the Empire of the Hellenes were expelled, first by peoples in Thrace and later by barbarians themselves from the other dominions; some very small dominion remained (in the hands of the Hellenes).[668]

The implication was clear: the Empire of the Hellenes' territorial extent was insignificant, and we should look elsewhere to locate the Empire.

While Chalkokondyles' use of the "Donation" to place Roman authority in the West had no precedent in Byzantine tradition, his version fits in nicely with the controversy over the "Donation" that occupied Italian intellectuals in the fifteenth century and beyond. Chalkokondyles' version is reminiscent of a popular contemporary composition that also drew on the rich tradition of the Donation: the anonymous fifteenth century "Life of Saint Sylvester" in Italian, which related that the Pope had gained worldly dominion over the Empire and specifically over the city of Rome through the "Donation." The author of this brief piece wrote that Pope Sylvester had been crowned by Constantine with a precious palm, as this was the ancient custom of coronation for the Emperor of Rome. Afterward, every Pope was crowned to indicate their rule over the world, "regno del mondo."[669]

Others made use of the 'Donation' in additional ways in the fifteenth century. Despite Valla's philological demonstration that the "Donation" was a forgery, numerous intellectuals believed in the authenticity of the document. Among the latter was the Italian humanist

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[668] Darkó, **I**, 6-7. Tr. AA. "παραγενόμενος μὲν οὖν αὐτὸς ἔγωγε ἐπὶ τόνδε τὸν βίον κατέλαβον Ἕλληνάς τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων βασιλέα ὑπό τε τῶν ἐν Θρᾴκῃ γενῶν πρῶτα, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν γε δὴ τῶν βαρβάρων τῆς ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἀπεληλαμένους, ἀρχὴν τήνδε βραχεῖάν τινα περιέπειν…"

[669] *Storia di san silvestro: testo di lingua inedito pubblicato secondo la lezione di un codice proprio da michele melga* (Napoli, 1859) 52, "In prima don'o a Santo Silvestro la corona della palma adornata di pietro preziose, con la quale per antico tempo incoronare si soleano tutti l'inperadori di di Roma, e con quela corona si si ciascuno papa, e chiamesi quellla corona Regno del mondo."

Flavio Biondo (1392-1463).[670] According to Biondo, the papacy was the rightful heir of the Roman Empire and was invested with the authority to defend the Christian-Roman lands against the barbarians, namely the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth century. Arguing that the "Donation" was an authentic document, Biondo considered it as proof of the authority of the Papacy as the heir of the Roman Empire.

Chalkokondyles understood that the principal function of Roman institutions, both the Papacy and the Roman Empire, to be warfare against the 'barbarian,' in similar manner as Biondo and other crusade propagandists of the fifteenth century. In his presentation, Chalkokondyles used similar classically inspired terminology as was used by these Western proponents for Crusade (i.e., Roman Empire, "Archbishopric of the Romans," "barbarians") which reveal that he was knowledgeable about western presentations.

However, one should note that Chalkokondyles did not spell out his argument with the same detail as Biondo and other fifteenth-century Crusade propagandists. Rather, Chalkokondyles integrated this purpose, 'Roman' warfare against the 'barbarians,' into the narrative using various authorial techniques throughout the History.

The discussion of the "Donation of Constantine" deserves scrutiny in one particular detail. Interpreters of the "Donation," writing in Greek or Latin, included information that Chalkokondyles omitted: the finding of the new capital named after the first Christian Roman Emperor. Chalkokondyles did not only pass over Constantine the Great's name in this passage and elsewhere in the History, he also refrained from using "Constantinople" as his toponym of choice, using "Byzantion" instead. Certainly previous Byzantine historians, such as Pachymeres and Gregoras writing in the fourteenth century, often employed the toponym, "Byzantion," but they also had no qualms about using "Constantinople" as an equally acceptable alternative. Chalkokondyles, however, used the imperial name "Constantinople" a

[670] Margaret Meserve, "Italian Humanists and the Problem of the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 21-24.

meager three times, while using the toponym "Byzantion" one hundred and eighty times in the History.[671] Was this a conscious authorial decision by Chalkokondyles? And if so, how does it contribute to his understanding of Roman identity? One should note at the outset that based on the lecture notes that were preserved in manuscripts, Chalkokondyles was faithful to his teacher Plethon's presentation of Constantinople.[672] In these lecture notes, Plethon referred to the translation of the capital and to the founding of Byzantion as capital and glossed over Constantine I's conversion to Christianity and the renaming of the city.

Constantine and the foundation of the capital was a popular *topos* employed by Byzantine authors to stress the continuity between Rome and the new capital. One finds an eloquent expression of that continuity in the early fifteenth-century composition by Manuel II, "Funeral Oration on His Brother Theodore."[673] Manuel II, the reigning Byzantine Emperor, composed the Oration c. 1409 and had intended to deliver it himself in Mistra where his brother Theodore I had ruled as Despot. Due to the complicated political and military situation in the Byzantine capital at the time, Manuel II was unable to travel to the Peloponnese for the occasion. Isidore, future Cardinal and Metropolitan of Kiev, and Theodore Gazes, were granted the privilege of delivering the oration. By this time, the Chalkokondyli family had not yet relocated to Mistra from their native Athens, but it is significant that Chalkokondyles would end up belonging to the same intellectual circles as Isidore and Gazes.

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[671] A quick search on Thesaurus Linguae Graecae reveals the frequency of usage.

[672]Plethon, Monac. Gr. 490: fol. 155v. Ignatio Hardt, Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Graecorum Bibliothecae Regiae Bavaricae (Munich, 1812), 126. Aslıhan Akışık, "Praising a City: Nicaea, Trebizond, and Thessalonike," *Journal of Turkish Studies In Memoriam Angeliki E. Laiou* ed. Nevra Necipoğlu and Cemal Kafadar, (Cambridge MA, 2011):15.

[673] Manuel II Palaeologus, *Funeral Oration on his Brother Theodore* ed. and tr. J Chrysostomides, (Thessalonike, 1985).

In the opening portion of this lengthy panegyric, delivered as an oration and devoted to the historical events of his brother's rule in Mistra, Manuel II eulogized his brother according "to the convention established by the ancient"[674] by paying tribute to his fatherland, among others:

> His country was the queen of cities and the all-sufficient metropolis and has no need of our praise to extol her fame. For she excels in beauty all other admired cities and outdoes and surpasses them in every pre-eminent blessing, for she ruled in turn all regions, nations and earthly kings, subduing them not so much by armies and sword as by virtue and reason, and this was because Constantine held the scepter in his hands – an emperor who was in truth both a leader and a dispenser of blessings to all.[675]

In this passage, Manuel II praised Constantinople with the standard formula, referring to the capital as the "queen of cities"/"ἡ Βασιλεύουσα," or "the city that rules," just as numerous Byzantines had previously. This topos fits nicely with the theme Manuel II wished to impress upon his readers, that Constantinople is the city that rules over many as the capital par excellence. In fact, Constantinople is no less than "a city, inspired by God (for it was God who so moved him and it was only with the help of God that he achieved all this.)"[676] Thus, Manuel II viewed Constantinople as deriving its importance foremost from being consecrated as the Christian city. Manuel II stressed Constantinople's primacy among all cities by pointing out that the city rules with virtue and with Logos (no doubt intending the double entendre referring to both reason and the divine element ordering the cosmos) and not by force of arms. Thus, Constantinople, in Manuel II's eulogy, is principally a civilizing element, the radiating epicenter of a Christian cultural universe.

Chalkokondyles, however, presented Byzantion as one Hellenic city among many in a Hellenic universe that was unified by a common cultural and linguistic heritage rather than by imperial structures. In the Introduction, which we have already analyzed in some detail,

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[674] Ibid. 80-81.

[675] Ibid., 82-83, emphasis added.

[676] Ibid.

Chalkokondyles made this explicit when describing the geographic extent of the Byzantine Empire at the time of his birth (The Hellenes held few regions under their rule at this time.)[677] In this passage, Chalkokondyles did not present Byzantion as the capital, nor even as the most important city. Chalkokondyles maintained this position in the greater narrative and did not introduce Byzantion as the administrative center. In fact, by stressing the Hellenic identity of Byzantion, Chalkokondyles was choosing to de-emphasize the Roman administrative element in the East.

One might argue that Chalkokondyles did not introduce Constantinople as the "Roman" capital because he was writing in the aftermath of 1453 when the "Roman Empire"/Byzantine Empire had ceased to exist. Chalkokondyles' contemporary Byzantine historians, however, still held onto the time-honored formula that Constantinople, founded by Constantine, was the Christian Roman capital. Kritoboulos, who wrote during the reign of the Conqueror, devoted his History to the events of Mehmed II's rule, and dedicated the work to Mehmed II, evaluated the capture of Constantinople differently than Chalkokondyles:

> And the City which had formerly ruled with honor and glory and wealth and great splendor over many nations was now ruled by others, amid want and disgrace and dishonor and abject and shameful slavery.[678]

Thus, Kritoboulos' understanding of the role of Constantinople as the capital city was quite similar to Manuel II's formulation. Significantly, the capture of the city by Mehmed II did not lead Kritoboulos to reexamine the standard clichés. The city remained

> the Great City of Constantine, raised to a great height of glory and dominion and wealth in its own times, overshadowing to an infinite degree all the cities around it…. it thus came to its end.[679]

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[677] See supra.

[678] Kritoboulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, tr. C. T. Riggs, (Princeton, 1954), 80.

[679] Ibid., 82.

This presentation of Constantinople as capital strengthened Kritoboulos' stated objective, which was the narration of Mehmed II's accomplishments. In Kritoboulos' History, there was continuity between Constantinople as the Roman capital and Constantinople as the Ottoman capital. This continuity is evident in those passages immediately following the capture of the city, when Kritoboulos announced that Mehmed II intended to make the city his capital/ τὸ βασίλειον and a more perfect capital than it was formerly under the Romans.[680] Furthermore, Kritoboulos described the repopulating and rebuilding of Constantinople as the Ottoman capital as major feats of Mehmed II. Thus, Kritoboulos put the old formula concerning the presentation of Constantinople as "the ruling city," which we have already come across in Manuel II's composition, to new use, while Chalkokondyles chose to dismantle it all together.

Roman Emperors in Chalkokondyles' History

Chalkokondyles departed from Byzantine historiographical tradition in his understanding of what constitutes "Roman" in various ways. With the exception of Justinian, Chalkokondyles invariably referred to Byzantine Emperors as "Emperors of Hellenes" or as "Emperors of Byzantion." Chalkokondyles also applied the term "Roman" to the West much more tenaciously than any other historian writing in Greek. In this section, we will investigate the political, administrative, and cultural aspects of Chalkokondyles' presentation concerning the Roman Empire and Roman Emperors. In particular, we will seek answers to the following questions: What were the functions of the "Roman Empire" and what were the distinguishing characteristics of "Roman Emperors" according to Chalkokondyles? How did Chalkokondyles present "Roman" power as legitimate? What are the various diachronic elements in Chalkokondyles' presentation of "Roman?" What are the synchronic elements?

[680] Ibid. 83.

Charlemagne as Roman Emperor

Charlemagne and his Empire was a topic Chalkokondyles revisited throughout the History. Moreover, it was a topic that Chalkokondyles included in the Introduction. Chalkokondyles made his first reference to the Carolingians in the context of those passages that refer to the tradition of the "Donation of Constantine:"

> We have learned that for many years, the Romans and their great Archbishop, having different ideas concerning many issues relating to religious practice, were separated from the Hellenes. And they elected the Emperor of the Romans first from among the French and later from among the Germans for the entire time. [681]

What is particularly remarkable about this passage included in the introductory pages is that the historian not only conceded to the contemporary West the title of "Roman Empire" and "Roman Emperor," but he also recognized the validity of the historical Carolingian claim to the Roman Empire. Thus, according to Chalkokondyles, all Carolingian Kings, along with Charlemagne, were Roman Emperors, and the Roman Empire had been located in the West continually since the beginning.

Chalkokondyles made his second reference to the Carolingian Emperors in the context of the war against the Ottomans undertaken by another "Roman Emperor," the fifteenth-century Sigismund. While Chalkokondyles anachronistically referred to Sigismund as the "Roman Emperor" in the closing years of the fourteenth century (Sigismund was elected as Roman Emperor in 1433), such an anachronism strengthened one of Chalkokondyles' main theses, that the chief function of the Roman Emperors is to make war against the "barbarians." In fact, Chalkokondyles made the connection between the historic and contemporary Roman Emperors explicit in these passages:

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[681] Darkó, **I**, 4-5. Tr. AA."Τοὺς μέντοι Ῥωμαίους ἐπυθόμεθα καὶ αὐτῶν ἀρχιερέα τὸν μέγιστον οὐκ ὀλίγα ἄττα κατὰ τὴν θρησκείαν ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν διενεχθέντας διακεκρίσθαι τά τε ἄλλα ἀφ' Ἑλλήνων, καὶ δὴ καὶ βασιλέα Ῥωμαίων ἐπιψηφιζομένους, ὁτὲ μὲν ἀπὸ Γαλατῶν, ὁτὲ δὲ ἀπὸ Γερμανῶν, ἐς τόνδε ἀεὶ τὸν χρόνον ἀποδεικνύναι."

