THE MEMORY OF NICAEAN RULE IN EARLY PALAIOLOGAN TEXTS AS A MEANS OF *KAISERKRITIK* AND PROPAGANDA

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

The Memory of Nicaean Rule in Early Palaiologan Texts

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This thesis analyzes the use of the name and memory of the Nicaean rule as a means of opposition and criticism after the usurpation of the throne by Michael VIII Palaiologos. The thesis claims that following the usurpation of the throne a new critical discourse emerged based on the memory of the Laskarids. The events and reactions after the usurpation that emerged in the name of the deposed dynasty will be examined to support this argument. Among the things that will be analyzed, there are plots and revolts against the ruling dynasty as well as socioreligious reactions like the sanctification of Laskarid figures. Moreover, the new patterns of *kaiserkritik* will be analyzed to have a broader image of the impact of Laskarid memory in the oppositional ideology of the time period. Finally, the Palaiologan reaction to the current situation will be examined by analyzing their reaction and approach to the memory of the Laskarids and how they tried to absorb it. Consequently, the main goal of this thesis is to achieve a complete image of the impact of Nicaean memory as an oppositional tool in the period following its deposition.

ÖZET

Erken Palaiologos Dönemi Metinlerinde bir K*aiserkritik* ve Propaganda Aracı olarak İznik Yönetiminin Hatırası

Bu tezde, VIII. Michael Palaiologos tarafından tahtlarının gasp edilmesinden sonra, İznik yöneticilerinin isimleri ve hatıralarının bir muhalefet ve eleştiri aracı olarak kullanımı incelenmektedir. Bu tez taht gaspını takiben Laskarid hatırasına dayanan yeni bir eleştirel söylemin ortaya çıktığını iddia etmektedir. Taht gaspından sonra devrik hanedanlığın ismi kullanılarak meydana gelen olaylar ve reaksiyonlar incelenerek bu argüman desteklenmektedir. İncelenecek olaylar arasında iktidardaki hanedana yönelik komplo girişimleri ve isyanlar ile Laskarid destekçisi kişilere kutsallık atfedilmesi gibi sosyal ve dini tepkiler yer almaktadır. Buna ek olarak, Laskarid hafızasının dönemin muhalif ideolojisindeki etkisine dair daha geniş bir imaja sahip olmak adına *kaiserkritik*'in bu dönemdeki yeni kalıpları analiz edilecektir. Son olaraksa Palaiologos hanedanı üyelerinin mevcut duruma tepkisini görebilmek adına onların Laskarid hatırasına yaklaşımları ve tepkileriyle beraber onu nasıl özümsemeye çalıştıkları incelenecektir. Sonuç olarak bu tezin temel amacı İznik hafızasının, çöküşünden sonraki dönemde bir muhalefet aracı olarak etkisinin ne şekilde devam ettiğinin bütüncül bir resmini elde etmektir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts to analyze the ways in which the memory of the Nicaean Laskarid dynasty was used as an oppositional tool and means of criticism against the Palaiologan rule during the reigns of the first two Palaiologan emperors, namely Michael VIII Palaiologos (1258-1282) and Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328). The usurpation of the Laskarid throne by Michael VIII Palaiologos and the blinding of John IV Laskaris had caused a great reaction and created a new discourse for the imperial criticism and opposition in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Byzantine Empire. The Laskarid memory and name were used as a subversive tool of criticism and opposition against the Palaiologans from that date on. This thesis aims to answer questions like how the usurpation was received by the Byzantines, what the outcome of the usurpation was for both parties, how this incident created a Palaiologan versus Laskarid discourse, and how this discourse and the Laskarid memory were used to criticize the Palaiologan rulers. In addition to this, the way in which the Nicaean memory was used by the Palaiologans themselves as a means of propaganda will be also examined.

Michael VIII Palaiologos took hold of the throne of the Nicaean State in 1258 when he made himself to be acclaimed as the regent and co-emperor of John IV Laskaris who was 8 years old at that time. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1261, by usurping John's right of rule, he declared himself as the sole ruler of the Byzantine Empire. He left John in Nicaea for imprisonment and had him blinded to make sure that he cannot reclaim the throne; in other words, Michael usurped the

throne. This usurpation of Michael Palaiologos in 1261 paved the way for the emergence of a new discussion concerning the legitimacy of the imperial rulers. His usurpation of the regency from Mouzalon with a coup in 1258 had already created a questioning of the legitimacy of his power, and his blinding of John Laskaris and usurpation of his throne enhanced this questioning. Considered along with his economic, political, and social actions and policies, this question of legitimacy and wrong-doing against the little John IV created an anti-Michael/pro-Laskarid faction. This opposition to him and his descendent survived for a significantly long time, even up until when his dynasty was already well-established. Opposition continued in different forms, some being more aggressive, some being passive and even covered; this opposition to Michael in the name of the Nicaean heir and the Laskarid dynasty had changed its form in time and turned into a political device and a discourse for criticizing the policies of the present rule.

Therefore, this thesis will be shaped around the early Palaiologan politics, and the main issue will be the study of the perception of the Nicaean rule and how the Nicaean rulers and their memory were incorporated and subjected into the politics of the time, both from the anti-Palaiologan perspective as a tool of *kaiserkritik* and subversion, and from the imperial perspective as a tool for the legitimization of their rule. The questions that this thesis attempts to answer are formed around the issue of usurpation and its aftermath. It is significant to explore and analyze the reception and reaction of the Byzantines to this usurpation. By analyzing the political and social reactions to this event, the thesis endeavors to understand the creation of a new discourse for the criticism of the Palaiologan emperors. The use of the name of Laskarids as an oppositional and subversive tool against the Palaiologans; creation of a dichotomy between the two dynasties as the

examples of good and bad government, utilization of this dichotomy as a means of *kaiserkritik;* and the reaction of Palaiologans to the existence of such criticism are among the main problems of the thesis that will help us to appreciate the matter in a more comprehensive way. To achieve this end political, social, and religious reactions to the usurpation will be analyzed along with an examination of the literary subversion in terms of its relationship with the abovementioned discourse.

1.1 Introduction to modern scholarship

It is significant to provide a brief introduction to the modern scholarship on the topics like Nicaean and early Palaiologan history along with the history of Byzantine *kaiserkritik* and literary subversion as that could help us to situate this study within the already existing body of literature.

It is important to recognize that the Latin occupation of Constantinople in 1204 was considered a breaking point for Byzantine history. Nicaean State that was established after this date was among the several small states that replaced the empire, but its significance lies in the recapture of Constantinople by a Nicaean ruler. However, when one examines the existing body of literature on the topic, it is evident that the history of the Nicaean State usually is not incorporated into the studies on late Byzantine history. Its history has been commonly studied as an entity of its own. The major works related to the history of the Nicaean State started to be studied around the early twentieth century. Alice Gardner's study on the history of the State of Nicaea[1] written in 1912 can be counted as the first major work on the field. Gardner provides a detailed account of the political and military history of the time period following 1204. Another contributor to the field is Michael Angold, who

[1] Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea: The story of an empire in exile*.

has a book and several articles on the history of the Nicaean State.[2] In his book written in 1975, Angold's main concern is to examine the "social and administrative structure" of the State of Nicaea. John Langdon's Ph.D. thesis[3] and a book he published afterward[4] can be counted among important sources for the history of Nicaea as well. He is mainly concerned with the reign of John III Vatatzes and provides a complete picture of his reign in his thesis. However, none of these sources go beyond 1261 and discuss the continuation of political and social issues that were transmitted from the Nicaean State into Palaiologan Byzantium.

When it comes to the period after 1261, for the first decades of Palaiologans, Donald M. Nicol[5], Deno J. Geanakoplos[6], and Angeliki Laiou[7] can be counted among the major sources. Nicol provides the political history of late Byzantium starting from 1261, whereas Geanakoplos' work is only based on the reign of Michael VIII and Laiou provides the internal and external dynamics of the reign of Andronikos II. Nevertheless, none of these accounts examine the issues that we had mentioned earlier.

As these sources demonstrate, the impact of Nicaean rule on the following period has acquired little to no attention. There are limited works that exceed the limits of 1261 as a historical separator and deal with the issues that this thesis is concerned about. Dimiter Angelov must be counted as an important contributor to the field. In his book on ideology and politics[8] he examines a time period from 1204

[2] Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1261).*
[3] Langdon, *John III Ducas Vatatzes' Byzantine Imperium in Anatolian Exile, 1222-1254: The Legacy of his Diplomatic, Military and Internal Program for the Restitutio orbis.*
[4] Langdon, *Byzantium's last imperial offensive in Asia Minor: the documentary evidence for and hagiographical lore about John III Ducas Vatatzes' crusade against the Turks, 1222 or 1225 to1231.*
[5] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453.*
[6] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West.*
[7] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins; The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II 1282-1328.*
[8] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330.*

to 1330; he is aware of the continuation of many ideas and themes throughout this period. He relates the perception of imperial ideology and political thought in the given period, he also briefly mentions the impact of Nicaean rule and its model in the early Palaiologan period. He also mentions the value of Pachymeres' *Historia* – which is among the main sources of this thesis— as a work of criticism and the use of the Laskarids as a historical foil. Besides his work, articles by Teresa Shawcross[9] and Ruth Macrides[10] are among the works that deal with the impact of Nicaean rule and the usurpation in the Palaiologan politics and the use of their memory as a tool for opposition. But none of these sources provide a complete picture of the opposition done in the name of Laskarids, nor are they concerned with the use of their memory as a means of *kaiserkritik.* Therefore, this thesis attempts to fill this gap in the literature.

Imperial ideology and politics are among the major topics for Byzantine studies as well; yet, the criticism targeted to these two topics has acquired much less attention in comparison. Studies on Byzantine *kaiserkritik*, subversive literature, and opposition to imperial policy have not collected much attention as a separate category of their own; when these topics are studied, they are generally included in a large-scale work on Byzantine political thought or ideology. Nevertheless, when there are works dedicated to these topics, they mainly deal with the period between the 6th and 12th centuries, from Prokopios to Niketas Choniates.

The most significant modern work that is focused on Byzantine *kaiserkritik* was Franz Tinnefeld's 1971 book titled *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates*. This book alone can be considered as the reason behind the focus on the period between the 6th and

[9] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor: Politics of Resistance after the Palaiologan Usurpation."
[10] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaiologan Period."

12th centuries as being the pioneering study on the field. It is not surprising to see Prokopios gaining much attention as he wrote a book that was entirely dedicated to the critique of the emperor. Thus, his *Secret History* is rightfully the first book that comes to mind while talking about Byzantine *kaiserkritik* and a very effective one. Prokopios's work was also the one that had the most attention from the modern scholars, and it has a great influence on modern scholarship to a degree that scholars tend to pay attention to the authors who followed the tradition of Prokopios.[11]

Nevertheless, Byzantine literature has much more examples in it concerning the criticism of emperors that does not follow the Prokopian way. Writings of Byzantine intellectuals had the aspect of defending and criticizing the imperial power as a "concealed" opinion.[12] In a system that was dominantly coercive, it is not surprising to have the criticism in a concealed form. Byzantine studies historically based on the idea that Byzantines were in agreement with the imperial policies. However, in recent years there is an increase in the studies concerning the critical and "subversive" side of Byzantine intellectuals and their writings. This increase in the field shows the departure from the traditional stereotypical reading of Byzantine sources.[13]

Subversion as a word has the meaning of a secret, underhand activity to overturn an authority; applied to Byzantine literature it can be used as a concept to look for the concealed and implied criticism of the authority that is not done in an open way. Therefore, it differs from the criticism that was applied openly like in the *Secret History* of Prokopios.

[11] Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik:* Two Case Histories," 1.
[12] Kazhdan, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*, 157.
[13] Angelov, "Power and subversion in Byzantium: approaches and frameworks," 1.

Most of the time criticism comes with a reference to an image of the ideal ruler and that image is used to criticize the current ruler based on that image. Such sort of criticism is not directed to the idea of authority or the system itself, but it rather targets the individuals or families and aims to replace them with the ones that suit that image. Doubtless, it is not always about the state being ruled by an ideal ruler, but most of the time it is about the writer's personal problems with the current ruler or their alignment of interest with another possible or past ruler. Angelov describes this kind of criticism as "pointed" and opposes it with the "systematic" one which targets a system as a whole aiming at a transformation. Systematic subversion can also be "pointed" to a certain individual or norm, but its end goal is what differentiates it from the pointed subversion.[14]

The earlier study that was completely composed to understand the critical side of Byzantine writing was the book written by Franz Tinnefeld that we have already mentioned. The study of Tinnefeld was only concerned with the historiographical works, and it is restricted to the time period from the sixth to the twelfth centuries. He studies the historiographical accounts one by one in chronological order and discusses the critical character of each separately. In conclusion, he is more concerned with the reasons and motivations of writers to compose such criticism.

Margaret Alexiou is one of the pioneering figures in the field as well. She studies irony and subversion targeted to authority in literature, she specifically focuses on the twelfth century.[15] Likewise, Paul Magdalino also studies the

[14] Angelov, "Power and Subversion in Byzantium: approaches and frameworks," 7-8.
[15] See Alexiou, "Literary Subversion and the Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: A Stylistic Analysis of Timarion (ch.6-10)"; Alexiou, "Ploys of Performance: Games and Play in the Ptochoprodromic Poems"; Alexiou, "Afterword- Literary subversion in Byzantium: A partial and personal perspective"; Angelov, "Power and Subversion in Byzantium," 1-2.

kaiserkritik in the twelfth-century histories. He is more concerned with the aspects that differentiate the critical attitude of this century than the previous ones. He emphasizes the existence of a republican character in the works of the time period that accompanies a criticism of increased imperial power and authority under the Komnenian regime.[16]

More recent contributors to the field are the names like Averil Cameron, Dimiter Angelov, Teresa Shawcross, Liz James, Antony Eastmond, and Maria Mavroudi. Dimiter Angelov is among the most important names who contributed to the field. Besides his abovementioned book on imperial ideology, he has also written many articles about the topic and he is the editor of a work dedicated to subversion in Byzantium.[17] Liz James and Antony Eastmond have studied the relationship between art and subversion; whereas Teresa Shawcross, Maria Mavroudi, and Ruth Macrides are mostly interested in textual analysis.

1.2 Sources and methodology

The main sources of the current study are the histories written by Pachymeres (1254-1307) and Akropolites (1203-1261) along with other primary sources like hagiographies –like the *vita* written by Georgios of Pelagonia— or *typika* when it is necessary. In Byzantine literature, an emperor, another high ranking individual, a religious or political group, an institution, religion itself, a culture or tradition, and many other various subjects can be the target of criticism,[18] but, in this study, we will be focusing on the criticism that is directed to the emperors or dynasties –which can be defined with the German term *kaiserkritik* whose literal translation means

[16] See Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik."
[17] Angelov and Saxby, *Power and Subversion in Byzantium: Papers from the Forty-third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies.*
[18] Angelov, "Power and Subversion in Byzantium," 8.

imperial criticism. The written criticism can exist in different genres from hagiography to poetry, but historiography takes the main spot by providing a more frequent and varied criticism as its main concern is the emperors and their deeds. This is the reason behind the choice of these two histories as the main sources.

Concerning the methodology, the thesis is mainly based on the textual analysis of different narratives. The named sources are analyzed in the thesis within a framework of concepts, patterns and rhetorical devices that were developed within the already existing literature on *kaiserkritik*. These patterns and rhetorical devices that are used in the thesis to examine the sources in a more analytical way are mainly based on the framework that is used by Tinnefeld in his analysis of histories in terms of *kaiserkritik.* More can be added to this frame of tools and concepts in terms of *kaiserkritik*, historiography, and literary studies in further studies.

In addition to an analysis of texts in terms of their critical and subversive aspects, this thesis will go beyond the limits of textual analysis and also examine the examples of deeds and ideas which are related to the use of Laskarid memory as a subversive tool as in the case of sanctification of political figures or the rebellions in the name of Laskarids. While the textual analysis will provide us the opinions of the upper classes, the latter will provide us some hints concerning the stand of the general public –especially the provincial ones— and their opinion on the subject. These examples will provide us a better portrayal of the political world of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Byzantium. We will be able to understand the importance of Laskarid memory for the political opposition of the time period in a more comprehensive way.

1.3 Chapter plan

The thesis is composed of five chapters. The introductory chapter is followed by a second chapter in which the political and socioreligious reactions to the usurpation and opposition to the Palaiologan rule will be examined. This chapter is more factual in comparison to the following ones; it relates certain events from a period that starts with the Nicaean State and continues up until the end of Andronikos II' reign. The chapter starts with a brief account of the history of the Nicaean State and the usurpation of Michael VIII to provide the context. Then, it continues by relating the acts of opposition done in the name of the Laskarids. The revolts and plots organized for the revenge of the Laskarids, the use of Laskarid memory both by external and internal enemies to overthrow the Palaiologans, and the sanctification of Laskarid and pro-Laskarid figures as a passive reaction and as a part of an anti-Palaiologan ideology will be examined in detail.

Chapter three will be about written criticism directed to the Palaiologans. In this chapter, the main source of the thesis –the *Historia* of Georgios Pachymeres— will be analyzed in detail, in terms of its critical stand against the Palaiologans, especially Michael VIII. The chapter first starts with a general account on the Byzantine patterns of *kaiserkritik* and rhetorical devices that were commonly used in it. Then it continues by discussing the life of Pachymeres along with his possible motives for composing a critique of Palaiologans. In the main body of the chapter, Pachymeres' work will be analyzed in terms of the patterns and techniques that are used for the criticism of Palaiologan rule. Special emphasis will be on the usage of the Laskarid memory as a tool for subversion and criticism. Lastly, this chapter presents a few later references to the name of Laskarids in different written sources; which will demonstrate the continuation of the utilization of Laskarid versus

Palaiologan discourse for the critical and oppositional purposes even years after the reigns of the first two Palaiologan emperors.

Chapter four will analyze the Palaiologan side: it is about the reaction of Palaiologans to the opposition directed to them in the name of Laskarids. The ways in which Palaiologans themselves reacted to this opposition are analyzed based on some writings and including a few examples of events that took place at the time. The chapter endeavors to demonstrate the tools that Palaiologans and their supporters used to support their legitimacy and claim of power, and their response to the criticism directed to them. This chapter starts with an examination of two monastic documents composed by Michael VIII Palaiologos to comprehend the tools he uses to defend his stand and legitimize his usurpation. Then, the history of Akropolites will be analyzed as a work of propaganda written under the sponsorship of Michael VIII Palaiologos, and the ways in which it treats the Laskarid period. Lastly, the reactions of the family members of Michael VIII will be discussed with an emphasis on Andronikos II and the empress Theodora –the wife of Michael VIII; we will examine how they tried to dissociate themselves from the memory of Michael.