> In the beginning, the Archbishops of Rome used to give this (title) to the Emperors of the French on account of (their) famous and most brave wars, against those barbarians who had crossed over into the Iberian peninsula from Libya and who had subjected a large part of it. Afterwards, the vote of the Archbishop of the Romans changed in favor of the rulers of the Germans. [682]

While Chalkokondyles did not specify the reason as to why the Popes transferred the title of "Roman Emperor" from the French to the Germans, there is a striking parallelism between these Roman Emperors. Both the historic Roman Emperors and their fifteenth-century counterparts undertook wars against "barbarians" in Chalkokondyles' History, the first against "barbarians from Libya" and the latter against the "barbarian" Ottomans.

Chalkokondyles' most elaborate account of Charlemagne and the paladins was included in Book II in the context of information on France and the French. Chalkokondyles took his authorial cue for introducing the French and subsequently Charlemagne from Manuel II's visit to Paris and France from 1399-1403, which was undertaken by the reigning Byzantine Emperor to raise help against Bayezid during the eight-year Ottoman siege of Constantinople. Manuel II had handed over Constantinople, which Chalkokondyles referred to as "the capital city of the Hellenes," to his nephew John Palaiologos, son of Andronikos, and sailed to Italy to raise much-needed military help against the Ottomans. Having first sailed to Venice and then continuing to Milan, Manuel II crossed over into Gaul. Next, he sought the aid of the French Kings (οἱ τῶν Κελτῶν βασιλεῖς), pleading with the French not to "betray the capital city of the Hellenes, which was under siege by the Barbarians."[683]

Chalkokondyles began by relating that among all the Western nations, the contemporary French Kings were not only haughty, but they also "considered themselves to

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[682] Darkó, **I**, 68-69. Tr. AA."τοῦτο μὲν οἱ τῆς Ῥώμης ἀρχιερεῖς τοῖς Κελτῶν βασιλεῦσι τὸ πρῶτον ἐπεδίδοσαν διὰ τοὺς πολέμους, οὓς θαμά τε καὶ ἀνδρειότατα πρὸς τοὺς ἀπὸ Λιβύης διαβάντας ἐπὶ Ἰβηρίαν βαρβάρους καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῆς Ἰβηρίας καταστρεψαμένους αὐτοῖς. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐπὶ τοὺς Γερμανῶν ἡγεμόνας μετενήνεκται ἡ ψῆφος τοῦ Ῥωμαίων ἀρχιερέως."

[683] Darkó, **I**, 79. "ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τὸν Γαλατίας βασιλέα, ἐδεῖτο αὐτοῦ μὴ προέσθαι πόλιν βασιλίδα Ἑλλήνων ὑπὸ βαρβάρων πολιορκουμένην..."

have a claim to the rule and the empire of the Romans" because of their relation to Κάρουλος/ Charlemagne, whom the historian once again presented as a "Celtic (French) Roman Emperor."[684] Chalkokondyles made such information on the French and Charlemagne relevant to his main topic by creating parallelisms between the past and the present and between the East and the West. In this instance, Chalkokondyles was knowledgeable of the contemporary claims of the French throne. The figure of Charlemagne as the ancestor of the fifteenth-century French Kings was a familiar topos, one that was often employed by contemporary intellectuals in their addresses to the French throne.[685] In fact, Chalkokondyles' remarks concerning the fifteenth century French throne's relation to Charlemagne and their self-perception appear insightful to students of the French Renaissance to this day.[686]

The Florentine Agnolo Acciaiuoli[687] also employed this topos of Charlemagne as the glorious ancestor of the French Kings. The Florentine Agnolo's address to the French King Charles VII during his ambassadorial mission to the French throne to secure an alliance against Alfonso of Aragon, who was sieging Florence c. 1451, is preserved as notes in the registers of Florence.[688] According to these notes, the Florentine ambassador Agnolo was prepared to communicate to the French King the perpetual debt of the Florentine people and to address the French King as the descendant of the "most glorious Charlemagne," who had

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[684] Darkó, **I**, 79 "ἀξιοῦν ἑαυτῷ μετεῖναι τῆς ἡγεμονίας τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας." Darkó, **I**, 81, "καθ' ὃν δῆτα χρόνον βασιλεῖς Ῥωμαίων καὶ αὐτοκράτορες ἀπεδεικνύοντο οἱ τῶν Κελτῶν βασιλεῖς."

[685] J. Monfrin, "La Figure de Charlemagne dans l'Historiographie du XVe Siecle," *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Societe de l'Histoire de France*, (1964-1965), 67-78.

[686] A. Chastel begins his narrative with a reference to Chalkokondyles in "French Renaissance Art in a European Context," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XII, no. 4, (1981), 77-103.

[687] Agnolo belonged to the Florentine family which ruled over Athens in the fifteenth century and which banished Laonikos' family from their hometown. Agnolo also accompanied the Byzantine Emperor John VII during his stay in Florence during the Council of Florence-Ferrara in 1439. K. M. Setton, "The Emperor John VIII Slept Here…" *Speculum*, vol. 33, No. 2 (April 1958), 224-228.

[688] J. Monfrin, "La Figure de Charlemagne dans l'Historiographie du XVe Siecle," *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Societe de l'Histoire de France,* (1964-1965), 71.

liberated Florence, the Roman Church, and all of Italy from the barbarian attacks of Attila and the Huns.[689]

Charlemagne (768-814), however, was not an alien topic to Byzantine authors as they, too, were informed of the symbolic meaning and political ramifications of the Carolingian King's coronation as "Emperor of the Romans" on Christmas day, 800, in Rome by Pope Leo III. The first extant Byzantine source mentioning Charlemagne is Theophanes' *Chronographia*, which chronicled events up to 813 A.D. Theophanes' passages on Charlemagne only mentioned that he was a son of Pippin, that Irene had attempted to wed her son to the Frankish king but that the engagement was broken off, and, of course, Charlemagne's coronation by Leo. Other Byzantine authors, among them Constantine VII (905-959), Zonaras (d. 1159?), Constantine Manasses (c. 1130-c. 1187), and the chronicler Ephraim (14th century?) also mentioned Charlemagne, but except for Constantine VII, they did not have any original information to add to what Theophanes had already provided. Overall, the mention of Charlemagne in Byzantine sources, the after-life of the story of Charlemagne, so to say, was sporadic, limited by what Theophanes had already written, and did not in any way match the lively epic/chivalric tradition that had grown around Charlemagne in the West.

The only exception in Byzantine tradition (apart from Chalkokondyles) to provide a few details not found in Theophanes remains a passage in Constantine VII's *De Administrando Imperio*, the famous tract on foreign relations and neighboring peoples. Constantine VII wrote:

> Charles, a man much celebrated in song and story and author of heroic deeds in war. (περὶ οὗ πολὺς ἔπαινος, ἐγκώμιά τε καὶ διηγήματα καὶ περὶ πολέμους ἀνδραγαθήματα.) This Charles was sole ruler over all the kingdoms, and reigned as emperor (μονοκράτωρ) in great Francia. And in his days none of the other kings dared

[689] Ibid.

> call himself a king but all were his vassals; and he sent much money and abundant treasure to Palestine and built a very large number of monasteries.[690]

Himself a reigning "Roman Emperor," Constantine VII appropriately ignored Charlemagne's elevation to the imperial office, being careful not to call him "ὁ βασιλεύς" at any point. Thus, Constantine VII prudently deleted the well-known story of the coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo, and he did not provide any details concerning the attempts at forging a marriage with the "Roman Emperor"/Byzantine Empress Irene.

Constantine VII, however, did include one detail that is also found in Chalkokondyles, mentioning "ἐγκώμιά τε καὶ διηγήματα"/"song and story," which possibly referred to the oral epic tradition that had sprung up around Charlemagne's legend. Constantine VII's comment on this tradition, coming as it did in the tenth century, was insightful and precocious as the earliest extant manuscript of a chanson de geste dates from the late eleventh century. Hence, Constantine VII may indeed have been knowledgeable of the western oral tradition, as his use of vocabulary indicates.

By the fifteenth century, the literary tradition surrounding Charlemagne and the paladins was just as vibrant as the oral tradition, branching out in different directions in various Latin vernaculars (Italian, French, and Spanish). Numerous authors were incorporating various elements of the oral tradition into different literary genres, such as historiography, epic poetry, and romances. There were French chroniclers, among them David Aubert, who adapted the oral epics into chronicles, such as Charlemagne's fictive visit to Jerusalem.[691] The Florentine humanist Donato Acciaiuoli (belonging to the same Florentine family as Agnolo Acciaiuoli), composed a *Vita Caroli* to present to the French King Louis XI. In this composition, Donato relied on Einhard but also employed the oral epic tradition and turned a critical eye to his sources, sieving through the information and adopting

[690] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio,* (Washington D.C., 1967), 109.

[691] J. Monfrin, 68.

the wars with the Muslims, but deleting Charlemagne's visit to Constantinople.[692] Others such as the Italian poets Matteo Maria Boiardo (1434-1494) and Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) chose elements of the oral epic tradition and the figure of Orlando to compose romances in verse.

Chalkokondyles mainly relied on the epic tradition in his presentation of Charlemagne and the paladins, which as we have remarked is included in the context of those passages on the French in Book II. In fact, Chalkokondyles explicitly acknowledged the oral aspect of that epic tradition, writing "Their great fame is sung (ᾄδεται) in words of praise in Italy, Spain, and France to this day."[693] Consequently, Constantine VII and Chalkokondyles emerge as the only authors writing in Greek and belonging to Byzantine tradition who referred to Western traditions concerning Charlemagne. Chalkokondyles went even further than Constantine VII did by incorporating some of the content of these rich Western oral traditions into his History, just as his Western contemporaries (historians, rhetoricians and poets) were doing at this time.

While narrating the deeds of Charlemagne, Chalkokondyles focused on another "barbarian" people, the Muslims from "Libya," northern Africa.[694] Appropriately, the military success of Charlemagne against his Muslim foes in Spain was the most famous aspect of his legend in Western medieval popular culture. Bisaha has demonstrated that Charlemagne's chivalry, as a Christian hero in the face of the Muslim enemy in Spain, was equally appealing to Italian humanists and others writing in lower registers during the Renaissance.[695] In particular, Renaissance authors extensively used the figure of

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[692] Daniela Gatti, *La Vita Caroli di Donato Acciaiuoli***,** (Bologna 1981); Monfrin, 75; Bisaha, 32-33.

[693] Darkó, **I**, 81. "κλέος αὐτῶν ἀνὰ Ἰταλίαν καὶ Ἰβηρίαν καὶ δὴ καὶ Γαλατίαν μέγα ἐς τόνδε ἀεὶ εὐφημούμενον ᾄδεται ὑπὸ πάντων. "

[694] Darkó, **I**, 81, "καὶ ἔργα πρὸς τοὺς ἀπὸ Λιβύης βαρβάρους ἀποδεδειγμένον λαμπρά."

[695] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West*, (Philadelphia, 2004), 30-42.

Charlemagne in the crusade literature.[696] In his address to the French King, the Venetian Bernardo Giustiniani attempted to divert Louis XI's attention from Italy to the Ottoman Turks, using the figure of Charlemagne to make his point:

> Turn your eyes, if you will, a little to the East. Do you not see what desolation that fierce and huge beast has made and will make?... Who made Charles great if not the Saracen in Spain?... This duel, the most glorious of all which the sun has ever beheld, our Lord Jesus Christ has reserved for you. [697]

For the most part, Chalkokondyles' version followed Charlemagne's wars with the barbarian Muslims. The Historian wrote that the "Libyans" had crossed over the strait and in a short while had captured the Iberian Peninsula. Subduing all of Iberia, the "Libyans" soon turned to the "Κελτική" lands and it was Charlemagne, along with his comrades-in-arms "called paladins," who defeated the barbarian enemy from Africa, according to Chalkokondyles. Charlemagne along with his nephew Orlando as well as Rinaldo, Oliberios, and other leaders not only expelled the "Libyans" from the "Κελτική" lands but also drove them as far back as the city of Granada, which was a stronghold in a mountainous region neighboring the ocean. Chalkokondyles maintained that Charlemagne and his followers were victorious in battle and settled Iberia, Navarre, and Aragon, returning the land, which had been under siege by the barbarians, to the rightful owners. Thus, to this day, praises are sung for Charlemagne and his paladins for defeating the enemy, Chalkokondyles remarked. Chalkokondyles concluded the account with details from the chivalric tradition, adding that Orlando, the general, died of thirst during a siege, while Rinaldo, continuing the battle, left it to the Iberian Kings and that the successors in Iberia continue the struggle with the "Libyans" up to the present time.

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[696] Ibid.

[697] Patricia H. Labalme, *Bernardo Giustiniani: A Venetian of the Quattrocento***,"** (Roma, 1969), 166.

Focusing attention on Chalkokondyles' use of proper names, "Orlando," "Rinaldo," and "Oliverio," one begins to make sense of the Historian's fascinating narrative. Chalkokondyles could have called the paladins "Roland," "Renaud," or "Olivier," had he been following the French tradition, but his usage correlates with the Italian onomastic practice for the Carolingian epics.[698] Hence, Chalkokondyles was mainly employing Italian sources for his version of Charlemagne. Moreover, incorporating the paladins into the account of Charlemagne, Chalkokondyles was indebted to the tradition of oral epics/chanson de geste. Orlando's manner of death (dying of hunger) clearly followed that tradition.

Consequently, one may also argue that Chalkokondyles, in this instance, did not attempt to construct a historically accurate account based on primary sources. Chalkokondyles employed neither Einhard nor Theophanes. He did not methodically check the historical veracity of the chansons de geste as sources by comparing and contrasting them with other primary material. To us, as moderns, such a critical study of sources is the hallmark of historiography as a social science, and Chalkokondyles may appear to have failed when judged by these standards.

However, there were compelling reasons why Chalkokondyles included these legendary accounts in the *Apodeixis*, as they highlighted some of his perennial interests. In particular, the story of the Roman Emperor Charlemagne's war with the "barbarian Muslim Libyans" over territory that originally belonged to the "Kelts" and the "Iberians," but that had come to be invaded by the "barbarians," was a suitable and meaningful motif for the *Apodeixis*. After all, the main topic of Chalkokondyles' *Apodeixis* is a different invasion and the destruction of another civilized people (Hellenes) by another group of "barbarians" (Ottoman Turks). The presentation of these epic events strengthened the dichotomy that was at the heart of the History: "barbarian" versus "Hellene."

[698] P. Rajna, "L'onomastica Italiana e l'Epopea Carolingia," *Romania*, 18 (1889), 1-69.

Moreover, just as the Italian humanists were employing the figure of Charlemagne and the legend of his exploits on the Iberian Peninsula to compel the Western kings and the Holy Roman Emperors to holy war against the "barbarians," Chalkokondyles also styled Charlemagne's war against the "barbarians" as a component of Roman identity and as praxis to be emulated. Two instances of anachronism found in these sections made Charlemagne's wars in Spain more relevant to the fifteenth century and to Chalkokondyles' main topic. The first anachronism was the claim that Granada had been the only stronghold of the "Libyans" since Charlemagne. The second anachronism was that Charlemagne had handed down the war against the "Libyans" to succeeding Spanish Kings. Neither of these claims was true. As late as 1228, with the fall of Cordoba to the coalition of Christian forces led by Alfonso VIII of Castille, the Muslims in Spain organized themselves into the Kingdom of Granada. Similarly, Spanish Kings of the fifteenth century were not genealogically related to Charlemagne, in spite of their professed ideological affinity. By use of such anachronisms, Charlemagne's legendary exploits no longer appeared as antiquarian and dated stories of a bygone era. Just the contrary, they gained immediate relevance in making sense of contemporary events.

Roman Emperors in the Fifteenth Century

Chalkokondyles' presentation of contemporary Roman Emperors, and in particular Sigismund's elevation to the rank of Roman Emperor, provide further clues concerning Roman identity. As we have seen, Chalkokondyles referred to Charlemagne, among other passages, in the context of Sigismund's election by the "Archbishop of the Romans."[699] As such, Chalkokondyles provided a diachronic Roman identity, referring to Charlemagne and to Sigismund. Furthermore, legitimate Roman authority, was to be located in the West both historically and in the fifteenth century. Chalkokondyles' description of contemporary

[699] Darkó, **I,** 68-69.

Romans also contributed to an understanding of Western Roman identity. What, then, are the various authorial decisions and interventions employed by Chalkokondyles to present the fifteenth-century Roman Empire and Roman Emperors? What are the distinguishing components of contemporary Roman identity?

Chalkokondyles used a discursive method similar to that employed by Herodotos and integrated various types of information (political, ethnographic, linguistic, genealogical, and ancient history) into a whole by providing excursuses on relevant topics, which in return enriched the main political narrative thread. Thus, the points in the text when Chalkokondyles provided information on Sigismund and other contemporary Roman Emperors were not arbitrary, but meaningful and illuminating.

The Historian included the digression on Sigismund, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Germans as part of the late fourteenth-century military rivalry between Sigismund and the Ottomans. Thus, Chalkokondyles continued the political narrative in Book II with the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396.[700] In particular, Chalkokondyles reported Sigismund's military response to Ottoman encroachments and to Bayezid's campaigns in the Peloponnese in Book II.

Chalkokondyles wrote that when Bayezid began the campaign into the Peloponnese, Despot Theodore, the "ruler of Sparta," accompanied him, a strategy the Ottomans frequently employed. As Bayezid made inroads into Thessaly, Theodore escaped to the Peloponnese, intending to defend it as best he could. Bayezid, at that time, was not intending to attack the Peloponnese, but upon learning that another army was being collected to campaign against him, he changed his mind. This army, led by "Sigismund, Emperor and Autocrat of the Romans," and comprised of Hungarians, French, and many Germans, had assembled to campaign against the Ottomans. As they were preparing to cross the Istros, the Wallachians,

[700] Darkó, **I**, 64.

"a noble race," went with them, leading the way and advising the army. Chalkokondyles then provided the reader with a brief biography of Sigismund:

> Thus, Sigismund, who was campaigning against Bayezid, initially was ruler of the Germans, spending most of his time around the city of Vienna and ruling over a substantial portion of the land of the Germans. Afterwards, when the Hungarians joined themselves (to the Germans), he was established as Emperor of both the Hungarians and as ruler of the land of the Germans.[701]

In his usual fashion, Chalkokondyles, following this first mention of Sigismund and the crusader army, continued with synopses on the geography, ethnography, and political structures of Germany and Hungary, as well as a brief note on the genealogy of the Hungarians. Chalkokondyles then returned to the main topic at hand, Sigismund, relating that the Hungarians had chosen him as their ruler when Sigismund was the ruler of Vienna, "a city of Germans." According to Chalkokondyles, Sigismund, upon being chosen by the Hungarians as Emperor, sent an embassy to the Archbishop of the Romans, as the latter was a close friend, that the Pope might elect him as "Autocrat of the Romans." The narrative continues with a reference to previous Popes who had elected Roman Emperors from among the French, which we have already analyzed in the context of the Carolingians.[702]

The election and the coronation process, however, were not without strife. Chalkokondyles wrote that the Pope had promised Sigismund the title of Roman Emperor, but the Venetians would not grant passage through their territory as Sigismund would have to travel to Rome for his coronation:

> Sigismund engaged in battle with the Venetians but lost a substantial portion of his army and fled. Having despaired of securing safe passage through Venetian territory, Sigismund then travelled to Rome by way of upper Germany and Liguria. Subsequent to his establishment as Emperor, Sigismund asked the Pope to contribute manpower

[701] Ibid. **I**, 64. Tr. AA. "Σιγισμοῦνδος δὲ οὗτος ὁ ἐπὶ Παιαζήτην στρατευόμενος ἡγεμών τε Γερμανῶν τὴν ἀρχῆν ἐτύγχανεν ὤν, περὶ Βιέννην τὴν πόλιν τὰ πολλὰ διατρίβων, καὶ χώρας τῶν ταύτῃ Γερμανῶν ἄρχων οὐ φαύλης. Παιόνων μετὰ ταῦτα προσαγομένων σφίσιν αὐτὸς βασιλεύς τε ἅμα καθειστήκει Παιόνων καὶ τῆς Γερμανῶν χώρας ἡγεμών." Sigismund's court was not at Vienna and Vienna was the capital of the Habsburg Dukes of Austria.

[702] Darkó, **I**, 68.

> and money to the war with the barbarian. The Pope, in turn, sending embassies to the Emperor of the French, to the Tyrant of Burgundy, secured an army of 8,000 and also the brother of the ruler of Burgundy as general. Sigismund, on the other hand, collected an army of Germans, hiring their services, and also taking the army of the Hungarians, with the Wallachians leading the way, and descended upon Bayezid, following the course of the Istros. Sigismund, also, sent embassies to the rulers of Italians and Iberians, as the Pope had advised, asking for money and manpower. The Pope, in turn, sent sufficient money and men.[703]

This information on Sigismund is particularly striking because the German ruler was crowned "Emperor of the Romans" much later than the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396. The coronation ceremony occurred on 31 May 1433 and was conducted by Pope Eugenius IV in Rome. Modern critics of Chalkokondyles have remarked that chronology is a major shortcoming of the History.[704] However, there is a case to be made that the historian deliberately made use of such authorial in(ter)vention to emphasize his primary interests. Although Chalkokondyles' knowledge of these events was imperfect, that does not mean he was merely copying and pasting information with no purpose. One could contend that Chalkokondyles included a description of the coronation of Sigismund as Roman Emperor in 1433 among the events of the Battle of Nicopolis in 1396 to emphasize the association between the offices of Roman Emperor, the Papacy and war against the barbarians. Comparing and contrasting Chalkokondyles' account of the Battle of Nicopolis with that

[703] Darkó, **I**, 69-70. Tr. AA. "ὡς δὲ ᾔσθετο κωλυόμενος, παρετάξατο ἐς μάχην καὶ συνέβαλε τῷ Ἑνετῶν στρατῷ, καὶ ἀπεγένετο αὐτῷ οὐκ ὀλίγα τοῦ στρατεύματος, τραπομένῳ τε ἐς φυγὴν καὶ μόλις διαφυγόντι τοὺς ἐναντίους. οὗτος μὲν δὴ ἐπεί τε ἀπέγνω τὴν δι' Ἑνετῶν πορείαν, ἀπῄει διὰ τῆς ἄνω Γερμανίας ἐς τὸν Λιγυρίας τύραννον ἀφικόμενος. ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἐς Ῥώμην παρεγένετο, καὶ βασιλεύς τε καθειστήκει, ὑπὸ τοῦ μεγάλου ἀρχιερέως ἐς τοῦτο ἀποδειχθείς. μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐδεῖτό τε τοῦ ἀρχιερέως συμβαλέσθαι ἐς τὴν ἐπὶ τὸν βάρβαρον αὐτῷ ἐκστρατείαν γινομένην, ᾐτεῖτο δὲ αὐτὸν χρήματά τε καὶ ἄνδρας. ὁ δὲ πρός τε τὸν Κελτῶν βασιλέα διαπρεσβευσάμενος καὶ πρὸς τὸν Βουργουνδίας τύραννον διεπράξατο δοθῆναι ἐς ὀκτακισχιλίους, καὶ στρατηγὸν τὸν Βουργουνδίας ἡγεμόνος ἀδελφόν. παρεσκευάσατο μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτός, συλλέξας στράτευμα ἀπὸ Γερμανῶν, ὅσον ἠδύνατο μισθωσάμενος. ὡς ἤδη αὐτῷ τε τὰ εἰς τὸν πόλεμον παρεσκεύαστο, ἐξήλαυνε, λαβὼν τούς τε Παίονας καὶ Δᾶκας τῆς ὁδοῦ ἡγεμόνας, εὐθὺ τοῦ Ἴστρου ἐπὶ Παιαζήτην. διεπρεσβεύσατο δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἰταλῶν καὶ Ἰβήρων ἡγεμόνας, χρηματίζοντος δὲ τοῦτο αὐτῷ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, αἰτούμενος χρήματα καὶ ἄνδρας."

[704] Steven Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453*, (Cambridge, 1965), 128.

offered by the contemporary historian Doukas, we may further delineate Chalkokondyles' understanding of Roman identity.

From Doukas' history we learn that he had been employed as secretary for the Genoese Podesta Giovanni Adorno, son of the Genoese Dodge Giorgo Adorno, in New Phokaia, a Genoese colony on the Aegean Sea that was established with a view to securing control over the maritime routes in the eastern Mediterranean, and also to exploit the alum mines in the region, for which privilege the Genoese were paying tribute to the local Turkish rulers by the fifteenth century. Doukas himself did not stay in Adorno's employment for the rest of his life, but crossed the Aegean to offer his services to another Genoese family, the Gattilusi, who were rulers of the island of Lesbos. Having supplied much information on this region of the Aegean concerning alum production/trade, the political alliances between the Genoese, Byzantines, and Turks, tribute payments, and military expeditions all in the context of the last century of Byzantine rule, Doukas' account ends in dramatic fashion: Doukas, still in the service of the Genoese Gattilusi in 1462, described the naval siege of Lesbos by the Ottoman navy and the attack on the capital city, Mitylene, by the Ottoman grand vizier Mahmud Angelovic. Describing the onslaught, the cannons the Ottomans put to use, and the defenses of the island and the city, Doukas' account was left unfinished and breaks off in mid-sentence:

> Drawing up the cannon opposite the city and discharging stone balls against the section of the city called Melanoudion, he brought it crashing to the earth. He did the same to the ramparts and towers in other sections. The citizens within, therefore, seeing[705]

Doukas most likely did not survive the siege.

For someone who had spent his entire life in the service of the Genoese, it comes as no surprise that Doukas wrote in favor of those advocating ecclesiastical union with the Papacy, such as Bessarion and Isidore, and bitterly criticized the anti-Unionists, especially

[705] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 261.

Scholarios. What is more surprising is that Doukas remained thoroughly conventional and Byzantine, both in terms of his exposition and his vocabulary. Unlike Chalkokondyles and Kritoboulos, who, respectively organized their histories according to the reigns of Ottoman Sultans and to the events of Mehmed II's rule, using Ottoman history as their main narrative thread, Doukas took as his main subject the history of the Byzantines. Staunchly Christian, Doukas began his History with the creation of Adam, fast-forwarded to the fall of Constantinople in 1204, and began a more detailed account with John Kantakouzenos' reign, the civil war of 1341-1347, and Kantakouzenos' alliance with the Ottoman ruler Orhan. Doukas was also similar to earlier Byzantine historians and different from Chalkokondyles in that he provided very limited information on Italy and the Italians. Doukas appeared interested in Western politics only to the extent that they involved the Byzantines and the balance of power in the eastern Mediterranean, an attitude that he shared with the fourteenth-century Byzantine historians Pachymeres, Gregoras, and Kantakouzenos.[706] In fact, Doukas was rather reserved in providing information on Genoa when compared with Chalkokondyles, even though this must have been a topic with which the former historian was thoroughly familiar.