The thesis ends with the fifth chapter in which the final remarks on the topic and the conclusion of the thesis will be stated along with suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

PALAIOLOGAN USURPATION AND THE REACTIONS IN THE NAME OF LASKARIDS

The usurpation of the throne by Michael VII Palaiologos from the last member of the Laskarid dynasty was a significant event in the history of thirteenth-century Byzantium. The events and reactions that took place after this can be considered among the most important social, political, and religious incidents of late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Byzantine history. The environment created with the usurpation had caused the name of the Laskarid rulers to become a political foil against the Palaiologans. Even though their reign ended with the usurpation, the name and the memory of the Nicaean rule had continued to live in the minds and the writings of Byzantines for more than a hundred years after the usurpation. The name Laskaris was still in the stage of politics for many more years after their rule ended because it was still relevant for the opposition of current Palaiologan rule of the time. As Shawcross evidently states it "remained on the lips of those who sought to take a stand against the Palaiologi."[19] The opposition revealed itself in different forms varying from a revolt of people in the name of Laskarids to sanctification of pro-Laskarid figures. This chapter will demonstrate the ways in which the reactions against the Palaiologan usurpation take place. By looking at these reactions we will be able to achieve a greater level of understanding of how the usurpation was

[19] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 203. Even though Shawcross' statement is only about the name of John IV Laskaris, it can be generalized for the all members of Laskarid dynasty as this thesis aims to show.

received by the Byzantines, and what was the outcome of the usurpation for the Palaiologans.

2.1 Historical background

To have a better understanding of the opposition against the usurpation of Michael VII Palaiologos and the bases of the support for Laskarid dynasty, a brief history of the Nicaean State and the events that took place later between Michael Palaiologos and John Laskaris must be provided first.

2.1.1 A brief history of the Nicaean State

The fall of the imperial capital Constantinople to the armies of the fourth crusade in 1204 was a major shocking moment for the course of Byzantine history.[20] The loss of Constantinople and the foundation of a Latin state in the City was very significant for the Byzantines as the City was among the pillars of the imperial identity. Following the Latin capture and sack of Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire was fragmented into small states. Byzantines fled to the different parts of the remaining Byzantine lands and established new states –Nicaea, Epiros, and Trebizond—all claiming to be the real inheritors of the Byzantine imperial rule. Among the three, the State od Nicaea was the most successful one and from there the last dynasty of the Byzantine Empire emerged.

When Constantinople was under the attack of the crusaders, the emperor of the time Alexios V Doukas had fled from the city and Constantine Laskaris was chosen as the new emperor at Hagia Sophia by some members of the aristocracy.[21]

[20] For detailed information on the Fourth Crusade and what happened to the Byzantine Empire afterwards please see Laiou, *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences.*
[21] For the discussion on the identity of the person chosen at the time please see Sinogowitz, "Über das Byzantinische Kaisertum Nach dem Vierten Kreuzzuge (1202-1205)," 351.

After his election, he endeavored to organize a final resistance against the crusaders; however, realizing that his efforts were hopeless he decided to flee to Asia Minor with his retinue.[22] There he and his brother established themselves by gaining the control of Bithynian territories. Constantine perishes from the history soon after the fall of the City and his brother Theodore Laskaris –who was the son-in-law of former emperor Alexios III Angelos and had the title of *despot*[23]— took the stage. After gaining control over the local rulers of Asia Minor, he was proclaimed as emperor at Nicaea in 1206; thus, he was the first ruler of the Empire of Nicaea.[24] In 1208, with the hope of strengthening his stand, he called for a synod to be held at Nicaea to elect a new patriarch. The very first deed of the new patriarch Michael Autoreianos was to coronate Theodore. By this way, Theodore Laskaris made sure that the two backbones of Byzantine Empire were rebuilt at Nicaea: "the imperial office and the patriarchate."[25]

During the early years of his reign, after establishing his empire and the patriarchate, Theodore's main objective was to make this state strong and secure. In order to reach this end, he fought in every front with different enemies varying from Latins to Turks and other Greeks. Within the state, his relationship with the population of Nicaea was in god terms: he gained both the refugees from Constantinople and the local population by creating a secure and stable environment for them as well as engaging in construction activities for the safety of the city.[26] At the time of his death in 1222, Nicaea was a center of political and military activities

[22] Sinogowitz, "Über das Byzantinische Kaisertum," 354.
[23] Angold, "Byzantine Nationalism in the Nicaean Empire," 50. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 12.
[24] Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 12-13.
[25] Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 13.
[26] Foss, *A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises*, 63.

and was the center of patriarchate; the newly established state was in a fine stage and open to further progress.[27]

After Theodore's death, his son-in-law John Doukas Vatatzes took the throne of the Nicaean Empire and ruled from 1222 until 1254.[28] His reign can be considered as the most successful period of the Nicaea. In his reign Nicaean state had a strong army and he added new territories to the empire.[29] The state was self-sufficient in terms of production, and with the ongoing trade, economy of the state became more advanced.[30] During his reign Nicaea became a center of education and culture.[31]

John III Vatatzes was the definition of an ideal good ruler for many in terms of his management of both foreign and internal affairs. He attempted to create a peaceful relation with the Eastern and Western neighbors of his state by diplomacy and negotiations. However, he was also ready to wage war for the good of his state when diplomacy is not an option; he was also successful when it comes to military operations.[32]

Regarding the government, he preferred to appoint the men of merit instead of the members of noble families. Also, he changed the administrative center to Nymphaion and Magnesia; which resulted with the outcome of many different centers of the empire becoming equally important and well-cared. Concerning his domestic policy, it can be said that he was genuinely interested in the well-being of his subjects. He endeavored to support the middle and lower classes of the society and create social justice. He tried to provide better conditions for the peasants,

[27] Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea,* 52-115. Foss, *A Byzantine Capital*, 61.
[28] For a detailed information on the reign of John III Vatatzes see Langdon, *John III Ducas Vatatzes' Byzantine Imperium in Anatolian Exile.*
[29] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 21-25.
[30] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 21-25.
[31] Foss, *A Byzantine Capital*, 65.
[32] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 97.

artisans, manufacturers within the realms of his empire.[33] He wanted the empire to be self-sufficient; he supported the local production whereas discouraged the use of luxury items imported. He even issued a law to forbid the importation of luxury goods. Moreover, to support the agriculture, he tried to make every subject of his empire landowners. He prevented big land owners to take control of small lands and he divided the land for small holders.[34] He also had lands and animals to meet the needs of his family and the imperial court; he is also praised for not using public treasury for his and his family's expenditures.

His reign also witnessed an increase in the scholarly activities taking place at Nicaea. John sponsored learning and used his own money to support students. He established libraries in several cities having books of arts and sciences. Additionally, John and his wife Irene engaged in many building activities. They built churches, hospitals, homes for the aged and poor, monasteries and other charities.[35]

Vatatzes was succeeded by his son Theodore II whose reign only continued for four years. He was the first emperor from the Laskarid dynasty who was born in Nicaea; as a result of this, he was more bounded to his motherland. His relations with his subjects was also in good conditions. He mostly continued the successful policies of his father and his strategy of appointing the men of merit to the offices. Theodore was harsher than his father in terms of his treatment of the aristocracy. Both he and his father also downgraded power that was hold by the members of the imperial family. They were praised for their such attitude for "not having a numerous and privileged family" like their predecessors did.[36] However, this anti-aristocratic policies in the long run created an anti-Laskarid sentiment among the long-

[33] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 98.
[34] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 99.
[35] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 101.
[36] Angelov, "Byzantine Ideological Reactions to the Latin Conquest of Constantinople," 303.

established aristocratic families.[37] After his death at an early age in 1258, the throne was inherited to his little son John IV Laskaris.

2.1.2 The usurpation of Michael Palaiologos

Michael Palaiologos' career before his accession to throne was marked by his disloyal behavior against the last three emperors of Nicaea.[38] Before his actual usurpation, Michael was accused of treason several times and swear oaths of loyalty to the Laskarids as a result.[39] First of such incidents happened in 1253, when Michael was a governor in the Thracian towns; and the last one happened before the death of Theodore II.[40] Whether the accusation or the incidents that are reported by the historians were completely true or not, it is clear from all the accounts of the time period that Michael was suspected of treason by the Laskarids.

After the first incidence that had happened in Thracia, even though Michael was given all of his honors back, he did not acquire the governorship of Melnik and Serres back.[41] This can be taken as a proof of the distrust against Michael and the suspect of him creating an alignment with western neighbors. Moreover, he was given a new title as the commander of the Latin mercenaries (grand constable); this can be Vatatzes' attempt to keep Michael close to his court and away from west.[42] After being suspected for many times, Michael finally achieved his goal after the death of Theodore II and usurped the throne from the little John IV Laskaris.

[37] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 204.
[38] Langdon, *John III Ducas Vatatzes' Byzantine Imperium in Anatolian Exile*, 271.
[39] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 206.
[40] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 21-32.
[41] Geanakoplos, Emperor Michael, 26.
[42] Geanakoplos, Emperor Michael, 26.

Before his death in August 1208, Theodore II appointed the *protobestiarios*[43] Mouzalon as the regent and guardian for his son John who was only nine years old at that time.[44] Mouzalon was unpopular among the aristocrats of the empire as he was a man of humble origins. Moreover, the dislike for Mouzalon was the result of anger towards Theodore II himself. Because Theodore II had appointed many men of lower origins to high rank offices and did not consider those from aristocracy for such high honors, he was disliked by many men of aristocratic origins. Mouzalon was his closest friend and officer, as well as he involved in Theodore's harsh policies against the aristocrats. All these combined made Mouzalon a hated figure.[45] In addition to this, he was also disliked by the members of clergy again as a result of Theodore's independent manner against the Church.[46] Pachymeres states that many were in great hostility against the Mouzalon family and that created a highly threatening environment for the guardian of little emperor.[47]

Specifically, Latin troops within the army were among those who hated Mouzalon the most. This was because they believed to be dishonored by Mouzalon as he deprived them from their rights. He also neglected to pay their payments and gifts.[48] Moreover, there seemed to be a plan of Theodore II to dismiss the foreign troops and establish an army only consisting of Greeks; and this might be learned by the foreign troops.[49] As a result of such things, they were ready to kill Mouzalon "if

[43] This was a post for a palace eunuch who was the keeper of emperor's private wardrobe, from the 12th century it became a more prestigious title. For further details see Kazhdan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 1749.
[44] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 205.
[45] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologos and the West*, 34-35.
[46] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*, 35. Geanakoplos, "The Nicene Revolution of 1258 and the Usurpation of Michael VIII Palaeologos," 421.
[47] Pachymeres, *Historia* translated by Nathan J. Cassidy, 17.
[48] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 23.
[49] Geanakoplos, "The Nicene Revolution of 1258," 422.

given only a little encouragement;" and that encouragement came from no one other than Michael Palaiologos himself who was the head of the Latin troop.[50]

On the ninth day of Theodore's death when a memorial service was going to take place, the expected revolt happened. Mouzalon was killed at the spot by a Latin mercenary and many other office holders, fearing for their lives, fled to different places.[51] After the incident, the first step Michael took was to take the child emperor under his guardianship. However, there were many others from different noble families all claiming to have the right to be regent. They decided to have an assembly; many had started to argue about who will be the guardian of the little emperor John. Eventually, they agreed upon Michael Palaiologos, thinking that he was the most suitable one than the others: he was from a noble descent, was a good general and was a relative of the emperor.[52] To match his new duty as the regent, Michael demanded to have a high title that is suitable for his position; accordingly he was agreed to given the title of *megas doux.*[53]

Nonetheless, Michael's plan was to reach higher than this title; with the help of bribes, gifts, and promises he managed to find support among the clergy and nobles. His supporters advocated the idea that the person who is responsible from the state affairs and who will be receiving foreign ambassadors must hold a higher title which gives him more authority.[54] Despite there was some opposition, his supporters managed to convince patriarch Arsenios and Michael Palaiologos raised to the rank of despot.[55]

[50] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 23-24. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*, 37-38.
[51] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 25-28.
[52] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 29-30.
[53] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 30-31.
[54] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 34-36. Geanakoplos, "The Nicene Revolution of 1258," 428.
[55] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 37.

His new rank as despot gave Michael the chance to control affairs more freely, however it was not enough for him to only be a despot. He wanted to become co-emperor along with John Laskaris to have the total control –and consequently to become the sole ruler.[56] His desire for becoming the co-emperor created another ground for discussion among nobles and clergy. Michael was trying to do his best to convince people by making several promises. If he was given the title of co-emperor, he would honor the Church, the priests, scholars, soldiers, and promote higher ranks for many people.[57] Consequently, he seemed to impress and convince many with his promises. Furthermore, his supporters tried to convince others with questions like what if little John dies before reaching to his maturity.[58]

Even though many were already won over by the promises of Michael, the patriarch and the bishops had some concerns. They knew that having two rulers creates an environment of conflict and struggle. However, Michael's supporters were much in number and many bishops agreed on making Michael the co-emperor. Regarding this concern, they bind the two "with dire oaths" and they both made vows to not plot against each other.[59]

There were some who did not forget the words and vows that Michael gave to John III and Theodore II about not engaging in any plot against the dynasty. They claimed due to this vow it was not possible to declare Michael co-emperor; if this was going to happen, he indeed must be excommunicated as the vow required. Nevertheless, the others were not sharing the same idea: the event that was happening was not a plot against the emperor, rather they were forming a partnership that will benefit the little emperor John. Moreover, this new oath was being added to

[56] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 37.
[57] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 43-44.
[58] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 38.
[59] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 44-45.

the previous one, thus it will be a stronger one and made sure there is no possibility of plot.[60]

On the other hand, Michael also had concerns about his future as the co-emperor. Thus, he also demanded the oath to be mutual, and young John to be bounded by the same rules with him. Moreover, the subjects were made to swear to take action for revenge if one of the emperors plots against the other[61] and magnates swore to "defend the victim of a plot."[62] Michael was the first one to swear the oaths to the emperor John as he was still inferior to him; he swore to "counsel him and attempt no deadly plot against him." In this way he was raised to the imperial level and now was the co-emperor.[63]

When it was the time for them to be crowned, Michael took the child and following the patriarch they moved to Nicaea. According to the arrangement, John IV Laskaris must be crowned first, and he must lead the procession whereas Michael and his wife, being crowned after, must follow John in the procession. However, as it can be expected at this point, Michael had his own agenda: for him it was not proper to be preceded by someone who was not even mature yet, thus he must come first. [64] On the day of the coronation, just at the time of the ceremony, Michael made his plan announced and this created an uproar among those present. Some of the supporters of Michael had "threatened to harm the child and put him to death" if the plan was not approved by the clergy.[65]

Discussions among the clergy took place, after a long time they accepted the plan by majority; those who agreed had signed a document stating it. However, there

[60] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 45.
[61] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 45
[62] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 46.
[63] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 46.
[64] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 48.
[65] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 49.

were others who insistently opposed, to convince them the little John was brought and made to state his approval of the situation only if he suffers anything. While this was happening, there were many people threatening him and "the axe-bearing Celtic regiment" was present there to take action if it was ordered. Thus, under the circumstances of such threat others had to accept the plan involuntarily. As a result, Michael and his wife were the only ones crowned at that ceremony and the child was planned to be crowned later.[66] It is important to notice that all this happened in a short span of time; Michael Palaiologos managed to become an emperor in December 1208 within only four months.[67]

When Constantinople was taken back by Michael, he emphasized in his speech that the capture was destined to him; it was in his reign God showed his kindness.[68] There was no mention of John in his speech, but he only emphasized that he was the one who was destined to take the city. In his first entrance to the City, John was absent from the scene again. He took with himself his wife and his son Andronikos, as well as the mother of queen; they accompanied by the senate and the council of elders.[69] After their entrance to the city, Michael wanted to be crowned for a second time in Hagia Sophia; in September 1261 a second coronation took place. John Laskaris' coronation was again neglected and there was no mention of his name.[70]

Conquest of Constantinople was so significant for Michael to legitimize his place as the rightful emperor of the throne and made people forget his past as the usurper. That is the reason why he made himself crowned a second time in the city

[66] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 49-50.
[67] Geanakoplos, "The Nicene Revolution of 1258," 430.
[68] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 76.
[69] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 78.
[70] Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 92. Pachymeres, *Relations historique* ed. A. Failler and trans. by V. Laurent, 232.

and along with his wife and his child Andronikos II. Moreover, it cannot be a coincidence that Michael got rid of John Laskaris completely and claimed his son Andronikos as co-emperor to create his own dynasty after the conquest of the City which he might have believed had given him the right to do so.[71]

The existence of John along with himself was causing Michael insecurity, so, he believed that John should not be reigning with him as having two emperors was a source of disorder. John was not mentioned nor honored during the second coronation of Michael; this was a step in his "gradual obliteration." However, it was not enough for Michael, he did not want to leave any hope for the little one; to secure his rule as the sole emperor he had to get rid of the little John completely. His passion surpassed and lead him to engage in, what Pachymeres calls, a shameful decision: he ordered John to be blinded and sent him away to be locked in a fortress.[72] This incident took place in the Christmas day of 1261 and John was sent into prison to Dakibyza.[73] This was the final step in Michael's usurpation of the throne as he secured his place by totally getting rid of John IV Laskaris.

2.1.3 Afterwards of the usurpation

The usurpation of the throne was the main reason behind the questioning of Michael VIII' legitimacy; however, it was not the only reason behind the opposition that he had to face during his reign. Many other incidents that took place in his reign further enhanced the emergence of oppositions against him. The Arsenite schism, the Union of Lyons and the loss of Asia Minor along with his fiscal policies were among the reasons why Michael had to deal with several oppositional parties and movements.

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[71] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael,* 120-122.
[72] Pachymeres, *Relations historique*, 254-256.
[73] Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 93.

All these things combined with his usurpation, had paved the way for the emergence of an anti-Palaiologan environment in which pro-Laskarid sentiments were able to get a strong hold. Once the name and memory of the Laskarids had become a tool for the opposition against Michael, it then continued to be used for his descendants as well for a long time.