Doukas' exposition on Sigismund, the Holy Roman Empire, the Papacy and the Battle of Nicopolis was more limited in scope than Chalkokondyles' narrative. While Chalkokondyles provided extensive information on the Hungarians and the Germans as a prelude to Nicopolis, Doukas merely recounted the raising of the Crusader army and the events of the battle. Chalkokondyles made sense of the Crusade of Nicopolis (as well as other events) in the greater framework of world history, both diachronically and synchronically, by

[706] Angeliki Laiou, "Italy and Italians in the Political Geography of the Byzantines," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 73-98.

presenting this Crusade in the context of German and Hungarian geography, politics, and culture, while Doukas presented a highly localized account of the same event.

Chalkokondyles compared the Germans to the Skythians with respect to numbers and political organization, concluding that the Germans are the most populous nation (γένος) in the world after the Skythians and that had they been united under one rule, it would have been impossible to defeat them. He continued with mention of the climate of these regions, climactic theories of disease, and the recurrent plagues. He provided other information on military weapons, language, city administration, geography, and religious practice, all of which contribute to our understanding of German, Hungarian, and Roman identities.

Doukas, on the other hand, began the passages on Nicopolis with Bayezid's siege of Constantinople, which was starving the city into submission. Doukas then remarked that Manuel II, having no help on his side, wrote to the Pope, the King of the Franks, and the King of Hungary informing them of the siege, asking for help in these dire circumstances, and declaring that unless help was dispatched the city would soon fall to the enemy. Doukas continued:

> (The rulers of the western nations) armed themselves to oppose the enemies of the Cross. With the coming of spring the king of Flanders, many Englishmen, the nobles of France, and many Italians came to Hungary….With them was Sigismund, the King/κράλ of Hungary, who was called emperor of the Romans.[707]

There was an underlying methodological concern that set Chalkokondyles apart from Doukas, which one may disclose by examining the type of information that each historian provided. Chalkokondyles included this passage and other such ethnographic information as part of the allure of the exotic and attempted to provide a full account.

[707] Doukas, tr. Magoulias, 83-84.

By describing the Germans in detail, their way of life, customs and then writing in the same section,

> This nation (Germans) is ruled in the same way as the Romans, sharing their way of life and customs and all else. And in the religious worship of the Romans, they are the most pious of all the nations of the west…[708]

Chalkokondyles provided various competing definitions of Romanitas, a legal/administrative definition referring to citizens of the Holy Roman Empire as Romans and a religious identification of Roman with the Catholic/Roman Church. In doing so, Chalkokondyles also provided a concrete and multi-faceted Roman identity that was not merely nominal. In contrast, Doukas put the emphasis on the political/military events relevant to Byzantine history and did not in any way problematize Roman identity.

Moreover, Doukas presented Manuel II as the legitimate Roman Emperor (Doukas wrote of Manuel II's elevation to the office of Roman Emperor, "καὶ βασιλέα ἀναγορεύει Ῥωμαίων"[709]) and as the one who initiated the crusade of Nicopolis. On the other hand, the Byzantines, in particular Manuel II, were conspicuously missing from the picture Chalkokondyles offered concerning Nicopolis. Barker, making use of Venetian archival documents, has demonstrated that as early as 1394, the Venetians were urging Manuel II to apply for Western aid against the Ottomans by appealing to the Pope, the (Holy Roman) Emperor and other Western rulers. In the same year, 1394, the protracted eight-year siege of Constantinople by Bayezid I's army had already begun, and Manuel II had concluded a pact with Sigismund against the Ottomans. Barker writes that Manuel II was unable to contribute to the Battle of Nicopolis in person due to the siege of the capital, but the Byzantine

[708] Darkó, **I**, 66. Tr. AA. "πολιτεύεται δὲ κατὰ ταὐτὰ Ῥωμαίοις ἔς τε δίαιταν καὶ ἤθη τετραμμένον, συμφερόμενον τά τε ἄλλα Ῥωμαίοις, καὶ ἐς τὴν θρησκείαν Ῥωμαίων μάλιστα δὴ ἄλλα Ῥωμαίοις, καὶ ἐς τὴν θρησκείαν Ῥωμαίων μάλιστα δὴ τῶν πρὸς ἑσπέραν δεισιδαιμονεῖν."

[709] Doukas tr. Magoulias, 81.

Emperor's contribution to the Crusade was needed because of "his valuable strategic position."[710] The other fifteenth-century historian Sphrantzes also supported Doukas' version of the same events and mentioned that Manuel entered into negotiations with Sigismund concerning the Crusade.

In Doukas' narrative, Sigismund and the other Western military leaders occupied second place after Manuel II in initiating the Crusade, while Chalkokondyles depicted Sigismund and the Pope as the chief planners. Furthermore, according to Chalkokondyles, the battle of Nicopolis against the Ottomans was strictly a European event. In fact, Doukas' brief mention of Sigismund as "the one who is called Roman Emperor" was in stark contrast with what Chalkokondyles had to say concerning Sigismund as legitimate ruler of Vienna, King of the Germans and Hungarians, his conflicts with the Venetians, his relation to the Pope, his elevation to Roman Emperor, the organization of the Crusade of Nicopolis and so forth.

Chalkokondyles provided extensive information on Sigismund, but the Historian was not comprehensive. It is evident that Chalkokondyles had some insight into the intricate electoral mechanisms of the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy in the fifteenth century. The Historian made this manifest by describing the multistage election process for the elevation of the Roman Emperors, from ruler of Vienna, to ruler of the Germans, to ruler of the Hungarians and so forth. Moreover, Chalkokondyles' choice of words—particularly "ἐπιψηφίζω" and "ψῆφος"—also referred to the deliberative and elective aspects of that process by which the Holy Roman Emperors were chosen. Chalkokondyles, however, did not provide any procedural information regarding the election, nor did he mention Sigismund's rivals in his bid for the office of Holy Roman Emperor, namely the two other princes of the House of Luxembourg, Wenzel and Jobst, who were, respectively supported by the rival Avignon Pope Benedict XIII and the Pisan Pope John XXIII (Sigismund himself was

[710] Barker, 123-134.

crowned by Gregory XII).[711] Chalkokondyles also failed to make a distinction between the election of Sigismund in 1410 as King of the Romans and his coronation in 1433, which took place in Rome. Moreover, Chalkokondyles presented the multi-staged history of Sigismund's election as a smooth and rather quick process, when, in reality, it was quite involved, rife with setbacks, and lengthy. In conclusion, the information Chalkokondyles provided on the political and administrative mechanisms of the Holy Roman Empire was meager in comparison to his primary interest, that of Roman warfare with the "barbarians." The difference between Chalkokondyles and Doukas was ultimately one of perspective: While Chalkokondyles was not invested to describe the Crusade from a Byzantine vantage point but rather narrated the events through the lens of his classicizing and universal model, making much use of the opposition between Roman and barbarian, Doukas was much more conventional and Byzantine.

Indeed, in all instances when Chalkokondyles mentioned the coronation of a Roman Emperor by a Pope, the story quickly turned to the struggle against the barbarians. This was also the case when the historian provided a confused account of the coronation of a Holy Roman Emperor named Albert by Pope Nicholas, who may have been Pope Nicholas V.[712] According to Kaldellis, Laonikos mistakenly called the Roman Emperor Friedrich III, "Albert."[713] Kaldellis, also, uses the military conflict between the Roman Emperor and Hunyadi to suggest 1463 as the terminus ante quem for the composition of the *Apodeixis*.[714]

This episode is included in Book VIII, which is the first of the three books dedicated to the events of Mehmed II's reign. As such, Book VIII begins with Mehmed II's

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[711] Archibald Main, *The Emperor Sigismund: the Stanhope Essay*, (Oxford, 1903), 20.

[712] Darkó, **II**, 187-190.

[713] A. Kaldellis, "The Date of Laonikos Chalkokondyles' *Histories*", *Greek, Roman , and Byzantine Studies,* 52.1 (2012): 114.

[714] Ibid.: 118.

preparations for the capture of "Byzantion", a lengthy description of the Ottoman siege, and the eventual capture and pillage of the city in 1453. The narrative continued with the Western reaction to that event and with the attempts to raise an army against the Ottomans. In this episode, Chalkokondyles described how the Hungarians chose as their Emperor the nephew of Sigismund, bringing him over from Germany. Chalkokondyles wrote that as Sigismund's nephew was still a child at the time of Varna (1444) when Ladislav died, the Hungarians sent an embassy to Albert, who was the brother of Sigismund, to be guardian over the child and to bring the child to Italy. However, Albert, the Emperor of Germany, sought the seat of the "Autocrat of the Romans" for himself and was crowned as such by Nicholas in Rome. Upon being elected as "Emperor of the Romans," Albert was greatly honored in Italy, but not by the Hungarians. Indeed, the Hungarians, after much infighting, chose as their ruler one of Hunyadi's sons, who engaged in war with Albert.[715]

It was on account of such internecine warfare that Albert was unsuccessful in his plans to resist the Turks. As we look closely at Chalkokondyles' narrative, we find that war with the Ottoman Turks is the principal thread that connects the various stories concerning the Romans. Immediately following the sentence informing us that Albert was crowned 'Emperor of the Romans,' Chalkokondyles wrote that Albert prepared to campaign against the Turks. Chalkokondyles then inserted some passages regarding the internal politics and strife among the Hungarians before returning to the account concerning Albert, and wrote "as I have mentioned previously, Albert the Autocrat then readied to campaign against the Turks…"[716] However, Albert failed as the Hungarians refused to grant the Emperor provisions and safe passage through their territories. Further, Chalkokondyles described how

[715] Darkó, **II**, 189.

[716] Ibid., "Ὥρμητο δὴ οὖν, ὡς καὶ πρότερόν μοι δεδήλωται, ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ οὗτος Ἄλβερτος ἐπὶ Τούρκους καὶ Μεχμέτην στρατεύεσθαι…"

the embassy of Albert to the Hungarians was ambushed and killed, leading to prolonged warfare between the Germans and the Hungarians.

There are various complications with Chalkokondyles' account of these events. The Historian referred to Albert as the brother of Sigismund (πρὸς Ἀλβέρτον τὸν Σιγισμούνδου τοῦ βασιλέως ἀδελφόν) and to the child-heir brought over by the Hungarians as a nephew (ἀδελφιδοῦν) of Sigismund.[717] Chalkokondyles was most likely referring to Albert VI (1418-1463) who was indeed ruler of Vienna as Chalkokondyles mentioned. Moreover, Albert VI was guardian of another Sigismund, the son of Frederick IV. However, Albert VI was never 'Emperor of the Romans' and Chalkokondyles might have been confusing Albert VI with Albert II (1397-1439). The latter Albert was 'King of the Romans' for one year (1438-1439) before his death, although he was not crowned. Furthermore, Albert II was married to Sigismund's daughter and was son-in-law to the Emperor, not his brother. Albert II was already dead by 1439, long before Varna, the capture of Constantinople, and the unsuccessful siege of Belgrade, all of which preceded Albert's campaigns against the Ottomans in Chalkokondyles' narrative. Despite its tenuous hold on the truth, this exposition on the rivalry between the Hungarians and the Germans and the effects of this rivalry on the greater war with the barbarian Ottomans fits nicely in the larger framework of the History.

The primary responsibility of any Roman Emperor in this narrative is construed as waging war against the barbarians. Chalkokondyles' anachronisms or erroneous slips did not completely miss the mark as the election of the Holy Roman Emperors was, in actuality, aligned with the ability to wage holy war. By way of example, one may mention that in 1452, Aeneas, the future Pope Pius II, had chosen to address Frederick III on his coronation in Rome in 1452 regarding the necessity of calling a crusade against the Ottomans.[718] Aeneas

[717] Darkó, **II**, 187.

[718] Meserve, 96.

was not the only Venetian to champion a crusade against the Ottomans; Bernardo Giustiniani, on diplomatic mission to Rome for the same coronation event, had pledged military and financial aid from Venice in raising a new Crusader army.[719]

"Archbishops of the Romans:" Chalkokondyles' Presentation of the Papacy

Turning our attention once again to that other Roman institution, the Papacy, we find that Chalkokondyles provided a wide range of information on the fifteenth-century Papacy and the Popes, in addition to some historical material. In constructing a political narrative, the Historian mainly focused on the agency of the various Popes in organizing military campaigns against the 'barbarians' and calling for crusades. Thus, Chalkokondyles presented the Papacy as a supra-ethnic/supra-state organization that was instrumental and at times successful in creating some form of European identity. It is significant that the impetus to create such an identity arose out of the military threat the Ottomans, "the barbarians," posed to the civilized world. Beginning with the pontificate of Eugenius IV and the Council of Florence-Ferrara (1438-1439), and continuing with the attempts of Nicholas V (1447-1455) to put together a crusading army in the aftermath of 1453, the success of Calixtus III, whom Chalkokondyles referred to as Eusebios, in organizing and financing a military force that defeated Mehmed II in Belgrade (1456) and ending with the papacy of Pius II and the Council of Mantua (1459), Chalkokondyles presented information on the Papacy throughout the greater narrative of the work. Just as the author integrated the information on the Roman Emperors into the events taking place in the eastern Mediterranean, the presentation of the Papacy was similarly tied to the central theme of the History, the rivalry between the Ottomans and the Hellenes. Furthermore, Chalkokondyles offered a political narrative concerning the Papacy and also presented the reader with popular aspects of fifteenth-century Western religiosity.

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[719] P. H. Labalme, *Bernardo Giustiniani: a Venetian of the Quattrocento*, (Roma, 1969), 138-140.

Chalkokondyles' Presentation of the Fourth Crusade

Chalkokondyles' first, though rather brief, reference to the Papacy was in the context of the Donation of Constantine and was presented in the opening pages of the History. The narrative concerning the role of the papacy in the Fourth Crusade was also included in the same introductory section. In these paragraphs, Chalkokondyles provided a sketch of the background to and events of the Fourth Crusade:

> We have learned that the Romans and their Great Archbishop have been separated from the Hellenes concerning religious worship for not a short while but for many years. Choosing the Emperor of the Romans at first from among the French and later from among the Germans, they appointed (the Roman Emperors) for eternity. At the same time, they were continuously sending embassies to the Hellenes, for there was not a time when they did not, to harmonize and unify their religious practices. The Hellenes, on the other hand, did not wish to come to terms with the Romans and to confound their patriarchal Church, which had been established over time.[720]

Chalkokondyles wrote that it was a consequence of such religious differences that many Western nations and the Venetians, under the leadership of the Pope, sailed to Byzantion and took the city by force. The most eye-catching aspect of this description of the Fourth Crusade was Chalkokondyles' reluctance to blame the Papacy and the Western nations for perpetrating violence against the Hellenes, to which group Chalkokondyles as well as Plethon and the Mistra Circle belonged in the fifteenth century. Moreover, according to Chalkokondyles, the sole reason for this naval expedition was religious difference and the inflexibility of the Hellenes over settling those differences despite numerous Roman embassies to Byzantion. In particular, financial gain and imperial ambitions played no role in these hostilities. By portraying these events in this manner, Chalkokondyles significantly

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[720] Darkó, **I**, 4-5. Tr. AA. "Τοὺς μέντοι Ῥωμαίους ἐπυθόμεθα καὶ αὐτῶν ἀρχιερέα τὸν μέγιστον οὐκ ὀλίγα ἄττα κατὰ τὴν θρησκείαν ἀπὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν Διενεχθέντας διακεκρίσθαι τά τε ἄλλα ἀφ' Ἑλλήνων, καὶ δὴ καὶ βασιλέα Ῥωμαίων ἐπιψηφιζομένους, ὁτὲ μὲν ἀπὸ Γαλατῶν, ὁτὲ δὲ ἀπὸ Γερμανῶν, ἐς τόνδε ἀεὶ τὸν χρόνον ἀποδεικνύναι. διαπρεσβεύεσθαι δὲ αἰεὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε διαλείποντας, ὥστε τὰ ἐς θρησκείαν σφίσι ξύμφωνά τε καὶ ξυνῳδὰ καταστῆσαι ἀλλήλοις, κατὰ ταὐτὸ ξυνιόντας. καὶ μέντοι Ἕλληνας μὴ ἐθελῆσαι Ῥωμαίοις διὰ χρόνου συμφερομένοις τὰ πάτρια σφίσι καθεστῶτα συγχέαι."

departed from Byzantine tradition by adopting and adapting contemporary Western European, and in particular Venetian, views of these events.

Since the advent of the First Crusade, the Byzantines had both feared and uncomfortably accommodated the armies of the West as they passed through Byzantine territory. "Manganeios" Prodromos' poetry written during the Second Crusade and which was publicly delivered in Constantinople to celebrate the departure of the Crusaders from the capital, described the Crusaders as "wild boars, Gadarenes swine, fittingly rolled in mud, wild beasts and insatiable serpents from the West."[721] The Fourth Crusade and the subsequent political disintegration of the Byzantine state proved that such fears were not unfounded, occupied the hearts and minds of the Byzantines for centuries after 1204 and was instrumental in strengthening the earlier Byzantine stereotypes of the Latins as greedy, arrogant, cruel, uncultured, and at times no less than barbarians themselves.[722] In contrasting Chalkokondyles' account with this long and rich tradition, we will first look at the eyewitness account of Niketas Choniates and at the thirteenth century history of George Akropolites.

Niketas Choniates was born in the middle of the twelfth century in the modest town of Chonai, and he rose through the ranks to the highest civil office of *logothetes sekreton* in the capital under the reign of Isaac II Angelos (1185–95, 1203–04.) Choniates was not only present in Constantinople as an eyewitness when the diverted armies of the Fourth Crusade sailed to the Bosphoros instead of the Holy Lands, but he also lived to tell the tale of the bloody massacres and the unbridled looting of all the treasures the city had to offer, including holy relics, Church patents, and crosses, as well as the classical bronze monuments, such as that of Hera, Paris and Aphrodite, which adorned the public squares. Moreover, Choniates,

[721] E. and M. Jeffreys, "The "Wild Beast from the West": Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade," *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* ed. Laiou and Mottahedeh, (Washington D.C., 2001), 109.

[722] A. Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century," *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*.

whose monumental history is the chief Byzantine source for the Fourth Crusade, recognized the historical importance of the event, as the city had never been conquered since its refounding in the fourth century, and appropriately devoted a major portion of his work to 1204. Choniates' History begins with the reign of John Komnenos, and concludes with the aftermath of the looting of Constantinople by the "barbarians," for that is what the historian called the Latin armies,[723] the subsequent political disintegration of the Byzantine Empire, and the establishment of the Latins in former Byzantine territories, as well as with the more hopeful outcome of the founding of the Byzantine splinter state of Nicaea.

For Choniates, the chief reasons for the Fourth Crusade were the unfit, tyrannical, and exorbitant rule of the Byzantine Emperors prior to 1204, the envy of the Westerners for the city's wealth, and the grudge the Venetians held against the Byzantines for the confiscation of Venetian properties by Manuel I in 1171 and for the Byzantine commercial favors extended to Pisa, a rival Italian commune in the eastern Mediterranean trade.[724] The chief instigator of the event, according to Choniates, was the Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo, who was "a creature most treacherous and extremely jealous of the Romans." Choniates wrote that Dandolo convinced Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, Count Baldwin of Flanders, Count Hugh of Saint Pol, Count Louis of Blois, and other leaders of the crusader army, which was being convened at that time to reclaim the Holy Lands, to attack the Byzantine Empire instead. The Byzantine historian did not refer to any religious motivation in describing the Venetian Doge's plans. Instead, Choniates noted that Dandolo included the Crusader leaders in his schemes when he realized that an attack on the Byzantine Empire was an undertaking that surpassed Venice's resources. Unlike Chalkokondyles, Choniates did not believe, and

[723] Choniates refers to the Latins as "barbarians" on multiple occasions, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates: Annals of Niketas Choniates,* tr. H. J. Magoulias (Wayne State University Press, 1984), 358.

[724] Ibid. 294-295.

therefore did not include, that the schism between the Latin and Orthodox Churches had contributed in any significant manner to the Fourth Crusade.[725] Moreover, far from being religiously oriented, the Crusader army in Choniates' narrative was in fact unholy, and "raged openly against Christ and sinned by overturning the Cross with the cross they bore on their backs, not even shuddering to trample on it for the sake of a little gold and silver."[726]

George Akropolites, whose History is the main historical account for thirteenth-century Byzantine events and, in particular, for the Empire of Nicaea, began his narrative with the Fourth Crusade and ended with the reconquest of Constantinople by Michael VIII in 1261. It is not insignificant that Akropolites' narrative began with 1204. In fact, the historian, in his introduction, wrote at length about the different ways in which different historians have begun their works. Akropolites explicitly stated that he chose the Fourth Crusade as his starting point because it was "so notorious and well known to everyone that there is not a single nation that did not learn about it."[727] Thus, 1204 was configured as a new event that was not to be "relegated to the depths of oblivion which time is wont to produce," and one could argue that it therefore appeared as the most decisive event of that era.

Akropolites' account of the Fourth Crusade was brief and less detailed than that of Choniates'. The historian devoted only a few pages to 1204, but then his entire History is more condensed than the other. Despite its limited scope, Akropolites' version of the Fourth Crusade differed from Choniates' on some points. According to Akropolites, Alexios Komnenos, son of the dethroned Isaac II, had escaped to Rome and appealed to the Pope in

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[725] C. Maltezou, "The Greek Version of the Fourth Crusade: From Niketas Choniates to the *History of the Greek Nation*," in *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* ed. Laiou (Paris, 2005) 153: "According to Choniates, the destruction of Byzantium was not the result of the religious differences that separated the two Christian communities, but rather of Latin envy of Byzantine prosperity and the riches of the empire."

[726] Niketas Choniates*, O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, 316.

[727] George Akropolites, *George Akropolites: the History*, tr. R. Macrides, (Oxford, 2007).

order that his father might be avenged. Alexios also had made promises to the papacy in return for aid. Akropolites' reference to the "promises" is tantalizing. Did these promises include what the crusaders would acquire once they captured the notoriously wealthy Constantinople, or did they refer to the subjection of the Orthodox Church to Rome? Akropolites' commentator and translator Macrides wrote that this vague remark referred to both.[728] One may also note that the historian chose to remain vague and did not explicitly count religious differences between the two Churches as a contributing factor.

Akropolites also wrote that the Pope was persuaded by Alexios and decided to send the army to Constantinople, which was being collected from among the Italians, French, Venetians and others to free Jerusalem. While Choniates underscored the role of Venice, and especially Doge Enrico Dandolo, in the diversion of the Crusade to Constantinople, Akropolites presented the Venetians as one among many nations that undertook the Crusade. The prime mover in putting together the Fourth Crusade in Akropolites' account was the Pope, who remained an anonymous figure in Akropolites' History, but whom we know to have been Innocent III.

Chalkokondyles is at odds with Choniates and Akropolites over the underlying factors that gave rise to the Fourth Crusade, namely religious differences, and his account is substantially different from those presented by the primary Latin chroniclers of the same Crusade, Geoffrey of Villehardouin and Robert of Clari. Villehardouin, a knight accompanying the Crusader army, was involved in the enterprise from its inception as he had been on the embassy to Venice to negotiate the building of a navy to help transport the Crusaders. Villehardouin also benefited greatly from the diversion of the Crusader army to Constantinople, as he and his family received substantial fiefs in former Byzantine territory in

[728] Ibid. 109, Macrides wrote: "the 'promises' included the 'expenses' Akrop. Mentions, that is 200,000 marks and provisions, but also the subjection of the empire to the obedience of Rome, and aid for the crusaders in the Holy Land…"

the aftermath of 1204.[729] As such, it does not come as a great surprise that the chronicler portrayed the Fourth Crusade in a much more sympathetic light than the Byzantine historians. There are, however, significant overlaps between his account and those of the thirteenth-century Byzantine authors.

Villehardouin, who had met Dandolo as a member of the Crusader embassy to Venice, emphasized the role the Doge and the Venetians played in the Fourth Crusade. According to the chronicler, it was at Dandolo's suggestion that the Crusade was initially diverted when the number of people convening for the Crusade in Venice in 1202 fell short of that planned at the outset and the Crusaders were unable to raise the necessary funds to pay the Venetians for the ships the Venetians had built for the Crusade. Thus, Villehardouin explained, the Crusaders agreed to help the Venetians capture the city of Zara in return for their outstanding debt. Further, Villehardouin was explicit that the Doge furnished Alexios, the rival to the Byzantine throne, with as many ships and galleys as needed to capture Constantinople after the Crusader army decided to proceed to the Byzantine capital.

Robert of Clari was not a knight, but rather a crusader of modest background who agreed with Villehardouin concerning the manner in which the Crusade was diverted. Robert of Clari, in accordance with Villehardouin and Choniates, implicated the Venetian Doge in the enterprise and pointed to the political claims of Alexios, the claimant to the Byzantine throne, as two of the contributing factors for 1204.

It is obvious that Chalkokondyles did not rely on these eyewitness accounts, neither Byzantine nor Latin, for his brief exposition on the Fourth Crusade. Indeed, Chalkokondyles' emphasis on religious differences as the underlying factor to 1204 was a contemporary, that is to say, fifteenth-century, concern. When Chalkokondyles wrote about the repeated efforts

[729] Geoffrey of Villehardouin received Messinopolis in Thrace in 1205 from Boniface after the battle of Adrinaople in 1205. Geoffrey's nephew became Prince of Morea.

of the papacy to reconcile with the Hellenes before 1204, one is reminded of the various attempts to unify the Churches in the fifteenth century.

It has already been noted that the structure of Chalkokondyles' History relies on diversions, synopses, flashbacks, and fast-forwarding to highlight the historian's thematic interests. Chalkokondyles also chose to insert structural or ethnographic information at crucial points in the political/chronological narrative (the main thread), which follows the story of the clash between the Hellenes and the Ottomans from the fourteenth to the late fifteenth century. We have already seen that the historian referred to the Papacy as early as the introduction, and repeatedly remarked on the activities of various Popes, most significantly the business of electing the Holy Roman Emperors, before Book VI, at which point he provided a synopsis on the Papacy.