The first of such instances is the emergence of Arsenites. The Patriarch Arsenios, after hearing the incident, immediately summoned the bishops and excommunicated Michael VIII Palaiologos.[74] This was the beginning of a series of events that took place as a reaction to Michael's usurpation of the throne from the Laskarids. From that date on the tension between the patriarch and the emperor did not stopped and in 1265 Michael VIII finally had the chance to depose and exile the patriarch.[75] After this incident a group of clergy and laymen parted from the Church and did not recognize the authority of the newly appointed patriarch.[76] Joseph I, the patriarch who was appointed after the deposition of Arsenios, also excommunicated by Arsenios; thus Arsenites did not accept his authority and those he appointed.[77] Arsenites were mostly supported in Asia Minor which could be related with the existence of Laskarid supporters there. Many of the clergy and the population of Asia Minor had sided with the patriarch against the emperor, and from there emerged the Arsenite faction.[78] Nicol claims that some of the Arsenites were not necessarily concerned with the usurpation and blinding; however, their main concern was the interference of the emperor in the matters of church.[79] However, since this movement emerged as a result of a tension between the patriarch and the emperor after the

[74] Pachymeres, *Relations historique*, 268. Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 44.
[75] Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium, 7.* Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 45.
[76] Nicol, *Church and Society*, 8.
[77] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 34.
[78] Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 46.
[79] Nicol, *Church and Society*, 8.

blinding of John Laskaris, Arsenites were mostly associated with pro-Laskarid figures. They continued to pose a threat to the authorities also in the reign of Andronikos II until 1312 when they were finally placated.[80] After the death of patriarch Athanasios I, Arsenite demanded to be a part of the body of church again. An assembly was organized in St. Sophia and the body of dead Arsenios was seated on the patriarchal throne and dressed in his patriarchal dress; in his hands there was a formula claiming everyone excommunicated by him to be forgiven.[81] That was the end of Arsenite schism, but until that point they had been among the major problems of Palaiologans.

Beside this, the reign of Michael Palaiologos also witnessed the Union of Churches which was among the reasons why there was a strong opposition against him. Late Byzantine history witnessed two attempts for the union of churches; one was the Union of Lyons in 1274 and the other was the Union of Florence in 1439. Michael VIII was good at diplomacy especially in his relations with the West, and he managed to save the empire from another Latin attack. However, to be able to do so, he had to agree on the Union of Churches with the West.[82] The Union of Lyons did not receive much support from the Byzantines; indeed, it was hated to a degree that St. Sophia was ritually cleansed in 1282– just like it happened in 1261— because it served as the seat of a unionist patriarch for years.[83] After the Union, there were oppositions directed to Michael from different layers of society, even from within his own family.[84] Michael VIII severely punished those who opposed the union and he imprisoned many people because of their anti-union stand. This also caused the

[80] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 36.
[81] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 245.
[82] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 11-12.
[83] Nicol, *Church and Society*, 18.
[84] For a detailed account on the opposition and the family members that opposed Michael see Nicol, "The Greeks and the Union of Churches", 3-4. Nicol, *The Last Centuries.*

anger against him and the union to improve. Even though Michael VIII tried his best to make the union accepted, he never achieved this end. After his death, his son Andronikos II canceled the union and released the prisoners who were imprisoned by Michael VIII due to their opposition to the Union. Moreover, Michael VIII did not receive funerary rites that was fitting for the emperor as he was responsible from the union; and the salvation of his soul believed to be impossible.[85]

Another reason of why Michael VIII faced many oppositions was his treatment of the aristocratic class and the population of Asia Minor. Palaiologan period witnessed the increasing power of aristocratic class in social, political and economic relations whereas the power of the central imperial government was in decline.[86] John II Vatatzes and Theodore II Laskaris tried to weaken the power of the aristocratic class.[87] Inevitably, in the long run it created an environment of hostility against them and when Theodore died, the members of aristocratic class were ready to overthrow his friend Mouzalon.[88] They supported the regency of Michael Palaiologos who promised them their statue back. Laiou interprets the success of Michael' usurpation as the success of this aristocrats who helped his way to the throne and to whom he promised many things and created marriage alliances with them.[89] After his succession to the throne Michael granted large pronoia holdings to his supporters.[90] As a result of this, the holdings of small pronoia owners were seized by the large pronoia holders in the late thirteenth century.[91] After the loss of Asia Minor, the local aristocracy also lost their power along with their land; many became

[85] Nicol, *Church and Society*, 18.
[86] A.E. Laiou, "The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaeologan period: a Story of Arrested Development," 131. This group of ruling elites is defined as "the powerful (δυνατοί)"; they were mainly *pronoia* holders which gave them economic power that leads the political power as well.
[87] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology,* 4-5.
[88] Laiou, "The Byzantine Aristocracy," 133.
[89] Laiou, "The Byzantine Aristocracy," 135.
[90] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 4.
[91] Laiou, Byzantine Aristocracy, 141.

paid soldiers in the other territories.[92] Thus, both small land holders and the aristocrats of Asia Minor lost their holdings and became refugees during the Palaiologan times, which could be the reason of their dislike of the Palaiologans.

Asia Minor had a secondary place in Michael's policy in comparison to Constantinople and Western relations.[93] Michael's usurpation was not forgotten by the populace of Asia Minor and he was aware of that. He tried to weaken the area financially by imposing heavy taxes there, which he thought might weaken their power and opposition as well.[94] Concerning the decline of Asia Minor, Michael blamed the ones who were fighting against him meaning the Arsenites and pro-Laskarid parties.[95] Whereas the inhabitants of Asia Minor had a dislike for the central government because they believed the rulers did not do enough to save their region. That created a tension between the Anatolian populace and Palaiologans which had caused the people of Asia Minor to be the main supporters of anti-Palaiologan and pro-Laskarid parties. It was a necessity for the emperors to "stay on the good side of public opinion"[96] as it was among the important features of politics. This can clearly be observed in the situation of Laskarids and Palaiologans where one was highly favored by the populace and other was not liked much especially by the people in the provinces. All of these things combined were the causes of the emergence of the name of Laskarids as a tool for criticism and opposition against the Palaiologans.

[92] Laiou, Byzantine Aristocracy, 142.
[93] Concerning Michael VIII' policies in Asia Minor, Dimitri Korobeinikov suggests a different picture, he claims that Michael VIII' policies were not as bad as it is believed. Please see Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century*.
[94] Laiou, Constantinople and the Latins, 22.
[95] Laiou, Constantinople and the Latins, 23.
[96] Kaldellis, "How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium," 48.

2.2 Political opposition

Michael's usurpation of the throne had caused some revolts and plots against him and his descendants in the name of Laskarids, especially John IV Laskaris who was blinded by Michael. These varies from people's uprisings to pseudo members of Laskarid dynasty claiming the throne. Some events took place soon after the blinding of the John Laskaris whereas some happened years after in the reign of Andronikos II; moreover, sources demonstrate that the legacy of the Laskarids continued to be used in the later decades as means of political criticism against the current rule.

2.2.1 Nicaean revolt

John IV Laskaris' name was used by different parties to support their anti-Palaiologan attempts. The first of such events had happened only one year after the blinding of John at 1262 in a frontier land called Trikokkia near Nicaea.[97] Pachymeres relates this event as follows: the inhabitants of this frontier zone had found a blind boy –according to Pachymeres he was blinded by illness— and a rumor spread among them claiming this blind boy was John. As they believed him to be from the family that they swore oaths of loyalty; they accepted this false John as their master. According to Pachymeres, they wanted to take revenge in the name of him who was victimized by Michael. They proclaimed the child as emperor and acted as his subjects; they were ready to fight in his name.[98]

When Michael heard about this incident, he burst into anger. He was afraid of losing this region in the borders and was aware of the danger that others would follow the rebels so the incident might get even worse. Therefore, Michael had decided to send his army against those people to "wage civil war" as Pachymeres

[97] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 22.
[98] Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, 260.

calls it.[99] Learning about the march of the army against themselves, the farmers took hold of the nearby fortifications and fight against the army bravely. Having the informational advantage over the geography, the rebels caused much damage to the army. The struggle continued for a long time and the army of the empire was not able to win against this small group of lightly armed people who believed in their cause of resisting against the Palaiologan emperor. Seeing that it took long time to defeat those people, they tried to win them over by bribes and promises. Also, they tried to persuade the rebels by explaining that the real John Laskaris was in Dakibyza and if they want to see him, they can. By all these means they managed to persuade some, and others decided to continue their resistance.[100]

They regarded it as a dishonor to hand over the child who took refuge in their land, but they were also aware of that it was not possible for them to defeat all of the enemy. Thus, they decided to make an agreement with the condition of not handing the boy over to the army; a peace seemed to be agreed. After a while the boy fled to Turks and those who defended him until the last minute were punished harshly. The revolt came to an end in this way and the army returned back. [101]

It is important here to see that especially those who were living in the Anatolian borders of the empire were highly attached to the former rule of the Laskarids. Their loyalty to the Laskarid family even made them engage in a war for the defense of little John Laskaris. It is also important to notice that, as Shawcross states, the pretender John was able to find support easily among these people and this was clearly a result of the efforts of Laskarid rulers who did capture the hearts of the subjects on that regions.[102]

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[99] Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, 260.
[100] Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, 260-264.
[101] Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, 266-268.
[102] Shawcross, "In the Name of the True Emperor," 210.

Laskarid emperors realized the importance of the people those live in the frontiers and established good relations with them unlike the Palaiologan rulers whose attitude towards the frontiersmen had criticized by Pachymeres. The eastern neighbor of the Nicaean Empire were the Turks and the Nicaean rulers used the frontiersmen as a defense mechanism against their eastern enemies. They were given certain exemptions and gifts, some were awarded with *pronoia*; also, the emperors showed affection and direct support to those people.[103] However, what Palaiologans did was the opposite: Michael both cancelled their tax exemptions and imposed new taxes on them as well as expected them to join into military services apart from their own service at the frontiers; moreover, Michael also cut the emotional ties between the frontiersmen and himself, he distanced from them.[104] All these things combined had weakened the ties between the dwellers of the frontier towns and the imperial center; the frontiersmen were no longer in good terms with their emperor as they were before. The political attitude of the emperor Michael VIII against these people and his usurpation of the rights of a Laskarid had caused the revolt. Therefore, it is not surprising to see these people revolting against the Palaiologan emperor in the name of a Laskarid ruler whom they felt attached to.

2.2.2. Charles d'Anjou and John Laskaris

The one that had caused the Nicaean revolt was not the only pseudo-John that appeared in the history; about ten years after the previous event another pseudo-John appeared, this time at the opposite side of the empire. Charles I of Anjou, who was the king of Sicily and the protector of Pope, was posing a great threat of a new

[103] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 2-4.
[104] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 5-6.

crusade to restore the Latin Empire at Constantinople.[105] He openly accused Michael of usurping the throne and declared himself as the "champion of those who had been wronged by Michael VIII."[106] He at first declared his support for Baldwin II, the last ruler of the Latin Empire, and provided shelter for him.[107] However, Baldwin II was not his only guest: to strengthen his hand against Michael and to legitimize his intervention more, Charles' party announced that John Laskarid had escaped from prison and he too seek refuge in the court of Charles.[108]

Angevin records contain a letter from this so-called John Laskaris written in 1273 declaring that he managed to escape from "his enemy" and wishes to be accepted to the Charles' court; and there is a response written in the same year declaring that he will be welcomed.[109] Angevin documents also suggest that this person arrived to the court and resided there.[110] In despite of the Angevin documents, Byzantine sources do not mention any escape or involvement of John with Charles. Considering the political atmosphere of the time such escape would cause an important uproar at the Byzantium as well, thus it is safe to expect that the writers would definitely mention it. Moreover, as Geanakoplos points out, Byzantine sources of Pachymeres and Gregoras provide evidence for the opposite situation where John Laskaris was still under custody at Dakibyza. According to these sources, in 1282, after the death of his father, Andronikos II visited John IV Laskaris in prison at Dakibyza to talk to him and ask forgiveness.[111] Thus, Charles claims seems to be a false rumor and the person who arrived at his court must be another pseudo-John.

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[105] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 49-50.
[106] Shawcross, "In the Name of the True Emperor," 212.
[107] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 212.
[108] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 52.
[109] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 212.
[110] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 217. Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 212.
[111] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus,* 217-218. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 99.

In addition to this, Charles also made alliance with others who were also the opponents of Palaiologans and the supporters of the Laskarids. For example, he formed an alliance with the Tsar of Bulgaria who was also an enemy of the Michael VIII Palaiologos because of his wife who was the sister of John IV Laskaris and was hostile against Michael.[112] He also created alliances with Greeks that bear hostility against Palaiologans. For instance, the Duchy of Thessaly was ready to support Charles due to their troubled relations with the Byzantine emperor. Also, a powerful family called Tarchaneiotes, who were the sympathizers of Arsenios and John Laskaris, was influential at Thessaly back in the time.[113] It is evident that the supporters of the Laskarids were ready to create alliances with foreign powers against Palaiologans. Even though Charles d'Anjou's crusade against Constantinople never took place as a result of the Union of Churches in 1274, Michael VIII Palaiologos' great efforts to stop this from happening shows how much he actually considered the chance of losing the city to Charles as a reality.

Moreover, it is significant for us to observe the way in which Charles tried to legitimize his claim and receive more support. His claim of being the champion of John and having the Laskaris in his side clearly shows that he was aware of the internal problems that were going on in the empire back in the time following the usurpation of throne by Michael. From this evidence, one can also reach the conclusion that the support of the Laskarids and the hostility against Michael was strong among the Byzantines to a level that Charles thought he would be able to gain support from within by claiming to have John Laskaris at his court.

[112] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 216.
[113] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 214.

2.2.3 The revolt of Alexios Philanthropenos

It is evident from the sources that the opposition centered around the pro-Laskarid cause did not come to an end with the reign of Michael VIII. His son and successor Andronikos II also faced troubles caused as a result of the deeds and policies of his father, and he seems to be aware of the possible problems that might be awaiting him in the future. After his father's death Andronikos II visited the blinded John IV Laskaris where he was kept in prison. In his visit he ordered to improve John's living conditions, he begged him pardon for the things he had suffered and asked him to recognize Andronikos as emperor.[114] Later Andronikos II even made a public apology concerning the "sin committed by his father" and stated that this wrong deed must be left in the past.[115] These show that Andronikos had thought his acceptance by John Laskaris him as the emperor would ease the political reactions against him; and probably he hoped that by this way the sympathizers of Laskaris and Arsenios would also recognize his legitimacy as emperor. However, his efforts were not enough to stop the opposition happened in the name of Laskarids.

For instance, a general named Alexios Philanthropenos attempted a rebellion in the year 1295 in Asia Minor against Andronikos II. He managed to gather a large body of supporters among the local population who probably supported him to due to their pro-Laskarid and Arsenite sentiments.[116] He was sent to Asia Minor by Andronikos II to be the governor of the region, he proved to be successful in his duty and liked by the people of the region. After being sent to Asia Minor by the emperor,

[114] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 99.
[115] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 216.
[116] Laiou, "The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaeologan period: a Story of Arrested Development," 136.

Philanthropenos gained successes against the Turks there. He was believed to be a brave general and a generous, kind person.[117]

With the support he gained among the populace and the soldiers, he declared his control of the area.[118] This rebellion was actually started by his soldiers and supported by the masses in Asia Minor. The population of the region considered him to be someone through whom they could express their dissatisfaction against the center.[119] It seems like he also received support from the clergy in the region who were probably Arsenites. As they were politically an anti-Palaiologan group, it is not surprising to see their support for a rebellion against the Palaiologan rule. Moreover, Philanthropenos' family was related to the Arsenite leaders in Constantinople.[120] Alexios' aim was not to take control of the imperial throne in Constantinople; he just claimed to be the independent ruler of Asia Minor. However, he showed hesitation in his claims which made his support among the soldiers decline. This, caused his rebellion to be defeated by the central forces.[121] And he was blinded by his own Cretan soldiers.[122] Even though this rebellion was not directly related with the Laskarid cause, it was supported by them; for that reason it must be counted among the examples that are being given in this study. It is significant to see that this rebellion once again demonstrated that the people of the region were still disappointed with the rule of Palaiologans and wanted to free themselves from the Constantinople even after the reign of Michael VIII had ended.

[117] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 81.
[118] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 82.
[119] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 82.
[120] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 83.
[121] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 83-84.
[122] Laiou, "Some Observations on Alexios Philanthropenos", 90.

2.2.4 The revolt of John Drimys

The first incidence that took place in Andronikos II's reign as a direct reaction in the name of Laskarids was the revolt of John Drimys who according to patriarch Athanasios was a member of the clergy.[123] In the spring or autumn of 1305, he started his revolt by claiming that he was a descendant of the Laskarid dynasty and thus, was the legitimate heir of the throne.[124] Athanasios claims that it is not known who he actually was; but, no one ever heard of a Laskarid born.[125] He said to have come from the west[126], yet the exact place of his departure is not known. Wherever he was coming from, he arrived at the capital; thus, this time the uprising was happening at the center of the empire in Constantinople. He arrived at Constantinople with a group of people who were obedient to him[127] and his revolt gained a huge support also in the capital both from the people and the elite. This was the last armed uprising made in the name of Laskarids and had gained support from all the anti-Palaiologan parties.[128]

Among the elites that helped the revolt were military officers Fernando d'Aunes and Theodore Doukas Mouzakios,[129] as well as scholar Manuel Moschopoulos and the prison governor Glyks.[130] The evidence concerning the involvement of Moschopoulos and Glyks comes from letters. Concerning Glyks

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[123] Athanasius, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople edited and translated by Alice-Mary Talbot*, 203-205.
[124] Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, 652. Athanasius, *The Correspondence 205;*Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 197. Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 216.
[125] Athanasius, *The Correspondence*, 205.
[126] Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, 652.
[127] Athanasius, *The Correspondence*, 203-205.
[128] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 216.
[129] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 216. There is also another opinion concerning these two names: Failler based on Pachymeres' account claims that the revolt of these two military officers was independent from the Drimys' one. He bases his argument on the use of the words "ένθεν μεν…έκείθεν δε" while describing the two incidences; and Failler claims Pachymeres differentiates the two parties revolting around the same time. For further information see Albert Failler, Le complot antidynastique de Jean Drimys.
[130] Sevcenko, "The Imprisonment of Manuel Moschopoulos in the Year 1305 or 1306".

there is a letter of patriarch Athanasios I in which he asks Andronikos II to forgive the conspirator Glyks. Because Glyks was trusted to him by John Laskaris when he was alive, the emperor must act accordingly he says.[131] Once again, we see the involvement of another person who was once close to John Laskaris in a plot against the Palaiologan rule. Regarding Moschopoulos, evidence comes from his own letters which he wrote from prison. He admits his involvement in some political actions, but he claims to be trapped and rejects that he was involved in any criminal acts.[132] What all these demonstrates is that Drimys' revolt had gained support from a wide group of elites ranging from the military ranks to scholars.