Chalkokondyles had numerous opportunities to introduce this structural/ethnographic information on the Papacy before Book VI. Why, then, did Chalkokondyles wait until the middle of his History to elaborate on a topic he included in the opening pages? In fact, the historian included this information at that particular point in the narrative when the Papacy as an institution was most relevant to the outcome of events taking place between the Hellenes and the Barbarian Turks: in the lead up to and in the aftermath of the failed attempt at Union that occurred at the Council of Florence-Ferrara in 1438-1439. Indeed, Chalkokondyles devoted more than one-third of Book VI, which is the second of the three chapters covering the reign of Murad II, to papal history, papal structures in the fifteenth century and to events related to the Papacy.

The Papacy and the Council of Florence-Ferrara in 1438-1439

The Council of Florence-Ferrara was one of those events that Chalkokondyles found worthy of mention in the opening pages of the History. Giving a sneak preview, Chalkokondyles wrote that the Byzantine Emperor John had hoped to raise help in the West

against the Turks at a critical time when the outcome hung in the balance. Taking the Archbishop of Byzantion as well as notable Hellenes with him, John sailed West to take council and to reconcile with the Pope. The Byzantines hoped that if the Hellenes and the Romans could reach an agreement to end their differences in religious practice, then John could garner Western military help against the Turks. Following discussions the Hellenes agreed with the Romans, but upon returning to Byzantion, they renounced the Union, claiming that the Romans were unholy. Thus the Hellenes and Romans remained separated until the end.[730]

Chalkokondyles returned to the same subject in Book VI. Chalkokondyles first described the war between the Byzantines and the Genoese, which foreshadowed the grand failure of the Western powers to salvage the Byzantine Empire. Chalkokondyles wrote that the Genoese and John Palaiologos had come to blows over the *kommerkion*, the customs tax the Byzantines required the Genoese to pay but which the Genoese, both those from Genoa, the metropolis, as well as from the Genoese colony of Galata, refused. In addition to the kommerkion, the Byzantines were at odds with the Genoese concerning the vineyards surrounding Galata. Chalkokondyles wrote that following a military confrontation staged on the very doorsteps of Byzantion, the Byzantine Emperor John concluded a peace agreement with the Genoese.

Immediately following this account of Byzantine-Genoese rivalry and its subsequent resolution with a peace treaty, Chalkokondyles introduced the subject of the Council of Florence-Ferrara.

> John, the Emperor of the Hellenes, then sent an embassy to the Archbishop of the Romans, Eugenius, to convene (a council) and to help remove the difference in religious practice. He tried to test the intention of the westerners to see whether Romans for the most part would agree to make union with the Hellenes. So the embassy arrived upon the Germans. The Germans were in the city of Basel at that

[730] Darkó, **I**, 5-6.

> time, and differed in opinion from Pope Eugenius. The Germans had rejected him (Eugenius), and had established for themselves another pope, Felix, a man esteemed by the Germans. Thus, they (the Germans) had convened a public council (in Basel) and displayed their power. Both (the Germans and Eugenius) manned galleys and each sent them to John, the Emperor of Byzantion, each (the Germans and Eugenius) finding it worthy to prepare for a council and to reconcile their differences…[731]

Chalkokondyles, framing of the events of the Council of Florence-Ferrara (1438-1439) and papal history more generally in this manner attracted attention not only to the aggression of some of the European powers (Genoa) against Byzantium but also the inherent tensions and schism in the European political scene, namely the conciliar movement, the Council of Basel and German opposition to the Venetian Pope Eugenius. Set back by such complications, the prospects for reconciling the two Churches and ultimately presenting a united front against the barbarian Turks appeared shaky and dismal even at the outset.

Chalkokondyles was unwilling to provide a history of the schism between the two Churches. He did not refer to the historical reluctance of the Byzantine side to attend an ecumenical council to resolve the schism until the fifteenth century. He also did not spell out the burning issues that occupied the hearts and minds of the theologians on both sides. In particular, Chalkokondyles did not refer to the following issues, which occupied center stage at the Council in 1438-39: the primacy of Rome among the apostolic sees, the controversy

[731] Darkó, **II**, 62. Tr. AA. "Ἰωάννης μέντοι ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων βασιλεὺς ἐνταῦθα διαπρεσβευόμενος πρὸς τὸν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχιερέα, Εὐγένειον τοὔνομα ἔχοντα, ὥστε ἐς ταὐτὸ συνιέναι καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς θρησκείας διαφορὰν συνεξελεῖν, ἐπειρᾶτο τῆς τῶν ἑσπερίων γνώμης, εἰ περὶ πολλοῦ Ῥωμαῖοι ποιοῖντο ξυμβῆναι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς Γερμανοὺς ἀφίκετο αὐτοῦ ἡ πρεσβεία. ἐτύγχανον δὲ τότε οἱ Γερμανοὶ περὶ Βασιλέαν πόλιν, διενεχθέντες γνώμῃ πρὸς τὸν Εὐγένειον ἀρχιερέα, καὶ ἀποδοκιμάζοντες αὐτὸν καθίστασαν Ἰωάννης μέντοι ὁ τῶν Ἑλλήνων βασιλεὺς ἐνταῦθα διαπρεσβευόμενος πρὸς τὸν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχιερέα, Εὐγένειον τοὔνομα ἔχοντα, ὥστε ἐς ταὐτὸ συνιέναι καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς θρησκείας διαφορὰν συνεξελεῖν, ἐπειρᾶτο τῆς τῶν ἑσπερίων γνώμης, εἰ περὶ πολλοῦ Ῥωμαῖοι ποιοῖντο ξυμβῆναι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς Γερμανοὺς ἀφίκετο αὐτοῦ ἡ πρεσβεία. ἐτύγχανον δὲ τότε οἱ Γερμανοὶ περὶ Βασιλέαν πόλιν, διενεχθέντες γνώμῃ πρὸς τὸν Εὐγένειον ἀρχιερέα, καὶ ἀποδοκιμάζοντες αὐτὸν καθίστασαν…"

over the pronouncement of the filioque in the Nicaean Creed, the existence of purgatory, and the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist.[732]

The omission of the historical context as well as the items that were under debate, i.e., the content of the Schism, appears particularly prominent as the Council of Florence-Ferrara was a defining moment for Byzantine-Western relations. Chalkokondyles used the story of the Council as the main thematic thread running through the earlier portion of Book VI. He thus employed the story of the Council of Florence-Ferrara to provide the reader with information on other topics, similar to Herodotos' narrative strategy.

Chalkokondyles developed numerous topics in connection with the ecumenical Council. Immediately after having embarked on the story of the Council, Chalkokondyles "digressed" to write about the Council of Basel, a description of the city of Ferrara, a scandalous story detailing how the wife of the ruler of Ferrara cheated on her husband with his bastard son, and a description of Florence and Tuscany more generally, focusing in some detail on the political constitutions of the Tuscan cities.

At this point, he chose to return to the main thread, the Council of Florence, and described the elevation of two "Hellenes," Bessarion and Isidore, both of whom were pro-Unionists, to cardinalship by Pope Eugenius. Chalkokondyles then presented us with vitas of these two Byzantine intellectuals, the brevity of which contrasted with the outstanding praise the Historian had to offer. This provided an opportunity for contrast, and Chalkokondyles included corresponding information on the lives of the two leading figures of the anti-Union party, Mark Eugenikos and Scholarios.

Following the elevation of the Cardinals, Chalkokondyles continued the story with the ramifications of the Council and its failure. After the Council, Pope Eugenius returned to

[732] D. J. Geanakoplos, "The Council of Florence (1438-1439) and the Problem of Union between the Byzantine and Latin Churches," *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance, Studies in Ecclesiastical and Cultural History* (Hamden, 1966), 86.

Rome with the help of his compatriots, the Venetians. That detail, the reference to the Venetians, provided an impetus for Chalkokondyles to describe at length the war between the Venetians and Francesco Sforza, who was initially a general for the Venetians, but who would in time become the ruler of Milan and a mighty foe to his earlier patrons. Having acquired the rule of Milan, Chalkokondyles elaborated, Sforza engaged in a lengthy war with the Venetians.

At this juncture, Chalkokondyles related some information on factionalism in Italy, namely, the endemic struggle and occasional warfare between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. Chalkokondyles wrote that while the Ligurian confederacy and the Genoese were for the most part Ghibellines, the lands of the Venetians and Romans favored the Guelphs. Elsewhere in Italy, cities were divided between the two factions.[733] Continuing with the military rivalry between Venice and Sforza after the latter had acquired the rule of Milan, Chalkokondyles detailed the alliances and the battles. Chalkokondyles put the blame on Sforza, whose overarching ambitions, he wrote, turned all of Italy into a war-zone. "However, these happened later, though not much later,"[734] Chalkokondyles wrote backtracking the narrative to tell us about the fate of the Council. The Historian explained that it was because of war in Italy that Eugenius defaulted on his promise to the Byzantines and failed to send military aid:

> Then, as the Hellenes returned home, Eugenius the Archbishop, did not send any aid worthy of mention. Immediately, the Hellenes altered and regretted the very resolution (they had reached) with the Archbishop. He, on the other hand, did not send (aid) for this reason. He was engaged in war in Italy with the Tuscan cities on account of disagreement over land. And Eugenius maintained an army that was expensive and had a general (for the army) who belonged to the same family as Eugenius. This was a man who was notable and he did not stop making war, at one time with the Tuscan cities and thereafter with the ruler of Urbino. The metropolis of the Tuscan cities at that time appeared to side with the ruler of the Ligurian League,

[733] Darkó, **II**, 70-71.

[734] Darkó, **II**, 75.

> Filippo. The Archbishop was a Venetian and belonged to the house of Condulmer. Thus, members of this house were raised to high office and partook in the authority of the Archbishop. Consequently, when the Venetians and the ruler of Milan, Filippo, made war with each other, all of Italy was divided into factions alongside each.[735]

With these comments, Chalkokondyles ended the account of the Council of Florence-Ferrara. Before returning to his main subject, the war between the Hellenes and the Turks, Chalkokondyles gave some additional structural information on Italy and the Papacy. He provided a list of "tyrannical"/princely governments in Italy, information on how Popes are elected, the story of the she-Pope, the apocalyptic vision of Joachim of Fiore, and finally, a list of constitutional governments, namely Venice, Bologna, Turin, Florence, and Genoa, which nicely contrasted with the earlier list of tyrannical governments.

This concluded the section on Italy in Book VI and Chalkokondyles, in his own words, "returns to the earlier account," the attempt of the Hellenes to make peace with Murad II after the Hellenes returned home from the West without having achieved much. In Chalkokondyles' narrative, it was events in Italy, such as the rivalry between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or the warfare between Venice and Sforza or the rise of tyrannical governments, especially in Milan, which had a direct and disastrous effect on the salvation of the Hellenes from the Turkish menace. Having refrained from giving the reader a full account of the religious differences between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches, the author chose to undermine the deep seated and historic animosity that large populations of the Orthodox felt

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[735] Darkó, **II**, 76. Tr. AA. "τότε δὲ ὡς Ἕλληνες ἐπ' οἴκου ἐγένοντο, Εὐγένειος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς οὐδὲν λόγου ἄξιον ἔπεμπε παρὰ τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὸ ἐς ἐπικουρίαν φέρον. αὐτίκα οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐτράποντο, καὶ μετέμελεν αὐτοῖς καταλυσαμένοις πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα. οὐκ ἔπεμπε δὲ δι' αἰτίαν τήνδε. πόλεμός τε γὰρ συνῆπτο αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἐπὶ τοὺς Τυρρηνοὺς ἐπὶ χώρας διαφορᾷ, καὶ στρατόν τε ἔχων καὶ δαπάνην καὶ στρατηγὸν ἐπ' αὐτῷ προσήκοντα ἐς γένος, ἄνδρα ἐλλόγιμον πατριάρχην, πολεμῶν ὁτὲ μὲν τοῖς Τυρρηνοῖς, ὁτὲ δὲ καὶ τῷ Οὐρβίνῳ, τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα ἡγεμόνι οὐκ ἐπαύετο· ἐδόκει τε γὰρ ἡ Τυρρηνῶν μητρόπολις τότε φρονεῖν τὰ τοῦ Λιγύρων ἡγεμόνος Φιλίππου καὶ συμμαχεῖν ἐκείνῳ κατὰ τὸ ἰσχυρόν. δι' ἃ δὴ καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα Οὐενετὸν ὄντα, τοῦ οἴκου Κονδουλμαρίων, ὅν τινα δὴ οἶκον ἀξιοῦντος τοῦ ἀρχιερέως τῆς συγκλήτου ἐποιήσαντο ἀπὸ τοῦδε, καὶ ἔξεστι μετασχεῖν αὐτοῖς. διαπολεμούντων γὰρ ἀλλήλους τῶν τε Οὐενετῶν καὶ τοῦ Μεδιολάνου ἡγεμόνος Φιλίππου, ξύμπασά τε ἡ Ἰταλία διέστη πρὸς ἑκατέρους."

for the Catholic.[736] In Chalkokondyles' account, Sforza's disastrous rise to power and the subsequent failure of Pope Eugenius to deliver on his promise of military aid sealed the fate of the Council. Chalkokondyles did not blame either the Venetians or the Papacy for the less than successful outcome.

Bessarion and Isidore as Roman Cardinals

In describing the efforts of Pope Eugenius to bring about union with the Orthodox Church, Chalkokondyles referred to the election of two Hellenes, Bessarion and Isidore, as Cardinals of the Catholic Church.