In regard to the support that he got from the masses there were two main reasons: the involvement of Arsenites and refugees from Asia Minor. Among the supporters of the revolt of Drimys there were also Arsenites as they were mainly a pro-Laskarid and anti-Palaiologan group. [133] It seems like they were the most important supporters of Drimys; even the headquarter of the revolt seems to be an Arsenite monastery.[134] Rebels were excommunicated by the patriarch Athanasios I who was an important anti-Arsenite figure, and after the incident Arsenite leaders were transferred out of the city;[135] these are important signs that supports the claim of the involvement of Arsenites in this rebellion. Another reason of why John Drimys had gained a mass support from the populace was the loss of Asia Minor to the Turks and massive migration this loss caused. During the reign of Andronikos II most of the Asia Minor was lost to Turks and the population of those regions moved to the western parts of the empire, some to Constantinople. These refugees, accusing

[131] Sevcenko, "Notes on Stephen the Novgorodian Pilgrim to Constantinople in the XIV Century," 174.
[132] Sevcenko, "The Imprisonment of Manuel Moschopoulos," 147-148.
[133] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 197.
[134] Sevcenko, "The Imprisonment of Manuel Moschopoulos," 149.
[135] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 197-198.

Andronikos for their loss and remembering the good Laskarid past, gave their support to Drimys who claimed to be a Laskaris.[136]

In the end, what this event shows to us once again is that Drimys, just like those before him, was aware of the pro-Laskarid feelings that still continued to be used as a shield against the Palaiologans and what he did was to take advantage of this political situation. It is worth noting that, among his supporters there were people who would know it very well that he was not related to Laskarids in any way; however, they chose to side with him. This can be interpreted as a significant sign of the anti-Palaiologan atmosphere which might be the result of a disappointment caused by Palaiologan administration. This disappointment displayed in the form of a support to a revolt that was reminded the Laskarid past to the masses. Therefore, even though the actual aim of the revolt was not related to Laskarids or it was no longer possible to restore the Laskarids to the throne, when it came to the opposition to current Palaiologan rule the name of the Laskarids used as a subversive tool.

2.3 Emergence of political saints in the early Palaiologan period

In addition to all the social and political reactions targeted to Palaiologan rule in the name of Laskarids, another form of reaction that has its root in the religious realm also emerged: which was the sanctification of Laskarid or pro-Laskarid figures. Holy man and saints played an important role in the Byzantine society throughout its existence. Emergence of new contemporary saints and holy men was not something peculiar to the to the Palaiologan period; rather, it can be observed commonly in the previous periods. However, the peculiarity of the first decades of the Palaiologan rule was that it witnessed the emergence of some new saints which were related to the

[136] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 217.

current political strifes of the empire. These new saints were not necessarily related to religious realm or recognized for their ascetic life; instead they were the faces of anti-Palaiologan opposition.[137]

Macrides, by judging from the remaining textual evidence from the time period, observes that saints did not hold an important place in the Nicaean society.[138] However, the later periods witnessed an increase in the hagiographical works. What replaced the holy man in the thirteenth-century Nicaea was the environment created by the Laskarids. However, with the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos, saints reappeared in the scene and this time they were the representatives of the "right order" of Nicaea like the patriarch Arsenios, and emperors John III Vatatzes and John IV Laskaris. There were emperors before that remembered as saints like Constantine the Great, Theodosios the First, Justinian and others; but they were all related to the spreading of Christianity, defense of Orthodoxy and fight against the heresies.[139] The difference between these emperors and the Laskarids was that the later were not canonized as a result of their involvement in the religious affairs. Thus, we observe the emergence and veneration of political anti-Palaiologan saints throughout the Palaiologan times, especially during the reigns of the first rulers from the Palaiologan dynasty.

2.3.1 John III Vatatzes the Almsgiver

The Nicaean Empire had reached to its peak during the reign of John III Vatatzes; thanks to his virtuous rule people were devoted to him. After his death, his affection in the memories of his subjects had continued to live as a saint.[140] Among the ones

[137] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 68.
[138] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 67-68.
[139] Demetrios J. Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 93.
[140] Heisenberg, "Kaiser Johannes Batatzes der Barmherzige," 160.

we will discuss his memory seems to be the longest one in terms of its history of veneration. His memory started to be commemorated within ten years following his death in the churches of Magnesia.[141] John's memory continued to be celebrated in his burial place at Magnesia for centuries and his memory is still alive as his name is on the calendar of the Orthodox Greek Church and his date of commemoration is the 4th of November.[142]

As we mentioned above his reign was very prosperous and John himself was a very generous man. Philanthropy and almsgiving were among the virtues that was expected from an emperor to have. John Vatatzes was definitely satisfying the expectations as being a philanthropist emperor both with his public and private benefactions.[143] He was praised for building churches, monasteries, orphanages, hospitals, and old-age homes or refurbishing already existing ones.[144] This led him to be remembered with the title 'almsgiver' which was given to him during his lifetime.[145] Pachymeres too mentions Vatatzes' generosity by stating that he "was the father of the Romans"[146] and he did everything due to "his love of God and his love for the Romans"[147]. He also praises John III Vatatzes for not spending the imperial treasury but his own money coming from his own land and animals for his philanthropic activities. As Pachymeres relates when he was ill, he gave lots of alms to the poor and asked patriarch to be the witness of his alms being given from his own money.[148] In addition to this, his social reforms was another factor in his good reputation as they contributed to the welfare of the lower classes. John Vatatzes was

[141] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 93.
[142] Heisenberg, "Kaiser Johannes Vatatzes," 192.
[143] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 95.
[144] Cassidy, 164-165. Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 69.
[145] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 69.
[146] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 31.
[147] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 32.
[148] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 32.

highly interested in creating a better standard for the middle and lower classes of his subjects; he wanted to establish social justice and improve the conditions of lower classes.[149]

Even though John Vatatzes was such a good emperor, this was not the only reason for his veneration as a saint. It can be the reason for the creation of his cult, however, the continuation of his memory as a saint was highly related to the politics of the times following his death.[150] The first miracle that is attached to his memory reveals this fact. During the Palaiologan times, the lands of former Nicaean Empire in Asia Minor were in decline. When Lydia was under attack from the Turks in 1302, the emperor then, Andronikos II son of Michael VIII, failed and abandoned the land and left it to the hands of the enemy. It was that time the watchmen saw a man with a torch at the walls who was dressed as an emperor and he said that the garrison was under his control. People believed this vision was John Vatatzes and God assured his protection for them.[151]

As Macrides observes well this demonstrates that the people were disappointed with their current emperor and they thought John III to return for their defense who defended them before.[152] The circumstances were such that the subjects of the Palaiologan regime considered John Vatatzes as their protector. Moreover, when the region was taken by Turks, John's relics were not left behind there but moved to Magnesia. Thus, it is evident that the memory of the 'good old days' under the Laskarid rule in the Asia Minor continued to live in people's minds and the old rulers were respected and venerated in such a political context.

[149] Constantelos, "Emperor John Vatatzes' Social Concern," 97.
[150] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 69.
[151] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.
[152] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.

In the fourteenth century as well, John's relics were still in Magnesia and considered to be a source of healing; his relics were respected as a source of miracle which can be clearly observed in a hagiographical source written for him by Georgios of Pelagonia.[153] The healing power of his relics is also mentioned in three hymns and a *life* that are written in the later centuries.[154] He "had received the grace of healing" and his grave believed to heal the sick who had visited it.[155] Another issue that is emphasized is his involvement in the Christianization of many barbarians. This issue of mass conversion of Cumans is mentioned in the funeral oration for Vatatzes that was written by Akropolites.[156] John Vatatzes' image as a saint has most of the elements that one would expect a saint to have: miracles in his name, a *vita,* and a celebration day for his name in the calendar of patriarchate.

2.3.2 John IV Laskaris

In addition to the role John Laskaris had played in the social and political opposition against the Palaiologans, his memory continued to play a subversive role as a saint. Like his grandfather Vatatzes, John Laskaris was also sanctified; however, since he had never become a real emperor, there is not an idea of a good ruler created around his memory as in the case of John Vatatzes. Nevertheless, he was the last representative of the Laskarid dynasty whose rights were usurped by Palaiologans, this made him an important figure for the oppositional party. There is not any hagiographical or biographical work written about him nor he has a day of commemoration like Vatatzes, but there are some miracle tales developed around his shrine. For instance, his name was in the lists that were written by fifteenth-century

[153] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.
[154] Polemis, "Remains of an Acoluthia for the Emperor John Ducas Batatzes," 546.
[155] Polemis, "Remains of an Acoluthia," 546.
[156] Polemis, Acoluthia, 546-547.

churchmen Agallianos and Syropoulos describing the men and women whose relics have miraculous powers.[157] Also a sixteenth-century manuscript mentions John Laskaris and the location of his relics by stating that his relics showed healing miracles.[158] The assignment of miracles to John's relics demonstrates that they were receiving devotion from the people; thus, he was considered among the saints.[159]

Laskaris' remains were first buried in Asia Minor after his death, but then at the time of Andronikos II, his body was transferred to Constantinople and buried in the Monastery of St. Demetrios. This monastery was originally a Palaiologan foundation and was restored by Michael VIII Palaiologos.[160] Shawcross discusses that Michael Palaiologos might have designed the monastery of St. Demetrios to be his burial place and the tomb John Laskaris's body is placed was actually designed for Michael.[161] This fact can be interpreted as a public apology for the wrong-doings that John suffered. Since it was important for Michael's son Andronikos II to restore the image of the Palaiologans, the placement of John's remains in the place of his father might be interpreted as Andronikos' attempt to fix his family's reputation.[162]

Turning back to John Laskaris's shrine, the memory of John and his relics must be well established among the Byzantines that he even made it to the list of foreign travelers who mentions his shrine and relic. For example, the account of mid-fourteenth century Russian traveler -Stephen of Novgorod- mentions his burial place. He writes about his shrine as follows:

> "From there (Contoscalion Harbor) we went to St. Demetrios where the body of the holy Emperor Laskariasaf (for such was his name) reposes. Sinners

[157] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 219-220. Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 72.
[158] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 220. Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 73.
[159] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 73.
[160] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 72.
[161] Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 220.
[162] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 72.

> though we be, we kissed his body. This is an imperial monastery, and it stands by the sea."[163]

Then, he continues to his narrative by describing the place the monastery was situated and according to Majeska it must be near today's Yenikapı region.[164] The excerpt gives a sense that the Russian traveler was not aware of the identity of John Laskaris, this can be understood from his wrong spelling of the name. However, Sevcenko claims the word 'Laskariasaf' might mean Laskaris Joseph; that, he believes, can be the name John took after he took the monastic habit.[165] In either case, it is obvious that Stephen of Novgorod is talking about the shrine of John IV Laskaris. One can suggest that John was only important for Stephen because he might be informed about him to be a holy man, but he did not know the exact conditions that made him an important figure. However, even it might not mean much to him, his visit to the shrine can be a sign that the memory of John was well established among Greeks and his shrine was counted among the places one must visit with a religious intention. Because, as Majeska suggests that the Russian travelers might have a guide or guide book while traveling the city and the relics,[166] and if the shrine of John was mentioned in the guidebook or Stephen was told by some people to visit the shrine, then we might claim that the shrine had significance for Greeks and they considered it to be among the important shrines of the city that can be visited by a tourist. Even there was no guidebook or a guide, again he must be directed by someone to the monastery of St. Demetrios, so there were people in the city that considered the shrine among the important body of relics/shrines. Hence, the passage shows us that even though the

[163] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* 38.
[164] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, 267.
[165] Sevcenko, "Notes on Stephen the Novgorodian Pilgrim," 173. Teresa Shawcross, "In the Name of True Emperor," 219.
[166] Majeska, "Russian Pilgrims in Constantinople," 104-108.

Russian traveler was not aware of the political value of John, the people of the city were aware of it. This shrine, however, is not mentioned by the later Russian travelers who came to the city in late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries; so it can be argued that, in time, when the Palaiologan dynasty was well established and the Nicaean days were in the far past, the shrine lost its importance.

When we look at Pseudo-Kodinos' account about the offices and ceremonies, we see that the monastery of St. Demetrios is mentioned in there but there is no reference to any relic situated within it. The text only says "For the commemoration of the great Demetrios he (emperor) goes to the venerable monastery of the Palaiologoi which is honored with his name."[167] The Palaiologan roots of the monastery is mentioned without giving any details and without mentioning the relics in there, only important component of the monastery in this passage seems like its name. Emperor goes there to commemorate St. Demetrios because the monastery carries his name. This text is, just like the account of Stephen of Novgorod, dated to mid-fourteenth century, so the relics of John Laskaris were in there at the time and his memory was still relevant as it is mentioned in the traveler's account. Even though his name is not mentioned in the ceremony, we can see that Palaiologan emperors were visiting annually the place where John lies, and one can expect the memory of him being alive for the members of the Palaiologan dynasty as well.

2.3.3 Patriarch Arsenios

Finally, the last example of the new saints that we will mention is patriarch Arsenios. Arsenios was highly associated with the Laskarids and he was a supporter of John against Michael VIII. In a hymn written for him, Arsenios is praised as the one that

[167] Macrides, Munitz. And Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*, 195.

exposed the "injustice and the unjust deeds of the emperor."[168] This is the reason that he can be considered among the political saints that are related to anti-Palaiologan trend. His deposition by Michael created a tension and paved the way for Arsenite schism. His canonization had taken place after the death of Michael, just like the other previously mentioned saints. His relics were transferred from the island of Prokonnesos to Constantinople, to Hagia Sophia in 1284, in the reign of Andronikos II just like John Laskaris.[169]

His body was first placed in Hagia Sophia and then for a short time it was translated to another monastery, but in the end turned back to Hagia Sophia. And he was situated in the bema which is a central and important point within the church.[170] Thus, this shows the importance given to his memory. His name was among the ones that commemorated back in the time; however, he is not on the church calendar today unlike John Vatatzes.[171] There is biographical work written for him which also has an anti-Palaiologan notion, and his relics were also associated with healing miracles. [172]

His relics were also mentioned in traveler accounts. Starting again with the account of Stephen of Novgorod, he mentions the relics of Arsenios while he relates his visit to Hagia Sophia and when he was in the east of the naos: "From there we went to St. Arsenius the Patriarch. We kissed his body and a monk anointed us with his oil."[173] Another Russian traveler Ignatius of Smolensk who visited the city in the last decade of the fourteenth century mentions Arsenios' relic very briefly by saying "we kissed … then the body of St. Arsenius the Patriarch…"[174] An anonymous Russian

[168] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 74.
[169] Talbot, "The Relics of New Saints: Deposition, Translation, and Veneration in Middle and Late Byzantium," 221.
[170] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 75.
[171] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 75.
[172] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 75-76.
[173] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople,* 30.
[174] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople*, 92.

account that also dated to late fourteenth century mentions him as "The body of St. Arsenius the Patriarch reposes on the left-hand side of the altar; healing comes to the sick from it."[175] Another late fourteenth century Russian traveler named Alexander the clerk also mentions him very briefly "The relics of holy Patriarch Arsenius are in the sanctuary."[176] And the last Russian account dated to early fifteenth century written by Zosima the deacon says "I also kissed … the relics of St. Arsenius the Patriarch."[177]

Another account written by a Spanish traveler named Clavijo who came to Constantinople in the fifteenth century also mentions the relics in St. Sophia, and in one sentence he says "… in the church we were shown a sacred relic, namely the body of a certain patriarch that was most perfectly preserved, with the bones and flesh thereon."[178] Majeska claims that if we judge this sentence within the order he relates the relics inside the church, its location proofs here he talks about the relics of Arsenios.[179]

This is not a surprise that all these traveler accounts mention the relic of Arsenios as he was placed in St. Sophia that was the first accommodation of all the travelers. The information provided by them makes it possible to situate the relics within the church almost correctly. His relic was in the northern side of the sanctuary, thus in the north-east side of the church.[180] Beside this, they also show that his relics believed to be a source of healing, even one of the travelers had been anointed by the oil that is probably taken from the lamp above or near the tomb which shows his relics and related items to his relics were considered to have healing power.

[175] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople*, 132.
[176] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople*, 160.
[177] Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople*, 182.
[178] de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, 41.
[179] Majeska, "St. Sophia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: The Russian Travelers on the Relics," 84.
[180] Majeska, "St. Sophia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, 83-84.

In none of the accounts we see a personal observation or any information concerning the Arsenios, his life, or the political debates surrounds his memory. This can be considered as no surprise because Russian traveler accounts generally do not give such kind of information, but they only present a list of the places and relics that they visited. However, one of them -Ignatius of Smolensk- relates the political struggles between John V and John VII in his work as he witnessed them. One might expect such information in his work, but it does not exist. Clavijo who gives information about the city and politics in his narrative also does not mention any information about Arsenios, he does not even seem like he knows what his name was or who he was. Thus, we might again suggest that the foreign visitors of the city were not informed about the identity of Arsenios, but they mentioned his name only because he was situated in Hagia Sophia where everyone visits, and he was a venerated figure by the Byzantines; however, his memory and relics were important for the Byzantines that his relics were situated in a central position within the church of St. Sophia. Hence, just like in the case of John Laskaris, what made his relics to be mentioned in the accounts of the foreigners is the significance attributed to him by Byzantines; his political identity -not surprisingly- did not mean much for the foreigners, but they mentioned both Arsenios and John Laskaris as they were respected figures for the Byzantines and their relics were incorporated into the body of well-known and visited ones.

In the end, the examination of the examples of these three new saints makes it possible to claim their sainthood was related to political tensions of the time, mainly to the wrongdoings of Michael VII mentioned before – his usurpation of throne, blinding of John Laskaris and the union of churches-. And this was not only about the actions of Michael as a person, but it was also about the changing economic and social

situation of the time. As it is said earlier, the period of the Nicaean state was an economically stable and prosperous one in which the populace was more pleased with the administration; however, with the reconquest of Constantinople this had changed, and thus the rule of Palaiologans became connected with the loss of well-being for them.