> Then, the Archbishop of the Romans elected two of the most famous Hellenes, making them his own. Holding them in the greatest honor, he chose them as Cardinals, as leaders of religious practice. These (belonging to the office of Cardinals) were placed most near him (the Pope) and there were approximately 30 (Cardinals), placed as advisors. He provides them with sufficient income and land, from which he would provide their needs. He supplies each, some of them more and some of them less, with honors and land. He appointed two of the Hellenes, Bessarion from Trebizond, Bishop of Nicaea, and Isidore, Bishop of Sarmatia, as Cardinals, to help him and to unite.[737]

They were elected, continues Chalkokondyles, as "helpers to him (Eugenius) and as fellow-workers in ending the difference with the Hellenes."[738]

The presentation of Bessarion as "Archbishop of Nicaea" and Isidore as "Archbishop of Russia"[739] was particularly prominent. In 1437 Bessarion had, in fact, been elevated to the see of Nicaea, which was one of the most ancient sees in all of Christendom, but only

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[736] T. Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins*, (Urbana, 2000).

[737] Darkó, **II**, 68. Tr. AA. "ἐντεῦθεν ἐπιλεξάμενος ὁ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχιερεὺς ἄνδρε δύο τῶν Ἑλλήνων εὐδοκιμωτάτω ᾠκειώσατό οἱ, ἀνακτώμενος τὰ μάλιστα ἀξίως τε τῆς παρ' ἑαυτῷ τιμῆς τῆςμεγίστης, καρδινάλεις τε ἀπέδειξεν, οἷα τῆς θρησκείας ἡγεμόνε. τούτους γὰρ δὴ ἐς τὴν παρ' ἑαυτῷ ἐγγυτάτω χώραν ἱδρυμένους, ἀμφὶ τοὺς τριάκοντα, ἑταίρους τε αὐτῷ ἐπάγεται καὶ συμβούλους, παρεχόμενός τε πρόσοδον ἱκανὴν καὶ χώραν, ἀφ' ἧς ἂν αὐτοῖς προσίοι χρήματα, τῷ μὲν πλέω τῷ δὲ ἐλάττω, ἀξιῶν ὡς ἔχει τε ἑκάστῳ καὶ χώρας. ἐς τούτους δὴ ἀπολεξάμενος ἄνδρας δύο τῶν Ἑλλήνων, Βησσαρίωνα τὸν ἀπὸ Τραπεζοῦντος, Νικαίας ἀρχιερέα, καὶ Ἰσίδωρον τὸν Σαρματίας ἀρχιερέα, ὑπουργώ τε ἔσχεν αὐτῷ καὶ συνεργὼ ἐς τὴν πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας διάλυσιν τῆς διαφορᾶς."

[738] Ibid.

[739] Ibid.

nominally important at this date as Nicaea had been under Ottoman rule for over a century. Bessarion's appointment to this see on the eve of the Council of Florence-Ferrara was, no doubt, an attempt by the Byzantine Emperor John VIII and Patriarch Joseph II to strengthen the pro-Union party in the Byzantine delegation. Consequently, Bessarion was the unofficial leader of the pro-Unionists in Ferrara and Florence.

Isidore was appointed Metropolitan of Kiev and all of Russia at the same time, in 1437. On the one hand, Chalkokondyles draws attention to the high-ranking positions of Bessarion and Isidore in the Orthodox Church by giving their titles. On the other hand, the Historian makes only discreet references to the strength of the anti-Unionist party, led by Mark Eugenikos and Scholarios, among the Hellenes during the time of the Council of Florence-Ferrara and in its aftermath. Comparing and contrasting Chalkokondyles' portrayal of these four individuals, Bessarion, Isidore, Mark Eugenikos, and Scholarios, one may gain a better understanding of the historian's position with respect to the Union of the Churches and also his understanding of the relations between the Hellenes and the Romans, that is the Catholic West, more generally. Chalkokondyles wrote:

> Knowing his greatness, I will say more about Bessarion. When it came to natural intelligence, even though many Greeks were noted for it, he became by far the first among them, and he seemed to have the most powerful judgment regarding anything that might happen. He was second to none in learning, both Greek and Roman.[740]

Chalkokondyles did not qualify his praise of Bessarion in any manner. He considered Bessarion to be the foremost intellect of their generation, not only in natural intelligence but also in learning. Chalkokondyles presented Bessarion as the leading intellectual among the Hellenes and among the Romans. Thus Chalkokondyles presented Bessarion as a bridge

[740] Darkó, **II**, 68. "περὶ μὲν οὖν Βησσαρίωνος τοσόνδε ἐπιστάμενος μνήμην ποιήσομαι, ὡς ξυνέσει τε τῇ ἀπὸ φύσεως πολλῶν δὴ τῶν ἐς τοῦτο εὐδοκιμούντων Ἑλλήνων μακρῷ ≤πρῶτος≥ γενόμενος, καὶ κρίνειν τε ἐφ' ὅ τι ἂν γένοιτο κράτιστος δοκῶν γενέσθαι, τὰ δὲ ἐς σοφίαν τὴν Ἑλλήνων τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων οὐδενὸς δεύτερος."

spanning the distance between the Hellenes and the Romans to bring about Union with his extraordinary learning.

In the same passage, Chalkokondyles praised Bessarion's administrative skills after he had been elected Cardinal. Pope Nicholas, Chalkokondyles tells us, entrusted Bessarion with the governance of the prosperous city of Bologna.[741] However, similar to other cities in Italy, Bologna was also being torn apart by factionalism, Chalkokondyles writes. He then describes Bessarion as "some divine miracle" to appear in Bologna, which was afflicted by civil war. Chalkokondyles commented that Bologna was a prosperous city, not only in terms of wealth but also in terms of learning by referring to the University of Bologna. The order in which Chalkokondyles presented this information, starting with the appointment of Bessarion as governor of Bologna, civil war in the city at the time, the governorship of Bessarion as some "miracle," and the praise of the city, leads one to think that Bessarion contributed to the "good fortune" of the city.

One also comes away with the impression that Bessarion was not only well-versed in classical learning, but that he was deeply involved in social issues, joining his training with practice. This impression is strengthened in passages later in the History when Chalkokondyles described the Council of Mantua in 1459. This council was convoked by Pope Pius II, summoning the rulers of the Spanish, French, Germans and Hungarians to raise a crusader army against the Ottomans in response to the capture of Constantinople.[742] Bessarion, according to Chalkokondyles, played a role in the Council, arbitrating between the Germans and the Hungarians to resolve their differences so that "the war with the barbarians" might be carried out. Although unsuccessful, Bessarion comes across as a man who successfully puts his learning to use in the political causes in which he believed.

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[741] Ibid.

[742] Darkó, **II**, 190.

Chalkokondyles equally praised Isidore in connection with the Council of Florence-Ferrara. Chalkokondyles called Isidore "notable," and he also called him "a man who loves his country"/"φιλόπατρις." The historian reserved this praise for Isidore alone in the entire History and did not apply it to any other figure, historical or contemporary. Chalkokondyles further qualified his praise of Isidore: "Isidore was, later, captured by the barbarians in Byzantion when he was defending the homeland."[743] This sentence is explicitly eulogizing and departs from Chalkokondyles' usual detached and non-judgmental style. In addition to the term "φιλόπατρις," Chalkokondyles also used the equally potent signifier "homeland"/" πατρίς" to refer to Byzantion. In view of the fact that Chalkokondyles is usually critical of the ruling elite in Byzantion, his use of "homeland"/"πατρίς" stands out. In this passage, Chalkokondyles also referred to the Ottomans as "barbarians," contrasting them with the classically trained Cardinal Isidore.

Chalkokondyles further wrote that Isidore, who was held in high esteem by the Hellenes, was chosen by Eugenius to provide help to the Byzantine Emperor and his Empire in their hour of need during the siege of Constantinople in 1453. Isidore, Chalkokondyles continued, not only cared for the Hellenes and their Empire, but he also had knowledge concerning the Hungarians and the Germans and urged them to campaign against the Turks.[744]

Chalkokondyles provided the reader with the aftermath of Isidore's involvement in 1453 in the later sections devoted to the capture of Byzantion.

> Then, Isidore, the Sabine Cardinal, was captured, and sold to Galata as a war-captive. And embarking on a ship, he escaped to the Peloponnese. If the Emperor had known

[743] Darkó, **II**, 69 "τὸν δὲ Ἰσίδωρον ἐλλόγιμόν τε ὄντα καὶ φιλόπατριν, ἁλόντα τε ὕστερον ἐν Βυζαντίῳ ὑπὸ βαρβάρων."

[744] Ibid.

> that he was the Cardinal Isidore, he would have killed him and (Isidore) would not be free to flee.[745]

Chalkokondyles' praise of Bessarion and Isidore was universal. Both individuals were conversant in Hellenic as well as Roman affairs. As such, Chalkokondyles presented them as ideal candidates for accomplishing the Union of the Churches. Having praised Bessarion and Isidore, Chalkokondyles set up Mark Eugenikos and Scholarios as their counterparts.[746] Mention of Mark Eugenikos and Scholarios is very brief in Chalkokondyles' narrative and immediately follows the passages concerning Bessarion and Isidore. Chalkokondyles, apart from this passing remark, did not mention these leaders of the anti-Union party elsewhere in the History.

Chalkokondyles wrote that upon returning to Byzantion, the Hellenes retracted the agreement with the Romans. Hence, the Pope sent a delegation to Byzantion to convince "the wise men of the Hellenes" to agree, once again, to the Union. Among these "wise men," Chalkokondyles only cited Mark Eugenikos and Scholarios. In introducing "Mark of Ephesos," Chalkokondyles' only remark was that he had refused to sign the decrees of the Council of Florence-Ferrara from the outset and that Mark Eugenikos completely opposed the Latin dogma. In contrast to Bessarion and Isidore, Chalkokondyles did not in any way refer to Mark' stature among late Byzantine intellectuals.

In fact, Mark Eugenikos had been a student of Plethon along with Bessarion, Isidore, and Laonikos himself. On the eve of the Council of Florence-Ferrara, Mark was elevated to

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[745] Darkó, **II**, 163. Tr. AA. "Ἐνταῦθα ἑάλω καὶ Ἰσίδωρος καρδινάλιος Σαβίνων, καὶ ὡς ἤχθη, ἐς Γαλατίαν ἀπεδόθη, καὶ ἐσβὰς ἐς ναῦν ἀπέδρα ἐπὶ τὴν Πελοπόννησον. εἰ μὲν οὖν αὐτὸν ἔγνω βασιλεύς, ὡς εἴη καρδινάλιος Ἰσίδωρος, ἀνεῖλέ τε <ἂν> αὐτὸν καὶ οὐκ ἀνίει διαφυγεῖν·"

[746] Ibid., **II**, 69. "ὁ μέντοι ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ σοφῶν τινὰς ἐπεπόμφει ἐπὶ τὸ Βυζάντιον παρὰ τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἐς διάλεξιν ἀφιξομένους τοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφοῖς, οἳ οὐ προσίεντο τὴν γενομένην σφίσι ξύνοδον κατὰ τὴν Ἰταλίαν, Μάρκῳ τε τῷ Ἐφέσου ἀρχιερεῖ, οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν τιθεμένῳ τῷ τῶν Λατίνων δόγματι τὸ παράπαν, καὶ Σχολαρίῳ τῷ τότε παρ' Ἕλλησι τὰ ἐς σοφίαν εὐδοκιμοῦντι."

the see of Ephesos, another historically prominent and meaningful archbishopric of the Church, but a see that had been under Turkish rule for almost a century and a half. Mark was the official leader and spokesperson for the Byzantines at the Council. Among the entire Byzantine delegation, only Mark and Bessarion had the authority to respond to the Latin party.[747] Tsirpanlis also argued that Mark's opposition to the Union came after the Union talks had begun and he realized that the Union would effectively subject the Orthodox Church to the Papacy. Tsirpanlis argument has merit as Mark had written an encomium to the Pope praising his efforts at Union prior to the Council.[748] Mark Eugenikos died in 1444 and was canonized by the Orthodox Church in 1456. Chalkokondyles, however, did not find any of this information relevant.

In presenting Scholarios, Chalkokondyles was equally taciturn: "Hellenes hold Scholarios in esteem with regard to philosophical/theological wisdom."[749] In contrast to what Chalkokondyles wrote about Bessarion and Isidore, the Historian's endorsement of Scholarios was incomplete. Chalkokondyles did not praise Scholarios' learning in things Hellene and Roman. Scholarios, however, was the most learned in Latin theology among his generation of Byzantine intellectuals. A famous Thomist, Scholarios had translated various works of Thomas Aquinas into Greek.[750] Scholarios and Mark Eugenikos moved in the same circles as Bessarion, Isidore and Laonikos. Scholarios' letters to Cyriac of Ancona, who in turn had praised Laonikos when Chalkokondyles was merely a youth living in Mistra, are still extant.

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[747] C. N. Tsirpanlis, *Mark Eugenicus and the Council of Florence: a historical re-evaluation of his personality* (Thessaloniki, 1974), 45.

[748] Ibid. 49.

[749] Darkó, **II** 69. "καὶ Σχολαρίῳ τῷ τότε παρ' Ἕλλησι τὰ ἐς σοφίαν εὐδοκιμοῦντι.""