Looking from the perspective of Andronikos II, all these matters were related to his efforts for dissociate himself and his family from the memory of his father. When he took the power as sole emperor, his first act was to renounce the union of churches and declare the restoration of Orthodoxy.[181] He set free all the people they were imprisoned by his father[182] and as it is mentioned above, he translated the relics of John Laskaris and the patriarch Arsenios to return their prestige -the reason that the same thing did not apply for the relics of John Vatatzes might be related with the fact that Vatatzes was not a direct victim of his father's problematic actions but he was just related with the old good order of the Nicaean State. Andronikos was also aware of the dangers the memory of Laskarids in general and of his father's usurpation was causing him; thus, by showing his respect to Laskarid related figures, he also wanted to eliminate the danger of future revolts and plots.

2.4 Conclusion

The usurpation of the Nicaean throne by Michael Palaiologos had caused some social and political reactions against him and his successors. Some were direct responses to the usurpation itself like the revolt of the frontiersmen or the sanctification of John Laskaris. However, others were the result of opposition against the Palaiologan rule in

[181] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium,* 94.
[182] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 95.

general context. There emerged a dichotomy that positioned the Laskarids and Palaiologans in opposite ends as the examples of good and bad government. The name and the memory of the Laskarid dynasty and their government of the Nicaean state became a critical subversive tool against the policies of the current rulers of late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The sympathy towards the Laskarids and the positive image of the previous dynasty in people's mind was so apparent that both the foreign and internal enemies of Palaiologans used their name as a device to achieve their goals as we saw in the examples of Charles d'Anjou and Drimys revolt. Nevertheless, the reactions were not always in the form of revolts, plots or political criticism, there was also socio-religious reflections of the opposition like the Arsenite schism in the church and social support they got. Another socio-religious response was the sanctification of the Laskarid or pro-Laskarid figures as it is discussed. Therefore, all the above reactions in different forms that we had had a look at against the Palaiologans and the usurpation of Michael VIII were the instances of the use of Laskarid memory as a means for opposition and critique.

CHAPTER 3

KAISERKRITIK IN THE WORK OF GEORGIOS PACHYMERES AND THE LASKARID FOIL

Opposition and criticism directed towards an emperor can be observed both in politics and social reactions of his time, as well as in written sources. This also applies to the opposition that Michael VIII Palaiologos and his family faced after the usurpation of throne from the Laskarids. The written criticism can exist in different genres from hagiography to poetry; but historiography takes the main spot by providing a more frequent and varied criticism as its main concern is the emperors and their deeds.[183] Concerning the first decades of the Palaiologan rule, Pachymeres' *Historia*[184] is the most detailed historiographical account of the time period, and it provides a great amount of critical statements about the Palaiologan administration. Among the texts that survived from the early Palaiologan period, Pachymeres' history has an important place for the cause of this thesis as it covers the related period and has an openly opposing tone against the Palaiologans, especially against Michael VIII. Thus, this chapter of the thesis will be about the history of Pachymeres in particular, as he can be considered as the main source that shows the opposition to Palaiologans in a clear way. Later narrative sources –including the *vita* written by Georgios of Pelagonia— that had a similar stand to that of Pachymeres in terms of their use of the Nicaean past as a tool for criticism against the Palaiologans will also be briefly mentioned in the chapter.

[183] Tinnefeld. *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der Byzantinischen Historiographie*, 11-12.
[184] The original title of the work is *Συγγραφικοί Ἱστορίαι*, it is translated as *Relations Historique* into French by Failler, and there is a partial translation exists in English by Nathan Cassidy in which he refers to the work as *Historia.* For purposes of precision we will be sticking to the title used in the English version throughout this thesis.

An analysis of Pachymeres' account along with other sources can give us some hints about the ways in which the memory of the former rule can be used as a subversive tool in literature. In the following pages, after discussing the history of *kaiserkritik* and subversive literature in Byzantium; the general frame of the patterns used in Byzantine *kaiserkritik* will be drawn. Then, after providing information about Pachymeres himself, his work and his understanding of history, this thesis will examine the *Historia* in detail. Emphasis will be on the first six books as those are the ones that are dealing with the reign of Michael VIII and Pachymeres is more vocal in those parts concerning his opposition. The remaining seven book also will be included when it is related for the certain themes; however, the same kind of use of Nicaean memory was not a relevant tool for Pachymeres for the reign of Andronikos II. This is mostly related with Andronikos' take on the policies of his father; of which most of the controversial ones Andronikos did reversed. Therefore, the emphasis will be put on the reign of Michael VIII and the first six books.

Since the main concern of this chapter is not to provide factual information about the political situation of the period but to analyze the way that Pachymeres reacts to that situation, chronological order of the book may not be saved, and irrelevant sections will be excluded from the narrative. A close reading of his work supported by further readings will enable us to observe the main issues that Pachymeres was concerned, main themes of his criticism directed towards Michael, and how Laskarid were a major tool and base for this criticism. We will try to discuss and situate his oppositional stand within the patterns of Byzantine *kaiserkritik.* Moreover, we will have the chance to observe Pachymeres' understanding of *kaiseridee*, his thoughts on the role of the state and the public, and

how his political thought was similar to or different from the previous historians all of which also affected the way he composes his criticism of the Palaiologan emperor.

After the examination of patterns and tools of *kaiserkritik* in the history of Pachymeres we will briefly examine other references to the Nicaean past as a means of criticism in the works of Georgios of Pelagonia and others. Since these later accounts were not written during the early Palaiologan period, they are not included in the main body of the chapter, but they are included to show that such a discourse of Laskarids as the representation of ideal emperors and a comparison between the two dynasties was not something peculiar to Pachymeres and inspired others too.

3.1 Byzantine *kaiserkritik*

3.1.1 Motivations and concerns of Byzantine critics

Looking at the general characters of Byzantine *kaiserkritik*, the tendency and concerns of the author for Tinnefeld plays a central role in the imperial criticism.[185] According to Tinnefeld the tendency of the author is determined by his own individual attitude or by the society around him; individual attitudes also shaped by social forces.[186] Almost all of the historians have high ranks or high social standing, they criticize because they feel that their position and property is threatened by the emperor or their class consciousness is what makes them to criticize. This kind of concerns are generally related with the changes of the dynasties which creates an environment of insecurity and change on positions of power and property relations including all classes.[187]

[185] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 182.
[186] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 184.
[187] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 184-185.

For instance, Prokopios writes in the name of the senatorial and landholding class that established under Anastasios and economically ruined in the reign of Justinian. Theophanes speaks for the middle class that was promoted by empress Eirene, but its existence threatened by Nikephoros. Skylitzes expresses the dissatisfaction of civil and ecclesiastical circles in the capital who felt ignored by Constantine VII. Psellos from an upper class develops a class consciousness and criticizes Michael V as he was from the lower class and let the common people to rise in offices and dignity. Atteliates criticizes Michael VII because his policy of centralization of the treasury had threatened the prosperity of provincial landowners which he was a member of. Zonaras writes in the name of civil aristocracy whose influence in threatened by the military aristocracy during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos. Choniates demonstrates the class consciousness of the aristocratic class as he criticizes the attitude of the emperors towards the nobles especially in terms of rise in office and economic matters. [188]

The change of the rule or dynasties also brings the opposite; sometime the predecessor of the current emperor gets criticized either because the change brought the historians a personal advantage or the historian is writing an official propaganda for the current emperor.[189] The history written by Akropolites can be considered as an example for this. All these criticisms that was an end result of the change in the dynasty was due to social mobility of Byzantium; and this factor was a peculiarity of the Byzantine *kaiserkritik.*[190]

In addition to this, sometimes the opposition of a historian against an emperor can be the result of his sympathy for a high personality of his time; for instance,

[188] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 185.
[189] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 185.
[190] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 189.

Prokopios and Agathias criticize Justinian due to their sympathy for the general Belisarius who they thought was treated improperly by Justinian. The person that they wanted to defend could be sometime a general, sometime a patriarch or any other high rank holder. [191]

3.1.2 Commonly used rhetorical devices and patterns of Byzantine imperial criticism

The work of Tinnefeld displays that most of the criticism present in the histories written between the sixth and twelfth centuries was based on the personality of the emperor along with a moral and ideological judgment of his policies.[192] It is possible to see certain patterns in the criticism of emperors along with peculiar approaches. Almost all of the sources have "general and recurring patterns of thought."[193] Politics were generally interpreted with references to the personal attitudes of emperors. And these personal attitudes were shaped by certain stereotypical expectations like being noble and having a good soul, as well as an emperor was expected to love the poor and humble the rich, thus he can please all his subjects.[194]

Consequently, one can observe that the Byzantine criticism of the emperor was based on an image of the ideal emperor. The imperial idea was more likely to be used in criticism when material was needed for defamation, claims Tinnefeld.[195] The image of the ideal ruler for the Byzantines was composed of features like a good lineage, philanthropy, generosity, justice, piety, intelligence, wisdom, bravery, and military success.[196] Thus, when it comes to the criticism of the emperor based on this

[191] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 186.
[192] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 253.
[193] Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik:* Two Case Histories," 16.
[194] Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik:* Two Case Histories," 16.
[195] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 192-193.
[196] See Kazhdan, "The Social Views of Michael Atteliates, Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries."

ideal image character traits like greed, treachery, cruelty, tyranny, injustice, unintelligence, carelessness for people were emphasized to draw a negative image.

Even though the emperor was expected to be the image of the God on earth and criticized accordingly, he also had some earthly responsibilities; especially the political and military policies of the emperor considered among the most important elements of his rule.[197] Emperors were harshly criticized for their failures; military, political and fiscal failures comes as the result of the decisions of the emperors. If something failed it was either due to the incapability of the emperor, or his unintelligence and immoral behavior.

Related to this, another characteristic of the Byzantine kaiserkritik was its formulation as a criticism of the time. For the Byzantines, there was a belief in people's responsibility for the course of history; thus, having a strong position, emperor was responsible from the miseries of the time. Even though there was no direct relation between an event and a person as its cause, Byzantine authors likes to associate sinfulness of the people as the cause.[198]

Byzantine writers did not always state their criticism openly, sometimes little comments reveal the real opinions of them about an emperor. For instance, even though John of Epiphenia wrote a neutral account about Justin II, he also writes that the best thing Justin ever did was to appoint Tiberius as Caesar.[199] This statement can be interpreted as a hidden shade thrown to the whole reign of Justin II. An open criticism of the current rule would most probably be dangerous for the author to compose; thus, the only option left was the hidden opposition.[200] Sometimes a critique can be hidden in innocent statements like criticizing imperial officials

[197] Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik:* Two Case Histories," 16.
[198] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 190.
[199] Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik:* Two Case Histories," 3.
[200] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 191-192.

instead of the emperor, however, it is hard to locate indirect criticism as it requires a complete knowledge on the author and the broader frame of the things they relate.[201]

Another element of the criticism was the displeasure of the authors because the power, fame and unity of the empire was not being maintained and promoted by the emperor enough; this attitude Tinnefeld calls as "empire consciousness" with a reference to "national consciousness."[202] Having such a point of view Prokopios criticizes every friendly gesture of Justinian against the foreigners as weakness. Also, Choniates criticizes the growing influence of the foreigners within the empire. However, imperial consciousness seems to be put back when it comes to the military failures of the emperor; to underline the inability of the ruler territorial losses and military defeats exaggerated.

Whereas in the twelfth century, a change can be observed with regard to the patterns of *kaiserkritik.* The criticism turns its shift from the persona of the emperor to a criticism of the system meaning the way in which emperor uses his power. There was a critic of the "absolutist system" and emphasis on senatorial power along with an emphasis on the "public accountability" of the emperor.[203] This new criticism emerged in the twelfth century was a response against the rule of Komnenian dynasty that established a system of family privilege.[204] Therefore, as a response to this new system what the new imperial criticism emphasized was the way emperor ruled the state, his treatment of his subjects, his favoritism, and use of public treasuries as his private holding. The criticism, however, became to be redirected from the personality of a certain emperor to the state system in which the emperor operates his power. For instance, Choniates does not necessarily criticizes "the"

[201] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 182-183.
[202] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 188.
[203] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 253-254.
[204] Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine *Kaiserkritik.*"

emperor but he draws an image of a "typical" emperor that applies to most emperors of the Romans he says.[205] However, Choniates' criticism is targeted not at the imperial power or imperial government, but at the style in which that system operates; he emphasizes the need for senatorial power.[206] Another example can be drawn from the history of Zonaras: He makes "an explicit differentiation between the imperial and the common good"[207], and criticizes emperors such as Basil II, Romanos I, and even Constantine the Great by saying they all did things against the good of public like burdening heavy taxes on the people, using common property as their own, and behaving their subjects in a wrong manner.[208]

Concerning the rhetorical devices that were commonly used in the Byzantine *kaiserkritik*, one can look for the several books produced on *progymnasmata* in the ancient times.[209] Rhetorical devices for the criticism –or to say *κοινοί τόποι*— that were used by Byzantine authors were also mostly influenced by the *progymnasmata.*[210] Among the techniques used were 'exaggeration' in the form of exaggerating a thing for the worse; 'generalization' which also goes with exaggeration in the form of using expressions like everything, everyone, and all were influenced by the actions of a certain individual or he did everything wrong; 'comparison' either with a good example or with another bad example by stating that this person was even worse than that person, and 'defamation' in the sense of slandering the manner on which an action is based.[211] Some other tools used in Byzantine subversive literature was to make omissions or substitutions in the course

[205] Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik," 327.
[206] Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik," 328.
[207] Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik," 330.
[208] Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik," 330-331.
[209] For a detailed information and to access several examples of *progymnasmata* please see Kennedy, *Progymnasmata, Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric.*
[210] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 29.
[211] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik* 29-33; Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 79-80, 105-108, 147-154, 201-206.

of events, emphasis praise in the virtues that the person actually is missing, praise the achievements which the person did not achieve yet.[212] Another important tool was to use the word 'tyrant' or 'tyranny' while referring to an emperor and his rule that both was a tool to criticize the violent disposition of the ruler or the imply that he was a usurper of the throne.[213]

Many of these patterns and rhetorical devices can also be observed in the *kaiserkritik* of Pachymeres too as we will discuss in the following pages. It can be argued that Palaiologans had continued a similar government to that of the Komnenians: they treated the state as "their own patrimony."[214] Therefore, one would expect to see the continuation of a similar pattern of twelfth-century criticism towards the Palaiologans. However, as Angelov claims, the late Byzantine historians based their criticism on the traditional patterns of criticizing the personal attitude and immoral actions of the emperor.[215] They mostly did not apply the twelfth century example of criticism; to this Pachymeres was an exception. He mixes the traditional and twelfth century patterns in his *kaiserkritik* of Palaiologans. In addition to his discussion of Michael's immoral acts especially he displayed while usurping the throne from the little John Laskaris, Pachymeres also criticizes the Palaiologan policies, tax system, use of public treasuries and their succession practice. He also gives reference to the notion of public power against the emperor.[216]

Moreover, Pachymeres himself was a teacher of rhetoric and he had written a *progymnasmata* himself.[217] Therefore, it is safe to expect someone like Pachymeres to be aware of the rhetorical devices that was commonly used by Byzantine writers

[212] Mullett, "How to criticize the *laudandus*," 262.
[213] Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik,* 35-36, 52.
[214] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 254.
[215] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 256.
[216] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 260.
[217] Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium*, 59, 61-63.

before him. It comes as no surprise that he made use of such devices himself along with introducing new themes and tools peculiar to his writing. While he 'exaggerated', 'compared', and 'judged', the character and deeds of Michael, he also used Nicaean government as a "historical foil" for his criticism of the current rule.

3.2 Pachymeres' motivation for criticism and introduction to his *Historia*

3.2.1. Life of Georgios Pachymeres and his writings

In order to get a better understanding of Pachymeres' writing and to search for the possible reasons of his opposition to Palaiologan rule, it is better to start with his life. The information concerning his life mostly comes from his own writings, however he does not reveal much, especially in the *History.* He had an autobiographical poem, but unfortunately it preserved only in excerpts, and the remaining parts of it does not provide any biographical information.[218] Nonetheless, what we know about his life is still valuable in terms of understanding his standpoint concerning the politics of his time.

Georgios Pachymeres was born in Nicaea in 1241-42 and believed to die after 1307 when the narrative of his book, the *History,* ends.[219] He was the son of a family who left Constantinople after the fall of the city to the Latins. He mentions his Constantinopolitan descent, and the fact that he was born and raised in Nicaea in the beginning of his work. There is no further information concerning his family and their background neither in his work nor in another source. Even though, his familial background is not clear, N. Cassidy suggests that they must have some status as

[218] Lampakis, *Γεώργιος Παχυμερης,* 21, 34.
[219] Cassidy, *A Translation and Historical Commentary of Book One and Two of the Historia of Georgios Pachymeres*, xiii-xiv.

Pachymeres had the opportunity to access to high-level education which would not be possible if they were not so.[220] He spent the first twenty year of his life in Nicaea and returned to Constantinople in 1261, thus he himself witnessed the last years of Laskarid rule in Nicaea and the beginning of Palaiologan rule. The years he spent in Nicaea and the city being his birthplace might had affected the way Pachymeres regards the issues related to Asia Minor.

His high-education brought him some high rank offices and the two highest position he appears to had were: *protekdios* – whose function for the 12th-15th centuries was to protect those who seek asylum in Hagia Sophia[221]— and *dikaiophylax* – which was an imperial officer appointed among the clergy to deal with the legal issues that transcends the civil-ecclesiastical divide—.[222] He thought to have these two positions at the same time and by being the sixth highest rank in the patriarchal hierarchy *protekdios* was his highest position.[223] Hence, he was a part of both the ranks of secular and ecclesiastical hierarchy, and was involved in issues concerning both realms. It is quite obvious that Pachymeres was always close to the imperial circles; and he used this opportunity to observe the events critically.[224]

Along with the *History*, Pachymeres wrote some other works in varying topics from science to theology. He has a book on mathematics and astronomy, a collection of philosophical writings from Aristotle, some poetry, rhetorical exercises, letters and theological works.[225] However, the *History* is his longest and most-known work, and it is the work that Pachymeres is famous for.

[220] Cassidy, *Historia,* xiii.
[221] Kazhdan, *Oxford dictionary of Byzantium*, 1742-43.
[222] Cassidy, *Historia,* xiii
[223] Lampakis, *Γεώργιος Παχυμερης,* 23-24.
[224] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 262-263.
[225] For a detailed information on his writings please see Lampakis, Γεώργιος Παχυμερης.

The book reveals the history of a more than fifty-year period of Byzantium. It starts from the reign of Theodore II Laskaris –1254— and relating everything in between, it ends suddenly at 1307. It consists of thirteen books; the first six are about the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1258-1282), while the others cover the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328) until the year 1307. Pachymeres displays a somewhat critical approach to these emperors; the main themes of the book revolve around financial problems, political crisis, religious controversies of the time period.[226] Pachymeres' history provides a more detailed account than the other histories which covers the same time period.[227] Since he was a member of both secular and religious hierarchies, his work deals with the topics related to two realms equally, and he is concerned about both politics and religion at the same level as it is evident in his work.

3.2.2 Preface of the *Συγγραφικοί 'Ιστορίαι*

Before examining the content of the *Historia* in terms of its use of Nicaean past as a tool for criticism, the preface of the book deserves a close look as it reveals Pachymeres' motivation, inspiration, research methods and his way of recording the history. His preface mainly "follows the traditional formulas of literary composition," yet it is possible to obtain information concerning his attitude.[228] He claims not to use "unconfirmed stories from the past," or not to believe in the things said by anyone without any further proof.[229] Instead he records the events only that

[226] Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*, 237.
[227] His work historically overlaps with two others: the period until 1261 is also covered in the history of Georgios Akropolites which will be examined in another chapter of this thesis, and the rest overlaps with the work of Nikephoros Gregoras. See Cassidy, Nathan. Xv.
[228] Lampakis, "Some Considerations on the Historiographical Work of Georgios Pachymeris," 135.
[229] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 1.

he was “a witness” to them at the time of their occurrence, and claims he was a first-hand observer of most of the things that he wrote down. Beside this, he claims to attain information from other people who witnessed things but uses these information “only after obtaining conformation from many others.”[230] Hence, he has a claim of narrating ‘the truth’ that is confirmable.

Like many other historian Pachymeres also has a claim of objectivity. He declares that it is significant for him to not to overstate the facts as a result of being “moved by hatred or favor.”[231] He states that he has not such feelings, nor has any intention to fool the audience by praising or dispraising events in an excessive manner; he just relates them in the way that they are. This statement of writing not as a result of favor or hatred is first can be seen in the preface of Anna Komnina[232], and later on also exists in the preface of Akropolites. Both Akropolites and Pachymeres must be aware of Anna’s work; it is significant to recognize the need of both writers to use this statement, since it was not something used for centuries. This, implication of them must be related to their stance in the history writing which actually contains a motivation drove from favor or hatred just like Anna Komnina wrote her history to defend her father. Therefore, to legitimize their take on the events they might have felt the need to emphasize such a thing. Or maybe Pachymeres’ use of this statement was solely based on Akropolites’ use of it; as a kind of irony and reference to his work which was written from a supportive stand for Palaiologans.

In addition to this, Pachymeres adds that it is better to remain silent concerning the things which are not necessary to relate than to distort the reality in a way author prefers to.[233] This last point he states opens a room for questions like

[230] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 1.
[231] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 1.
[232] Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History,* 106.
[233] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 1.

whether he had ‘remained silent’ on certain things either because they were unnecessary to relate, or he just preferred not to relate them for certain reasons which actually might be moved by ‘favor or hatred’. Nonetheless, by stating all these, Pachymeres’ main motive was to prove his objectivity and to make the audience believe that what they will read is nothing but the mere facts. It is evident in his work that he really does try to be objective by only using reliable sources; and by having a critical approach on the affairs he tries to understand reasons and motives of why things happened in certain ways. However, this does not stop him to insert his judgment about the things he relates; and it is possible to distort the narrative even while using reliable sources and witness account if you are only relating a certain side of the story and neglecting the other point of views. Thus, the claim of objectivity and narrating the ‘truth’ must be treated cautiously as the truth depends on the side you are standing.

Beside this, he states his aim for writing an history as to prevent the occurred events to be forgotten by time, as this aim also applies for many other historians. And what further encouraged him to write an history was his feelings about the time period they are living in. He, like many other writers of any time, was disappointed of his own time and was remembering the old days as better than present. He believes that things are getting worse for the Byzantine state and it is far away from its “previous blooming state.”[234] Therefore, even from the very beginning of his work he clearly states his dissatisfaction with his own time period and prepares the reader for what is going to follow.

Since Pachymeres’ understanding of writing history was based on his own witness account, he does not mention any events prior to his lifetime. He clearly

[234] Pachymeres, *Historia*, 2.

states that he will omit those times both because he does not have any first-hand information, and they are already written by others.[235] Moreover, he thinks that it is irrelevant to narrate past events for his present study;[236] yet, he makes some exceptions for occasions which he considers to be necessary. Most of the time these exceptional references to past are given to support his criticism of Palaiologan rule; he explains the conditions or policies in the past Nicaean times to compare it with the Palaiologans. After explaining his approach to history writing, his sources and his aim of writing, his preface continues with an account of the loss of Asia Minor, then he starts to narrate the history of the period from Theodore II Laskaris to Andronikos II Palaiologos.

3.2.3 The dichotomy between the Laskarids and Palaiologans in the *Historia* and the motivation of Pachymeres for the criticism

The use of Nicaean memory as a tool for criticism is openly done in the work of Pachymeres. Whether it was in the sense of a more traditional criticism based on the image of a good ruler, or another model of criticism based on the twelfth century ideas, Nicaeans were there as the historical foil. In both kind of criticism Pachymeres repeatedly uses the rhetorical device of *σύγκρισις / comparison* again and again to counter Nicaean rulers with the Palaiologans, especially with Michael VIII. Even at the very beginning of his work, he starts by comparing the wrong policies of Palaiologans as opposed to the good rule of Laskarids.[237] And this concept continues later on as well, specifically in the first six book of his history while talking about

[235] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 2.
[236] Even though Pachymeres states that he will only mention one past event, he mentions some others too and make comparison between past and present when that serves for his narrative in terms of strengthening his claim.
[237] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 267.

Michael VIII. Michael VIII Palaiologos' wrongdoings especially occupies an important place in his criticism, especially his act of usurpation which can be considered as the reason behind the creation of such a dichotomy between the two dynasty.

The *Historia* is a detailed account in every sense, but, when one looks closely it is clear that Pachymeres gives the most details concerning the time period before Michael VIII became the sole ruler of the empire. Pachymeres gives a very detailed account of the process that leads to the final act of usurpation of the throne by Michael VIII. He devotes a huge part of his account –almost three books out of six— on the reign of Michael up until to the period of his usurpation. Pachymeres seems like he wishes to demonstrate that Michael VIII Palaiologos had always planned to establish his own dynasty and his desire was apparent in his actions from the very start. Pachymeres clearly develops a plot like a novel in which he explains the path that lead Michael to become the sole ruler step by step; this plot shows clearly his master skills in the rhetorics. The introduction of the story is done with the account of Michael's previous acts of treason against the Nicaean rulers, and the disbelief on his loyalty to the emperors. The body starts with the plot against Mouzalon and continues with Michael's climb of the ranks one-by-one; then, the climax can be considered as the coronation of Michael alone. All this narrative end with the complete usurpation of the throne and the blinding of John IV Laskaris. And the afterwards is the story of Michael as the sole ruler to which Pachymeres devotes the other three books on his reign.

It can be claimed that the reason why Pachymeres was so critical of Michael VIII was highly related his concern for the Asia Minor along with the religious policies of Michael. As we had mentioned above Pachymeres was born and raised in

Asia Minor under the Laskarids, this can be the explanation of his attachment to the land and why he was highly concerned about the fate of Eastern lands. Pachymeres was concerned with Asia Minor more than the other writers of the time; and he was interested in the problems and frustrations of his society.[238] Pachymeres gives detailed information of "movements and struggles" of people of Asia Minor like the Anatolian Revolt –that was mentioned in the previous chapter—, the situation in Asia Minor during the Turkish attacks and the arrival of Anatolian refugees to the capital. He was concerned with the problems of population just like he was concerned with politics.[239] In addition to this, he was also against the religious policies of Michael, especially the Union of Lyons. These was yet another reason for him to criticize Michael. In his narrative he describes how the opponents of the union were treated by Michael with tyranny and how Andronikos II restored the Orthodoxy.[240]

As the 'class consciousness' was among the key motives of many Byzantine writers to criticize the emperor, most of them were the members of the upper classes threatened by the change of the ruler. However, the situation was different with Pachymeres: like many before him, he also seems to have 'class consciousness', but this time not from the side of upper classes. As it is mentioned above Laskarid rulers were favored by the lower classes of the society, whereas Palaiologans were mostly favored by the aristocratic families. Therefore, not being a member of an aristocratic family must be another reason for Pachymeres to stand against Michael. All these motives combined with Pachymeres' support for the Laskarid heir of the throne and

[238] Arnakis, "George Pachymeres – A Byzantine Humanist," 167.
[239] Arnakis, "George Pachymeres – A Byzantine Humanist," 166-167.
[240] Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 346.

his disapproval of Michael's usurpation had paved the way for his criticism of Michael.

3.3 Traditional patterns of *kaiserkritik* in the *Historia* of Pachymeres

In the work of Pachymeres the patterns of traditional Byzantine *kaiserkritik* was followed to a certain degree. The most prominent feature was the criticism of Palaiologans based on an image of ideal emperor. Laskarids for Pachymeres were the models for the ideal ruler; thus, his traditional criticism of the Palaiologan emperors comes from a comparison between the two dynasties as the representatives of right and the wrong rule. In addition to this Michael VIII was criticized as someone having bad characteristic treats which is something not suitable for an emperor. Pachymeres is most vocal in his criticism of Michael VIII especially while relating the story of his usurpation of the throne and right after his succession to the throne – which means the first three books of his history. Consequently, Pachymeres draws an overall negative image of Michael as someone who does not fit into the image of an ideal ruler, someone not fitting for rule and applying wrong policies that had caused territorial loss to the empire. In this section we will examine the patterns of Pachymeres' criticism of Michael based on the traditional way of criticizing the personality of the emperor along with his emphasis on his usurpation.

3.3.1 Personal traits

3.3.1.1 Philanthropy and generosity

Philanthropy and generosity were among the most significant features attached to the image of an emperor in Byzantium. Therefore, it takes an important place in the

narrative of Pachymeres as well. Michael's philanthropy was questioned again and again in the work, and Laskarids were there to provide a contrast. Pachymeres makes it sure that the reader was reminded about the philanthropic activities of Laskarids and a ground for comparison with the Palaiologans was ready.

John III Vatatzes was highly known and praised for his philanthropy and generosity. This attitude of him was also mentioned by Pachymeres. He even calls Vatatzes as "the father of the Romans"[241] and states that he was donating money for the love and mercy of God. While talking about his generosity against the poor, Pachymeres says: "… sackful of gold were channeled out and to each poor man."[242] As it can be clearly observed Pachymeres does not hesitate to 'exaggerate' to praise John III's act of generosity.

On the other hand, when talking about Michael VIII, Pachymeres tends to question the intentions of him. For instance, when right after his first coronation Michael distributed coins to the people it was to make sure that he was loved and accepted by them.[243] When Michael displays generosity to people Pachymeres questions his reasons of doing so. He says that he does not know if it is Michael's nature or if he just pretends. He might be acting generous either because he wants to create a philanthropic image which can help him as he knows he does not hold legitimate power; or he was aware of that if he does not act generously as the previous emperors did, he would not be like them. Thus, he had to act like an emperor to become one.[244] This comment, on its own, shows how Pachymeres devaluates Michael's claim to the throne; he does not acknowledge Michael as the emperor, but just considers him to be an emperor wannabe. Since he does not hold

[241] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 31.
[242] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 32.
[243] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 50.
[244] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 252.

any legitimate ground for his claim, he just acts in imitation of other emperors like being a benefactor for the subjects; in doing so he would ensure the acknowledgement he needs. Pachymeres also creates here a scene where the people do not consider him as a real emperor, thus Michael tries to win over them by acting in a generous manner.

According to Pachymeres, one of the most significant attributes of an emperor is his philanthropic approach to his subjects in return of which he earns the honor of his position. He continues by claiming that Michael was aware of this; thus, he wanted to act in an imperial way seeing that the people were provided with gifts and favors by the previous emperors. Moreover, he considered himself being accused and was also fearing any condemnations, therefore he followed the path of "deceased emperors."[245] Even though Pachymeres does not openly clarify why Michael was feeling accused, what was the cause of his fear, and who were the "deceased emperors," one can claim that he again creates a tension between Michael and the Laskarid. He might be feeling the fear and accusation due to his treatment of Laskarid child, while the deceased emperors might be the former Laskarids.

3.3.1.2 Greed

Among the negative character traits that were used to criticize emperors was their 'greed'. In the work of Pachymeres this trait was used in a different way; this time it was not the Michael himself who was greedy, but he used other people's greed to achieve his goals. Pachymeres emphasizes that through gifts and promises Michael managed to achieve his goals of first to be chosen as regent and then to be claimed emperor. According to Pachymeres, when Michael was agreed by others to be the

[245] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 254.

regent as being the most suitable candidate, his suitability "was only one part of the reason why" he was chosen, and in reality, there were other reasons. Those who support Michael was given a say at the first place as Michael was the one who managed the affair, beside this, Pachymeres claims that Michael gained the support of many men –particularly the ones who lost their position during the reign of Theodore—with some promises.[246] By stating this facts Pachymeres seems to be questioning the legitimacy of Michael's election as the real reason for his election was his secret alliance with some people. Furthermore, Pachymeres also claims that when Michael demanded higher rank positions, he used bribes and gifts to win the support of people.[247]

3.3.1.3 Piety

Piety is yet another trait that Michael was missing according to Pachymeres. He is most vocal about his opinions on the piety of Michael VIII when it is right after the blinding of John Laskaris. Pachymeres states that he, whose accession to the throne was accepted because of his show of possessing piety, was not acting accordingly.[248] Power showed his true character and the real reason behind his piety towards God. By blinding the child, says Pachymeres, Michael blinded his own soul as well.[249] Pachymeres throughout his narrative, up until now, was questioning the true reasons behind Michael's behaviors; but here he openly expresses that he believes all his good, virtuous behaviors were just pretended.

[246] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 29-30.
[247] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 32-33.
[248] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 256.
[249] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 258.

3.3.1.4 Tyranny

Pachymeres was not afraid to call Michael as tyrant which was among the futures of Byzantine *kaiserkritik*. For instance, after the blinding of John, when Michael severely punished the ones opposing his act, Pachymeres states that such acts leads to a tyrannical rule. He ruled no longer in legality but his rule turn into a tyranny where he did not accept any of the mistakes he does and punishes those who speaks the truth and this was the result of a fear.[250] It can also be seen in the narrative of the revolt in Nicaea. Once Michael heard about the revolt in the name of John, he was filled with anger and was no longer concerned with losing this border region; he just wanted to get rid of them which shows his tyrannical reaction.[251] It was only after not being able to win, the emperor decided to win them over by peace.[252]

3.3.1.5 Breaking of oaths

Another negative attitude that Pachymeres attributes to Michael was his constant break of the oaths that he had sworn. Such an attitude was definitely not suitable for an emperor, emperor must be someone who is trustworthy. Pachymeres continuously reminds the reader the words Michael had given and then relates the stories that shows Michael did not keep his words or sometimes openly states that accuses him of not being true to his word. For example, after his first incidence of disloyalty against the Laskarids Michael was made to swear an oath of loyalty and was bound by the church which would excommunicate him if he revolts against the dynasty.[253] However, a few pages later Pachymeres relates another story where Michael again was suspected of disloyal behavior. Therefore, Pachymeres shows that he was not

[250] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 258.
[251] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 260.
[252] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 262.
[253] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 6-7.

following his words. Most important example of this was his blinding of little John IV and his accession to the throne as the sole ruler.

Another incidence that Pachymeres depicts Michael as someone who is not true to his word takes place after the death of Theodore II Laskaris. Pachymeres here follows a clever path of showing the immoral character of Michael: he uses an important device of rhetoric, namely speeches, to manipulate the story to reach to a certain end. Pachymeres, right before accusing Michael as the head of the plot against Mouzalon, mentions an assembly gathered after the call of Mouzalon to discuss his regency. In the assembly, Mouzalon gave a speech stating that he does not have any intention of taking the throne for himself, and he only will guard the emperor if the majority of those present there agrees with that.[254] There was no opposition to him among the audience, on the contrary many gave speeches confirming their support for his rule, and of such man was Michael Palaiologos who made a very supportive speech.[255] It cannot be a coincidence that Pachymeres first provides Michael's speech at the meeting declaring his support for Mouzalon and then he emphasizes that Michael encouraged his troop to kill Mouzalon. By doing so, Michael was breaking his oath one more time and Pachymeres does not miss the opportunity to demonstrate this.

The highest amount of emphasis Pachymeres puts on the wows that Michael had broken was during his first coronation along with John IV and later after his blinding of John IV Laskaris. When Michael's claim for the rank of co-emperor was accepted by many, they bind the two with vows to not plot against each other.[256] Michael was the first one to swore the oaths to the emperor John as he was still

[254] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 17-21.
[255] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 21-23.
[256] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 44-45.

inferior to him; he swore to "counsel him and attempt no deadly plot against him." In this way he raised to the imperial level and now was the co-emperor.[257] There were some who reminded the vows of Michael about not engaging in any plot against the dynasty.

As it is prominently displayed in this narrative, the concern for a possible plot against the emperor was always present. Even though Michael was supported and accepted as the co-emperor, he was bounded by serious oaths whose main purpose was to prevent him to engage in a plot against the young emperor. It can also be seen in the narrative that his previous rebellious actions against the former rulers was brought into question and reminded, this might be a sign of the lack of trust on him and his words. However, at the end of the day, Michael managed to achieve what he always wanted as a result of a good strategy not a plot. Moreover, he used the concerns raised against him to his advantage by demanding the required oath to be mutual and accordingly demanding subjects to swear an oath to protect both of the two emperors against a plot from one another. This was to create a legal basis for himself that he can use against his opponents. This last point is also emphasized by Pachymeres: according to him this last addition was made because it opens up a ground for Michael to accuse whomever he wishes to for supporting civil disorder.[258] Finally, when he blinded the John Laskaris, once again Michael acted against the oaths that he had sworn; Pachymeres says Michael ate up all the oaths and agreements like as if they were nothing.[259]

Nevertheless, when it comes to Laskarids, Pachymeres seems like he avoids from attaching any negative personality traits to them. For instance, while he

[257] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 46.
[258] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 46.
[259] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 256.

mentions the ill-tempered character and rash decisions of Theodore II, he straightly tries to explain the reason behind this. Pachymeres devotes a couple of pages of his account to explain the situation of the emperor Theodore II which was, according to him, the reason behind the emperor's rash decisions. Theodore was having frequent seizures[260] which Pachymeres thinks was the result of some kind of a heart condition which affects his brain and thinking as well; this effect on his brain was causing him to have some disproportioned thoughts sometimes.[261] When, after the flight of Michael to the Turks, emperor Theodore forgave and pardoned Michael, Pachymeres states that his quickly changing attitudes and thoughts was also the result of his illness. As it can be seen from the above account, when it comes to Theodore II's wrong doings, Pachymeres seems to not blame him for them; but instead tries to explain the possible reason behind his acts and how his illness affected his decisions.