[750] C. Livanos, *Greek Tradition and Latin Influence in the Work of George Scholarios: Alone against all of Europe* (Gorgias, 2006).

In conclusion, one should note that possibly the most enduring contribution Scholarios made to history was as the first Patriarch of Constantinople under Ottoman rule. Indeed, Scholarios is credited with having conserved the Orthodox Church under Mehmed II in the first crucial years. I suggest that Chalkokondyles, by denying the anti-Union party, in the figures of Mark Eugenikos and Scholarios, any universal attribute that would contribute to the successful mediation between two worlds (the Latin and the Hellene), implicitly cast his vote for the pro-Union faction in Byzantium and also for the Latin world over the Hellenes.

The Curious Story of the She-Pope and the Question of Laonikos' Audience

In concluding his account of the Roman Church in Book VI, Chalkokondyles presented a short summary of the riveting story of the she-Pope, also called "Pope Joan." It has been suggested that Chalkokondyles had come into possession of this information by way of anti-papal propaganda.[751] In contrast, I suggest that this legend was popular in the fifteenth century not only among papal critics but also more generally.

> Chalkokondyles did not reveal his sources but wrote that upon being elected Pope, they sit on a small couch that has an opening so that his (the Pope's) testicles are hanging down and someone among the patrons touches (the testicles). In this way, it is apparent that this man is male. For they think (δοκοῦσι) that a woman, in the ancient past, had succeeded to the archbishopric of Rome.[752]

Chalkokondyles proceeded to write that among Westerners, including those in Italy and elsewhere in the Western lands, men do not shave their beards with the result that it is impossible to clearly distinguish between the two sexes. Chalkokondyles then continued the

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[751] A. Ducellier, "L'Europe occidentale vue par les historiens Grecs des XIVème siecle" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 22 (1996): 119-159.

[752] Darkó, **II**, 77. Tr. AA. "ἐπειδὰν δὲ τὰς ψήφους ἐπιλέγωνται καὶ ἀποδειχθῇ, ἀρχιερέα ἀναγορεύουσί τε αὐτόν, οἵκοι κατέχοντες, ἐς ὃ ἂν καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς συνδόξῃ ἡ αἵρεσις. καθίζουσι δὲ ἐπὶ σκίμποδος ὀπὴν ἔχοντος, ὥστε καὶ τῶν ὄρχεων αὐτοῦ ἐπικρεμαμένων ἅπτεσθαί τινα τῶν προσταχθέντων, ὥστε καταφανῆ εἶναι ἄνδρα εἶναι τοῦτον. δοκοῦσι γὰρ τὸ παλαιὸν γυναῖκα ἐπὶ τὴν Ῥώμης ἀρχιερατείαν ἀφικέσθαι·"

story about the she-Pope, "that having become pregnant, the she-Pope gave birth as she was arriving at a religious festival and was thus discovered by the Christian flock."[753]

Various elements in this version demonstrate that Chalkokondyles was fully informed about the legend of Pope Joan. It is not without reason that Chalkokondyles began the story by referring to the papal chair. Two late antique chairs made of red marble with an opening in their seats were indeed employed during the papal accession ceremonies from the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries. Various theories exist regarding their original purpose. Some have argued that they were antique birthing seats, while others have suggested that they were Roman bathing chairs.[754] Thus, the use of the chair with the opening in its seat, which was indeed being used in the fifteenth century as part of the ceremonies, comes across as the most veritable element in the story of the she-Pope.

The connection between the chair and a female Pope was also well established by the fifteenth century, at the time of Chalkokondyles' composition. The Swiss Felix Hemmerli, writing c. 1450s, provided the same explanation for the use of the chair. According to this author, the chair had been used to ascertain the sex of the incumbent Pope since the time of Benedict III, who had succeeded the she-Pope in the ninth century and who had introduced the rite.[755]

There is, however, a subtle distinction that sets Chalkokondyles apart from most of the Western tellers of the tale: Chalkokondyles did not present the existence of a she-Pope as fact. By introducing the story with δοκοῦσι/"they think,"[756] the historian casts doubt on the

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[753] Ibid. Tr. AA. "ἔγκυον δὲ γενομένην, ὡς εἰς τὴν θυσίαν ἀφίκετο, γεννῆσαί τε τὸ παιδίον κατὰ τὴν θυσίαν καὶ ὀφθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ. δι' ἃ δὴ ὥστε ἐπιγνῶναι καὶ μὴ πάνυ τι ἐνδοιάζειν, ἅπτονται, καὶ ἁψάμενος ἐπιφωνεῖ "ἄρρην ἡμῖν ἐστιν ὁ δεσπότης."

[754] A. Boureau, *The Myth of Pope Joan*, tr. L. Cochrane (Chicago, 2001), 48-53.

[755] Ibid. 21.

[756] Boureau, who cited Chalkokondyles, translated δοκοῦσι as "they believed."

accuracy of the story. Although in a clear minority, Chalkokondyles was not the only one to question the legend. The future pope Pius II, Aeneas Silvius Bartholomeus, had written concerning Pope Joan that:

> However, in that case there was no error, either of faith or of law, but ignorance of a fact. And the story is not certain. [757]

Chalkokondyles appeared fully informed about the legend of Pope Joan and its reception in the West where it was accepted by most people in the fifteenth century.

Significantly, in recounting this story, Chalkokondyles provided a detail that is not to be found elsewhere. The Historian commented on the appearance of the male populations in the West as the principal reason why the female Pope could succeed to the papal throne in the first place: it was difficult to distinguish between men and women in these strange lands as men shaved off their beards. Was the historian winking at his Greek audience, who, no doubt, grew their beards and clearly did not resemble women? In the final analysis, men who shave their beards and utilize strange chairs to check a newly elected pope's testicles appear just as fantastic as the story of a female pope. These ethnographic details, in the tradition of Herodotos, also reveal that Chalkokondyles' intended audience, or at least his primary audience was not Western and that Roman identity was, in some part, alien and exotic.

Conclusion

Having analyzed various references to Roman identity in Chalkokondyles' history, it is obvious that the Historian incorporated much of the information that was circulating in the West in the fifteenth century. In fact, Chalkokondyles' presentation of "The Donation of Constantine," Charlemagne, the Fourth Crusade, the Battle of Nicopolis, the Council of Florence-Ferrara and so forth heavily relied on Western interpretations of these events and eschewed Byzantine tradition. Moreover, Chalkokondyles departed from Byzantine historiography to the extent that he incorporated extensive ethnographic information, such as

[757] Ibid. 222. tr. Boureau, emphasis added.

the story of the she-Pope, which drew on Western popular traditions. In conclusion, Chalkokondyles' departure from the tradition of Byzantine historiography appears novel when evaluated in that context. However, if one reads Chalkokondyles in tandem with the Mistra intellectuals, such as Plethon or Bessarion, or alongside the Italian humanists, such as Donato Acciaiuoli, one finds that Chalkokondyles' understanding of Roman identity was not as idiosyncratic as it appears at first glance.

CONCLUSION

Sonnet 59

If there be nothing new, but that which is
Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
The second burden of a former child.
O, that record could with a backward look,
Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
Show me your image in some antique book,
Since mind at first in character was done!
That I might see what the old world could say
To this composed wonder of your frame;
Whether we are mended, or whe'er better they,
Or whether revolution be the same.
O, sure I am, the wits of former days
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

Shakespeare

The concepts that guided Laonikos Chalkokondyles and his teacher Plethon were deeply rooted in Greek *paideia*. Conscious of his ancient heritage, Chalkokondyles composed in a genre, "historiography", that was originally formulated as a division of classical Greek literature. His inscription in the fourteenth-century Herodotos manuscript, reveals that Laonikos closely studied the "Father of History" and viewed the events of his own time through the lens of ancient antiquity. The fall of Constantinople was an event comparable to the fall of Troy; Mehmed II was a new Xerxes; the fifteenth-century Byzantines/Romans were Hellenes. Laonikos' contemporaries were similarly self-conscious as they sought to analyze contemporary events with the tool-box of concepts that they inherited from the classical world. And it was not only events that spurred their self-identification with the classical world.

We have seen in the context of Plethon's hymns to the Hellenic gods, Apollo and Artemis, that the Platonist philosopher made use of the classical Greek concepts of unity, diversity, order, harmony, and justice, to set down the law. Laonikos, in turn, employed these concepts to understand Herodotos. Similarly, Laonikos' and Plethon's understanding of freedom, virtue, fate, and chance was influenced by ancient and Byzantine applications. Classical historians as well as their late antique and medieval counterparts, such as Polybios, Prokopios, and Niketas Choniates, had depended on these ideas to analyze human events. Moreover, classical political categories (anarchy, politics, welfare, constitutionalism, democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy, tyranny, citizenship) informed law-giving in the ancient and medieval worlds. When Laonikos set out to represent the barbarian and civilized worlds, which too is an ancient Greek dichotomy, he greatly relied on these categories. Similarly, the ideas of ethnicity, autochthony, and nomadism were sine qua non in arranging information on self and other. Was there, or is there, nothing new under the sun? Did Laonikos and his contemporaries contribute anything original to the thought-world of the fifteenth-century? Or did they merely conserve and transmit ancient knowledge?

What is particularly noteworthy concerning Laonikos' contribution to the Renaissance is his detailed application of Herodotos to the fifteenth century. Laonikos restored Herodotean categories of ethnicity, political rule, language, and geography to make sense of contemporary events and peoples. This was a thorough study of ancient historiography and in this manner Laonikos parted ways with previous Byzantine historians. I refer to Laonikos' method as "revolutionary classicizing", to describe the ways in which he abandoned the ideal of lawful imperium and restored the model of oriental tyranny when he described the nascent Ottoman state. What appears to be emulation of the ancient classics was, indeed, radical revival of political concepts such as city-states as ethnic units, freedom defined as

independence from foreign rule, law-giving as fundamental aspect of Hellenic tradition which did not encompass the Christian period.

Laonikos' adoption of an all-encompassing idea of Hellenic identity to refer to the Greek Orthodox subjects of the Byzantine Empire was similarly a radical departure from medieval tradition. Laonikos' contemporaries invested much energy into redefining the concept of Hellene, restoring some of its ancient meaning. Bessarion and Plethon referred to the Greek Orthodox subjects as "Hellenes", and abandoned the Roman designation. Plethon's archenemy Scholarios, however, retained the pagan connotations and accused Plethon of being a "Hellene". Laonikos, on the other hand, retained both its pagan connotations (he referred to ancient pagan religion as "religion of the Hellenes") as well as its ethnic meaning (Hellenes speak the Greek language, are descendants of the ancient Hellenes, and occupy a historically Greek geography).

Laonikos made extensive use of the structural opposition between barbarian and Greek. Indeed, this opposition is the most essential structure in Laonikos' *Apodeixis*. While previous Byzantine historians, such as Prokopios, Anna Komnena, and Niketas Choniates, had made ample use of this opposition, they did not adopt it as most basic. Laonikos, however, composed the *Apodeixis* as History of the Ottomans in a Herodotean guise, and organized the narrative around the regnal years of the Ottoman rulers. In this manner, he deeply engaged with the idea of the "other", painstakingly describing the various ways in which it is the antinomy of the civilized.

Laonikos, Plethon, Bessarion, and their contemporaries lived at a time of change. This change was not only political but also technological. The discovery of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century changed the rules of the game. Classical and contemporary literature became available as it had never been previously. The relative monopoly of the Catholic Church on the letters was gradually eroded. Humanists, employed by Italian city-

states, further contributed to this process. It was in this context that Laonikos' work first became available. The print editions and translations into Latin and French facilitated the wide dissemination of the *Apodeixis* in Europe. The rhetoric of a civilized Europe, that we find in Laonikos' narrative, appealed to the sensibilities of Machiavelli, who set up the Ottomans as foil to the French.

The ideology and legacy of the Roman Empire also attracted Laonikos' attention and he made use of it to present a rhetoric of universality. However, Laonikos' adoption of Romanitas was revolutionary as he applied it only to the West and relinquished the historical claim of the Byzantines to Roman imperium. The ideology of Roman warfare against the barbarian Ottomans was tied in with the elevation of Roman Emperors by the Papacy. Laonikos oftentimes described holy warfare against the Ottomans in the context of Papal claims to be the political leader of the western world. Indeed, Laonikos had no qualms about relating the Donation of Constantine as an authentic document, that secured the rule of the Catholic Church over the western Empire.

Laonikos has often been studied in the context of proto-national historiography as he had composed a universal history, wherein he had related extensive information on various ethnicities and political units in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. However, such proto-nationalist application does not capture the classicizing interests of the historian. Laonikos referred to his contemporaries as Hellenes, not because he was a nationalist who defined political identity only by recourse to language, geography, and common history. Rather, Laonikos believed that Hellenic identity, both referring to paganism as well as ethnicity, was still relevant and not bankrupt. We have seen Laonikos relate that Hellenism as paganism was a living reality in the fifteenth century, when people in Bohemia and in Asia, worshipped the Hellenic gods, Apollo, Artemis, Hera, and Zeus. Both Laonikos as well as his teacher Plethon believed in the Zoroastrian oracle that Plutarch had related. According to this oracle, a new

age of Hellenism, that is religious belief in the Hellenic Gods, would soon succeed and a Hellenic state, that is a pagan polity, would rule over a substantial territory in agreement with the Stoic notion of revolutions.

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