3.3.2 Michael VIII as usurper

To begin with, Pachymeres' account draws a clear image of Michael as a passionate man who can do anything to get the throne he always wanted. Pachymeres depicts Michael as someone who was always disobedient to the rulers to whom he swore oaths of loyalty and he always planned to plot against them to take the throne for himself. He is further introduced as being someone who was "always suspected of aspiring to the throne," and it was evident from his "stealthy behavior" that if he had the chance, he would take the opportunity.[262] Moreover, the first events that Pachymeres makes mention of is the acts of treason that Michael committed against different members of the Laskarid dynasty. This, in a sense, shows how Pachymeres

[260] Cassidy, based on the symptoms described by Pachymeres and others, thinks his illness to be temporal lobe epilepsy. See Cassidy, 103-104.
[261] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 12-13
[262] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 6.

was actually devoted to reveal Michael's character and he wanted to make sure that his usurpation is well-known and recorded for the future.

For instance, even though Pachymeres' history starts with the reign of Theodore II Laskaris, Michael is the main character of these parts along with Theodore. The section on the reign of Theodore II Laskaris starts with introducing Michael Palaiologos: who he was and the office he held at that time. Then comes his acts of treason, he was first suspected at the time of Theodore's father John III Vatatzes for conspiring against the emperor. He rejected the accusations, but he was not believed –Pachymeres also seems to agree with those who did not believe—. However, the tensions between Michael and the Laskarid did not stop there. The next incident happened at the reign of Theodore II. Because of a fear caused by the ill-tempered and rash decisions of the emperor, Michael was warned by a friend as he was still under suspicion. Being afraid for his life, he fled to Turks; then, after being assured by the emperor that he would not be harmed, he returned back and welcomed by him.[263]

From its beginning to the end Pachymeres' account of the reign of Theodore II was actually about the relations between the Laskarid dynasty and Michael Palaiologos. The story was centered around the things that were directly about Michael or things somehow related to him. Pachymeres does not actually offer a detailed account about the deeds and rule of Laskaris, but only mentions the events which prepares the stage for the upcoming story of Michael being a usurper of the throne. As it was suggested, one of Pachymeres' motives for writing his history seems like to record the wrong-doings of Michael for the future, it makes sense that he ignores other things irrelevant to his account of Michael Palaiologos. Also, one

[263] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 8-9.

should question that if Pachymeres 'remained silent' for the reign of Theodore to not draw a bad image of the Laskarid which would not complement his main story centered around the tension between the good and the bad –namely Laskarids vs. Michael.

As the reign of Theodore ends, Michael takes the center stage of the narrative in a more direct way. He appears this time as the main actor behind the plot against the regent Mouzalon. Pachymeres, after explaining the existing hatred against the Mouzalon, mentions that a plot was expected to happen against Mouzalon, especially by the Latin troops. These soldiers were ready to kill Mouzalon "if given only a little encouragement;" and the man who gave that encouragement was no one other than Michael Palaiologos who was the commander of the mentioned troop.[264] Therefore, with this act Michael had taken the first step in his way to throne by ensuring his regency instead of Mouzalon.

Later on, when Pachymeres relates the coronation of Michael as co-emperor, he draws an image that Michael was again engaging in behaviors not fitting for an emperor. When it was the time for their coronation, Michael had a plan of making himself crowned first. His plan was to force the patriarch to do this; and to be able to force him Michael again used the foreign mercenaries who was involved in his previous action against Mouzalon. Under the circumstances of such treats he was crowned.[265] Pachymeres, once more, makes it apparent that Michael was acting in a 'stealthy' way and made his way to the throne with intrigues. According to Pachymeres, Michael's attitude there and his overshadowing of the little John was just "the beginning of the plot of one against the other."[266] Pachymeres, as

[264] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 23-24.
[265] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 49-50.
[266] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 50.

anticipated, does not hide his opinion and enounces his disapproval openly.

In his narration of the following years Pachymeres continues to remind the reader about the situation of John IV and Michael's gradual usurpation. Even though Pachymeres narrates the way that Michael is dealing with the state affairs and his military campaigns and those topics are not directly related with the John, he inserts a passage about the little emperor in between the other events. This is also pointed out by Nathan Cassidy in the following manner: "Pachymeres wishes to ensure that his readers do not forget that Ioannes was the legitimate basileus, and to inform them of his life under Michael VIII's authority."[267] Pachymeres wanted to show how Michael slowly took John out of the stage in every sense and he openly calls what Michael was doing as "sidelining" the little John. Michael, even started to not treat to John in accordance with his imperial dignity.[268] Thus Pachymeres wants to make sure that the reader knows about his situation and how he is being treated by Michael which, as it is already said before, is a key feature of Pachymeres' story about Michael being a usurper.

After the capture of Constantinople, Michael advocated that the capture of the City was itself enough for him to have the imperial throne; since he "alone" was responsible for the capture, he should rule "alone" as well. He was no more willing to regard John "even in name, as his colleague in the empire," thus he did try to get rid of him completely.[269] He also wanted to make his own son Andronikos his co-emperor, which required Michael to be the sole ruler first. Pachymeres here states that "the plan" was always in his mind as he was engaged in plots before.[270] Pachymeres' use of the word "the plan" is significant as it shows that this plan was in

[267] Cassidy, *Historia,* 279.
[268] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 63.
[269] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 82.
[270] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 82.

Michael's mind since the beginning; and Pachymeres, being aware of that Michael's actions in the meantime were parts of this plan, tried to construct the whole plot of the story which leads to the end of Michael achieving his goal. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that Pachymeres, from the beginning of his story, foreshadowed the final of the scheme by emphasizing every step of it. Pachymeres also states that it was possible to understand Michael's plan of plotting if one pays attention to his actions: there were many clues of it like John not being able to enter to the City along with Michael. He seems like criticizing those who did not understood this and did not take any action against him. By breaking his oath Michael committed a major sin and "this was the beginning of great evil and … disturbance."[271]

Pachymeres, once again, does not hesitate to state his opinion; for him the things Michael did to make his way to the throne was illegal. In the end, what Michael wanted to do was both to get rid of the "real/legitimate" emperor. Pachymeres here refers to John as "…τήν του γνησίου βασιλέως …,"[272] which can be translated as real/authentic emperor, legitimate emperor, or emperor by race (birth right);[273] regardless, all these options show his emphasis was put on the right of John as being the legitimate emperor from whom Michael wanted to take the throne "illegally."

After his second coronation, Michael engaged in, what Pachymeres calls, a shameful decision: he ordered John to be blinded and sent him away to be locked in a fortress.[274] Even though Pachymeres does not openly expresses his frustration, his statement of John being only trusted in the patriarch might be his accusation of Arsenios for not saving the child; because he was the only one who could save him,

[271] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 82.
[272] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 229.
[273] Here Failler goes with the "authentique" option. See 228.
[274] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 254-256.

but he was not there for the child. Pachymeres shows his grief by stating that John was just a little tender child who was not aware of the things going on about him, who does not know what was to be sad or what an oath is. This in a sense, marks the end of the plot which was set over the tension between the Laskarid and Michael and Michael's way to the total control of the throne.

Event thought it was not his intention, Pachymeres' account reveals that what makes Michael's usurpation different was the way he followed. He tried to keep things legal. Coronation by the patriarch was an essential factor in the making of an emperor; since its introduction in 450, it became an "institution" of the empire.[275] This is the reason why Michael tried to win the support of the clergy, because it was the church that could legalize his action and power which also expected to influence the people.[276] Michael's usurpation of the throne was achieved as legally as possible, he first waited to be crowned by the patriarch to get rid of the little John totally, and he also made sure that John was not crowned by the patriarch. Therefore, Michael was not usurping the rights of a ruling emperor whose imperial rank was recognized with a coronation by patriarch; in this way Michael kept his act legal.[277]

It is evident from the above account that Pachymeres put a great emphasis on Michael VIII's usurpation of the throne. Also, he clearly wanted to add the adjective 'usurper' among the other negative traits that he accused Michael Palaiologos as having.

[275] Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance in the Late Roman Empire," 64-66.
[276] Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance," 62.
[277] Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance," 62.

3.4 Twelfth-century patterns of *kaiserkritik* in the *Historia* of Pachymeres

Along with his criticism of characteristic traits of Michael as opposed to the ideal rulers of the Nicaean past, Pachymeres also uses the patterns of *kaiserkritik* that were introduced by the twelfth-century historians. The main themes he had involved in the criticism were the fiscal policies of Palaiologans, sales of offices and succession practices.

3.4.1 Taxation system and public accountability

The most prominent feature of Pachymeres' twelfth-century inspired criticism directed to Palaiologans was about their fiscal policies and use of public sources. For this critique too Pachymeres uses the rhetorical device of 'comparison' with the Laskarids to show their different government of economy than the Palaiologans. This comparison of him between the two different approaches to the imperial treasury and taxes is related to aforementioned patterns of twelfth-century *kaiserkritik*. His criticism of fiscal policies of Palaiologans continues throughout his work. According to Pachymeres, Palaiologans were responsible for the "fiscal mismanagement" of the state.[278] Pachymeres shows how Laskarids, especially John III Vatatzes, filled the treasury as a result of their wise fiscal policies; however, Michael, on the other hand, spent what was collected by the Nicaeans starting from the time of his regency. And most importantly, Pachymeres makes a differentiation between the use of imperial treasury for the good of state and public and the use of it for the emperor's own expenses and good. This was another similar aspect of his criticism to the twelfth-century one as he makes a distinction between the public good and imperial interests.

[278] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 270-271.

In the account of Pachymeres, it is emphasized and showed that Michael Palaiologos used the 'public fisc' according to his will and he mostly used it for his own good: to attach supporters and win over important people. Whereas Laskarid rulers had approached tax money as public property and used them only for the state and public. For their own expenses they used the money that was coming from their own land.[279]

The first incidence that Pachymeres mentions was during the appointment of Michael Palaiologos as the regent of John IV Laskaris. To guarantee the support of aristocrats and clergy, Michael had used gifts and bribes. However, for these gifts he did not use his own finances but made use of the treasury. Apparently what Michael did was to use the imperial treasury for his own good. Even though he was not able to operate the money as he wished, he found a solution for that. He was fabricating false needs and was instructing treasurers to pay to certain people in return for that. In this way he was able to distribute money to those who supported him and gain more supporters among the aristocrats. The important point here, according to Pachymeres, was that since Michael himself did not possess much wealth, he definitely was not rich enough to distribute gifts to aristocrats from his own assets. Therefore, he would reject any accusation of gaining support via gifts.[280] Once again Pachymeres openly reveals one of Michael's 'stealthy' behaviors; and to make his wrongdoing more apparent Pachymeres compares Michael with the past rulers to show how he was unfitting for the task.

Nevertheless, Michael's use of the public treasury did not come to an end there. When it was the day for the patriarch Arsenios to arrive at Magnesia to organize an assembly in which the final decision about the regency was going to be

[279] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 271.
[280] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 32-33.

taken, it was not enough for Michael to only have the support of some nobles. Thus, what he did was to make sure he also won the support of the patriarch and the bishops in his retinue. He tried to gain the support of bishops with gifts for which he once again used the imperial treasury.[281]

In comparison to Michael's use of the treasury, Pachymeres stresses how Vatatzes had used his own estates and had separated them from public sources as a good model for financial administration.[282] In the middle of his account of Michael's regency, Pachymeres interrupts the story and turns back in time to talk about the situation of the imperial treasury under the rule of Laskaris. Even though he states in his preface that he will not be writing about the past times and events, he breaks his rule when it is for the good of Laskaris or, it is better to say, when he wants to show how Palaiologos mismanaged the affairs. Pachymeres describes how Laskarid – especially John III Vatatzes— dealt with the imperial treasury. In the imperial treasury at Magnesia there was "a great amount of money" which was collected mostly by John III. He was able to collect such amounts thanks to his good management of affairs, not as a result of unjust and heavy taxation.

When it came to the spending, Vatatzes spent the money wisely for the expenses of the state, military, and foreign relations. Beside this, Pachymeres also exemplifies his point with some anecdotes: one was about Vatatzes' philanthropy and the other was a conversation of him with his son. Vatatzes was highly engaged in philanthropic activities; however, for these activities he did not use the imperial treasury, instead he used the money that was coming from his own land and animals. Moreover, he wanted his action of using his own money to be witnessed by the patriarch so that no one would accuse him of using public sources for his own

[281] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 33-34.
[282] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 272.

expenses.[283] The second incident happened when one day his son Theodore was coming back from hunting. When Vatatzes had seen his son dressed in imperial gold clothes, he immediately fell into anger, and explained to him how "inappropriate" his attire was. Those garments were paid with subjects' taxes, thus, must be used only in their service on the arrival of foreign embassies.[284] Theodore II Laskaris was also praised by Pachymeres as he distributed the taxes fairly among his subjects.[285] As it is expected, the reason of Pachymeres' mention of Laskarids and their attitude of not using the public money for their own good was to demonstrate how Palaiologans acted in a different way. Michael's finances was the opposite; he used tax wealth and public treasury as his own from the very beginning. Thus, one more time Pachymeres prepares the necessary ground for the reader to judge Michael about his wrong-doing.

Another significant issue in Pachymeres' criticism of Palaiologans was the loss of Asia Minor as it is discussed above. One of the reasons why Asia Minor was lost, according to Pachymeres, was the economic policies and taxation system of Michael. Pachymeres makes it clear right from the beginning of his work the tax policy that Michael had imposed on eastern frontiers was just wrong in 'comparison' with the policies of Laskarids. While Laskarids had provided those living in the frontiers tax exemptions and granted pronoia to the for their living, Michael had reversed this policy. Apart from abolishing the tax exemptions, Michael imposed further taxes on them.

Between the Anatolian Turks and the Byzantines there were high mountains; occupying those places, fortifying them, and having good relations with the dwellers

[283] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 31-32.
[284] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 6; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 272.
[285] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 275.

to use them as some sort of a safety blanket was the policy of the Laskarids. The people of the mountains were very much open to attacks from the enemy and they did not have the necessary means to resist nor the courage to do so. Accordingly, what Laskarids made was to bind those people to their state both by showing them the support of state and the emperor as well as by giving certain exemptions and gifts. These people were given tax exemptions, and some among them was given *pronoia* by imperial order. As a result, having the support of the Nicaean state behind them, "their fortunes grew" and with the "abundance of livelihood" they became more courageous against the enemy.[286]

Being loyal and tied to the Nicaean state, the dwellers of the mountains did constant attacks against the enemy which according to Pachymeres was something discouraging for the enemy. Also, these attacks provide them further wealth in the form of booty. If any sort of attack was about to come from the enemy, these people were so willing to protect their land against them. Their command was local, and they had a good amount of wealth which made them more willing to defend their land against the enemy.[287] At the end of the day, this was a win-win situation for both the inhabitants of frontiers and The Nicaean state as the mainland was safe of any attacks from the east; Pachymeres seems to consider this to be a proper policy. Nonetheless, what happened after the reconquest of Constantinople lead to the spoil of this perfect balance at the eastern frontiers. Military service was imposed on the frontiersmen apart from their own service and they were put under a new tax payment to be sent directly to the imperial treasury. Hence, being cut of their wealth and support, they lost their strength, courage and will to serve the state. Being weak in wealth and courage, they were no more able to attack against the eastern enemies,

[286] Pachymeres, *Historia,*3-4.
[287] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 4.

they could only defend their land against the enemies' attacks for a time. However, by the time, as they became more and more defenseless, they left their lands and fortifications to the enemy.[288] Thus, according to Pachymeres the reason behind the loss of eastern frontiers to Turks and the present unsafe situation of the state from outer attacks was the misdirected policy of Michael Palaiologos.

Later on in his work, Pachymeres again and again mentions that the heavy taxes that Michael VIII had imposed on the population was among the reasons why Asia Minor was lost. For instance, while talking about the loss of Paphlagonia, Pachymeres states that the population voluntarily subjected themselves to the enemy as they were tired of taxes.[289]

3.4.2 Foreign relations and frontiers

Pachymeres' work starts with a criticism of the foreign policies of the current dynasty. As Pachymeres points it out, Nicaean State was surrounded by two enemies: Turks[290] in the east and Italians[291] in the west. Hence, they had to secure the fronts to strengthen the mainland. Since it was not possible to fight with the two enemies at the same time, with a wise decision, Laskarid tried to deal one at the time by making alliances with the other. First, by making an agreement with eastern enemies, they fought against the Italians in the coastal regions; getting them out of costs enabled the Nicaeans to secure their western frontiers.[292] At that point, they turned their faces to the eastern enemy and what they did there seems to impress Pachymeres a lot.

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[288] Pachymeres, *Historia,*5-6.
[289] Pachymeres, *Relations historique,* 366; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 274.
[290] In the text Pachymeres refers to them as the Persians. As it was a common practice among the Byzantine writers, they used the archaic names of places and people living in those lands. Concerning this practice, see Herbert Hunger, On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature.
[291] Pachymeres uses the name Italian as an umbrella term to refer to Western Europeans of different nationalities.
[292] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 3

However, what Palaiologans did was trying to fight in the both fronts at the same time which resulted with the loss of many lands.

3.4.3 Sales of offices

Another criticism Pachymeres directed towards the government of Palaiologans was about the policy of selling offices which became widespread during the reign of Andronikos II. He states: "the affairs of the Roman state turned completely for the worse… many (offices) are sold by the imperial ministers for pay or gifts."[293] While talking about this issue Pachymeres once again contrasts a Palaiologan ruler with a Laskarid by comparing Andronikos II' government with that of Theodore II. The sale of offices made the men of merit and those who were suitable for offices alienated and excluded them from services. Whereas Theodore II favored the men of merit over those with money or friend at court which made his government function better.[294]

Even though, Pachymeres seems to be criticizing the ministers of Andronikos II for the sales, his real target must be the emperor himself. As it is mentioned earlier, when the authors were not able to criticize the ruler directly, they criticized those in their service. Since Pachymeres was writing during the reign of Andronikos it is not surprising to see such devices for 'hidden criticism' were used. Moreover, he also criticizes the officials for not paying the salaries of soldiers in time. At the end, he openly directs his arrows to Andronikos by stating that he did not punish the "corrupt officials."[295]

[293] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 277.
[294] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 278.
[295] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought,* 278.

3.4.4 Succession practices

It is possible to see a little example on the discussion of succession in the history of Pachymeres. Herakleios was the one who introduced the system of coronating the sons as co-emperors to secure the establishment and continuation of a dynasty.[296] This model was followed by many others later on and Palaiologans were definitely an important representative of that. When Michael had coronated for a second time in the City, he made his son Andronikos coronated as co-emperor along with himself. And it was continued later on by almost all the members of the dynasty; this is among the things Palaiologans were criticized for. It was also a common theme in twelfth-century *kaiserkritik.*

Pachymeres was not like his twelfth-century colleagues: neither he did openly question or oppose the succession practices, nor he did defend another alternative model. However, what he did was he inserted a passage in which it is possible to see existence of ideas that questions the imperial system. Pachymeres puts such ideas into the mouth of Michael's supporters. Concerning his coronation, his supporters tried to convince others with questions like what if little John dies before his maturity[297] or by claiming that he was worthy of rule by stating that:

> "For the best basileis … are not those who succeed by right of birth, nor indeed those chosen by lot… Rather, the best are those who come to rule through merit and by proving that they are best fitted to rule."[298]

Pachymeres' inclusion of this ideas in his work might be related to a hidden criticism directed the Palaiologans. Pachymeres was writing during the reign of Andronikos II who was made co-emperor by his father during his reign to make sure his succession.

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[296] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, 29-31.
[297] Pachymeres, *Historia,*38.
[298] Pachymeres, *Historia,* 43.

Also, at the time Pachymeres was writing his history, Andronikos II also appointed his son Michael IV as co-emperor to himself.[299] This pattern also continued by later emperors of the Palaiologan times. Therefore, Pachymeres might be trying to show that how Michael once came to rule with a criticism of the succession practices; but then he continued to do the same. Concerning this passage Pachymeres makes no direct comment, he neither agrees nor disagrees with it; it looks like to be included for the reader to comprehend and judge themselves. Moreover, the criticism of succession practices was also another aspect of twelfth-century *kaiserkritik* against the Komnenians. Advocation of ideas criticizing the succession among the nobles of the empire might be also a sign of the fact that twelfth-century ideas of *systemkritik* continued to live among the certain classes of Byzantines. In either case, it is significant to see such ideas being spoken and recorded for the future.

Pachymeres' work is full of many more examples of criticism directed to Palaiologan rulers; the ones that we just discussed, however, can be counted among the most significant ones that are also the examples for the use of Nicaean memory as a tool for criticism and opposition.

3.5 Later references to the Laskarids in late Byzantine literature

Even though the armed revolts and plots against the Palaiologans in the name of Laskarids had come to an end in the reign of Andronikos II, the memory of the Laskarids had continued to live in the minds of people as the saints and model emperors. Their memory was associated with the good policies and order of their time as opposed to failures and instabilities of the Palaiologan times. The name of Laskarid continued to live especially in the literature taking a subversive form. Just

[299] Pachymeres, *Relations historique* II, 218.

like in the history of Pachymeres that is discussed above some later sources as well used Nicaean rulers as the symbols of ideal emperor and had compared them with the Palaiologan rulers of their time.

The members of 14th century ecclesiastical hierarchy used John Vatatzes' name as a reminder of what an ideal emperor is. For instance, Patriarch Kallistos uses John Vatatzes as the "fitting and proper" example of a generous emperor. However, he gives the example of John III to compare him with a Bulgarian ruler of Kallistos' own day; this leaves the impression of him not being able to find a contemporary example to compare.[300] Thus, even after more than a hundred year of his death John was still in the memories of Byzantines as a model emperor.

Hagiographies were also another source for critical content, they used to criticize the current rule either in an intended or a direct way. For the time period of Michael VIII hagiographies was used to express dislike by "avoiding direct statements."[301] For example the period of iconoclasm was very much reminded during the reign of Michael VIII as that period provides the perfect example of punishing and imprisoning those who opposed the emperor.[302] But this was not the only case past was used to criticize the present in hagiographies; the Nicaean past was also used as a tool for criticism in the hagiographical works. One example is Georgios of Pelagonia's *vita* of John Vatatzes written in 1271, in which also he describes John as an imperial model for the current rulers of his time who are obviously the members of Palaiologan dynasty. In his work he compares the virtues of John Vatatzes with the opposite character of the rulers of his time.[303] This text was

[300] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.
[301] Galaki, "Ideological Conflicts in Veiled Language as Seen by the Palaiologan Hagiographers. The Lives of St. Theodosia as a Case Study," 405.
[302] Galaki, "Ideological Conflicts," 406.
[303] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.

written like an imperial panegyric in which he praises the John and likens him to important biblical and classical figures.[304] In the introduction he declares that his aim was to provide an example to his contemporaries to "judge the Palaiologoi," and throughout the work he does not hesitate criticize Palaiologans in a direct way.[305]

In the work Georgios of Pelagonia praises John Vatatzes by saying that he truly showed to be worthy of the rule. He had a noble soul, a good family, good appearance, and high education[306] as well as he showed his love of God through his hospitality, his care for the poor and his building activities.[307] This according to Georgios must be the features of a good emperor.

Beside their character, Georgios also draws attention to the accession of John Vatatzes to the throne: he was not an heir to the throne by blood, but he was the son-in-law of the previous emperor. This was important for Georgios of Pelagonia to display because he claims that blood heirs do not always have the features of a good emperor, instead they were often "corrupted by luxury" and other things that comes with their situation as being born into that luxurious world.[308] He instead proposes a system of election to pick the best candidate: an emperor must be someone who by the way of his manners, appearance, soul and mind can receive the votes of everyone meaning the "generals, governors, army, magistrates, public servants, and finally the patriarch.[309] This kind of a criticism was not peculiar to him as it was among the common themes of twelfth-century *kaiserkritik*, and the succession practices of the Palaiologan rule was among the main issues that the dynasty was criticized for. They were criticized for appointing their sons as co-emperor to ensure their succession to

[304] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 266.
[305] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 267.
[306] Georgios of Pelagonia, Βίος του άγίου 'Ιωάννου Βασιλέως του 'Ελεήμονος ed. Heisenberg, 197.
[307] Georgios of Pelagonia, Βίος του άγίου 'Ιωάννου, 199.
[308] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.
[309] Georgios of Pelagonia, Βίος του άγίου 'Ιωάννου, 196-197.

the throne.[310] Thus, Georgios also criticizes this by saying that those who received the rule from their fathers are not worthy of any praise; but those who do not –like Vatatzes— deserve to be praised.[311] Consequently, those who do not deserve the rule and any praise were the emperors of the Palaiologan dynasty.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, when Kantakouzenos had his ambitions for the imperial throne, the name of John IV Laskaris come to the stage once again. This time it was the historian Gregoras who reminded the name of Laskaris, but he used their memory to defend the Palaiologans. While there was a civil war going on and Kantakouzenos was about the take the throne, Gregoras reminds the fate of John IV. He equates the ambitions of Kantakouzenos with those of Michael VIII and associates John V Palaiologos with John IV Laskaris whose right to the throne was usurped by Michael.[312] Therefore, it is evident that the usurpation by Michael VIII of the Laskarid throne lived in the minds of the people and was equated with the unjust claims to the throne.

The members of 14th century ecclesiastical hierarchy used John Vatatzes' name as a reminder of what an ideal emperor is. For instance, Patriarch Kallistos uses John Vatatzes as the "fitting and proper" example of a generous emperor. However, he gives the example of John III to compare him with a Bulgarian ruler of Kallistos' own day; this leaves the impression of him not being able to find a contemporary example to compare.[313] Thus, even after more than a hundred year of his death John was still in the memories of Byzantines as a model emperor. These examples demonstrate once again that even years after their rule had ended, Laskarid

[310] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 280-281.
[311] Georgios of Pelagonia, Βίος του άγίου 'Ιωάννου, 197.
[312] Shawcross, "In the name of True Emperor," 226-227.
[313] Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood," 70.

emperors still continued to be used as the model image of a good ruler and their memory used to criticize the current rule within different contexts.

3.6 Conclusion

The usurpation of the Nicaean throne by Michael VIII had created a new discourse for the *kaiserkritik* of the time period in which the Laskarids were the representatives of the good rule and Palaiologans –especially Michael— were the representatives of the bad. Laskarids became an historical foil for the criticism of Palaiologans in many ways from their policies to personal traits.

To have a better understanding of the use of Laskarid memory as a tool for criticism in literature we had examined the *Historia* written by Pachymeres in this chapter. The *Historia* of Georgios Pachymeres is an important work for the history of Michael VIII and Andronikos II Palaiologos as it describes their reigns in detail. The account, however, is more significant for this thesis in terms of its value as a piece of criticism towards the Palaiologans. Throughout the work Pachymeres takes a critical stand against Palaiologans and Laskarids are represented as the ideal rulers. An analysis of the work in terms of its use of critical phrases and judgments reveals the importance of Nicaean memory as a tool for *kaiserkritik.* Therefore, by analyzing the work within the frames of Byzantine *kaiserkritik*, we had seen how Pachymeres used already established patterns of criticism and rhetorical devices to criticize Palaiologans but mixed those with his own themes and created an impressive piece of subversive literature.

We had also discussed later references to Laskarids in several written sources to have a more comprehensive picture concerning the use of Nicaean memory as a tool for literary subversion. Some later sources like the *vita* written by Georgios of

Pelagonia, following the path of Pachymeres, had also used the dichotomy between Laskarids and Palaiologans as the good and the bad ones in their works to criticize their current rule. All these examples that we have seen in this chapter, when taken into consideration with the examples that were discussed in the previous chapter, reveal that the name of Laskarids was really a tool for political opposition and literary criticism.

CHAPTER 4

NICAEAN MEMORY FROM THE PALAIOLOGAN PERSPECTIVE

In this chapter we will try to provide the viewpoint of the imperial side, both the emperors themselves and their supporters. We will endeavor to comprehend what were the tools that these people were using to support their claim of power and how did they responded to the criticism directed to them based on the Nicaean memory. First, we will start with the reign of Michael and his statements concerning his seizure of the throne in his *typika* written for two monasteries. Then we will have a look at the historical account written by Georgios Akropolites which has a pro-Palaiologan stance as it was written under the patronage of Michael VIII. We will examine the work as in the example of Pachymeres to search for the instances of *kaiserkritik* directed to Laskarids and propaganda of the Palaiologan rule. From there we will move to the reign of Andronikos II to see how he reacted to the situation that emerged as a result of his father's usurpation and his policy of union.

4.1 Michael Palaiologos on his accession to the throne

The most explicit example of Michael VIII Palaiologos' stand concerning his seizure of the throne, and how he reacted to the past events and his perception of the Laskarid rule can be drawn from the two *typika* that he issued for the monasteries he reestablished. The *typikon* of the Monastery of the Archangel Michael and the *typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios were the two documents issued by Michael for his monastic patronage. In addition to his regulations concerning the monasteries and the life in there, the two documents also contain autobiographical

information[314] which can be examined to understand Michael's perception of his situation and his efforts to legitimize his seizure of the throne by associating himself with the Laskarids.

The first thing that he emphasizes to justify his take of the throne is his glorious ancestry that made him a worthy candidate for the office of emperor. In both of the documents he repeatedly mentions that God had granted him many favors and beautiful things among which his family was. He makes references to his ancestry which can be considered as an attempt to establish an imperial image that had continued in his family and reached its peak with himself. He states that God given him "earthly nobility," and he was born of noble and virtuous parents; also his family was holding many possessions and honors.[315] Moreover, his family was related to the emperors from both side: his father's side was related to emperors and empresses by the way of marriage whereas his mother's side was directly imperial.[316] He states that the illustrious past of his family was the basis for his present rule; therefore, it was important for him to stress his families imperial relations to legitimize his take of the throne.

He also emphasizes the high ranks that his ancestors hold in both documents. His grandfather was *megas doux* and his father was *megas domestikos*. He says each generation of his family was awarded with a greater honor,[317] which must be reference to his imperial dignity as the peak level of ranks following the path of his ancestors. While talking about the commemoration services, he again emphasizes

[314] To only see the autobiographical information on the documents please refer to Gregoire, "Imperatoris Michaelis Palaeologi de Vita Sua: Opusculum necnon Regulae quam ipse monasterio S. Demetrii praescripsit fragmentum."
[315] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1215.
[316] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1242.
[317] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1242.

their ranks and both of those and their wives Michael ordered to be commemorated. Hence, it is clear that he uses the reputation of his family to legitimize himself as someone worthy of being the emperor.

Another point that he stresses was his upbringing in the palace and his relationship with the ruling dynasty of the time which was a more important tool to legitimize his action by associating himself with their memory. Concerning himself he emphasizes his upbringing in the "imperial court"[318] in the palace. He declares that John III whom he calls as "my uncle" was the one who took Michael to the palace.[319] He says John III cared about him and made sure he was raised and instructed carefully as if Michael was "his own son."[320] Moreover, John III was "more loving than a father" for Michael.[321] When he turned eighteen, he was given military tasks[322] and it was John III who considered Michael as worthy of command.[323] Furthermore, emperor John had pleasure while listening the achievements of Michael as he claims. Also, John's love for Michael was so much that he desired to attach Michael to himself with marriage ties and married him to his niece who "he loved as his daughter." While mentioning this marriage bond, Michael does not give any reference to his accusation of a plot against the emperor as a result of which this marriage took place; but, instead he draws a very positive image of the relationship between him and the emperor John III. It is worth noting that he makes several references to kinship relations between him and John by calling him uncle, and by emphasizing that he married his niece; moreover, he is even trying to portray

[318] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1230.
[319] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.
[320] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.
[321] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.
[322] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1230.
[323] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.

their intimacy as a father and son relationship. All of these was the result of his efforts to relate himself to the Laskarids with kinship relations. Since the reputation of Laskarids among the Anatolian populace was very positive he might had wanted to stress his relation to the family so that he would be accepted like them. Beside this, by stressing such kinship relations with the Laskarids he might had hoped to resolve the problems caused by his usurpation of the throne from a Laskarid.

He says he was appointed by John III himself as commander and to other services various times and he performed his duties "loyally."[324] He emphasizes his loyalty to the emperors John III and Theodore II in both of the *typika*. His emphasis on his loyalty must not be overlooked; this can be considered as a direct response to many accusations directed to him for disloyalty to the Laskarids. Therefore, by emphasizing that he was loyal to them throughout his life, and even when he was not in the Roman lands, he clearly wants to demonstrate himself as a loyal subject of them who did nothing wrong to them.

Related to his claim of loyalty, he also wished to justify his flight to the Turks by explaining his reason of doing so. While everything was good during the reign of John III, when it was the time of Theodore II, he says he was tested by jealousy.[325] He claims that the envy which was directed to him might had caused terrible things and that was the reason why he did what he did.[326] However, again it was God who protected him by sending him away,[327] Michael had to leave his native land and fled

[324] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1231.
[325] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.
[326] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1231.
[327] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.

to the Turks in the east. Concerning the time he spent there, he makes an important statement saying the following:

> "During the time I spent in Persia I engaged in absolutely nothing, in word, in deed, in plot, or in attempt against the ruler of the Romans at that time, the blessed late emperor, my cousin (Theodore II Laskaris) or against the realm of the Romans."[328]

Rather, he claims to always protect the benefit of Romans and always being with Theodore in spirit; to made readers believe this statement he writes "I swear by God that this is true"[329]. One more time he states that when he turned back to his country he, by subjecting himself to the emperor, "loyally" performed all the services that he was given.[330] Therefore, in addition to creating kinship relations with the Laskarids, he also repeatedly emphasizes his loyalty to them and even swears to prove that. It is possible to claim that he was trying to invalidate the accusations against him concerning his stand against the Laskarids.

Concerning his accession to the throne, he emphasizes the intervention of God. He claims that it was clear he was raised to become emperor of the Romans.[331] He says it was God who granted him the power that he holds "in an unexpected manner," and the reason of which only God knows.[332] He claims to achieve imperial power by the "wonderous"[333] work of God without giving any details of what happened. He claims to be persuaded and forced to take the imperial power, and he did not force or tried to persuade anyone.[334] He does not mention the name of John IV in none of the documents as if he never existed. He just confines himself to

[328] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1231.
[329] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1243.
[330] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1231.
[331] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1244.
[332] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1216.
[333] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1231.
[334] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of St. Demetrios," 1244.

mention that after the death of Theodore II, he became the new emperor of the Romans. He does not give any detail about the process, about his regency or what happened to Theodore's son –he does not even mention that he had a son—; but according to his narrative he just became emperor by the miraculous intervention of God. His omitting the name of John IV Laskaris totally and after stressing his kinship relations with the former Laskarid rulers as his "uncle" and "cousin," creating a direct succession line from Theodore to himself can be considered as an attempt to portray himself as the direct and rightful heir of the Laskarid throne.

In addition to these, he does not forget to point out the most important achievement of his reign which he used as a tool to strengthen his place in the throne. According to him, the most significant gift that God granted to him was the reconquest of Constantinople from the Latins.[335] He emphasizes that this happened in the first years of his emperorship and happened without a war and bloodshed;[336] he seems to emphasize this to demonstrate that his accession to the throne was directly related to this accomplishment[337] and God's plan for him as it happened in the earlier stages of his rule. As if he was destined to become emperor to save the City from Latins.

As a consequence, it is apparent from the above examples of Michael's autobiographical *typika* that he used these documents to reveal his basis of

[335] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1216.
[336] Palaiologos, "*Typikon* of the Monastery of Archangel Michael," 1216.
[337] The importance Michael devoted to the conquest of Constantinople as a tool for justification of his usurpation can also be observed in the coinage that he issued. In the obverse side of his coinage there is a representation of the Virgin within Constantinople as she was the protector of the city. Penna and Morrison, "Usurpers and Rebels in Byzantium, 34-35. Another sign that supports this idea was the fact that Michael VIII had been called as "New Constantine" and he called himself as such from the time of his conquest of the City. Macrides, "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople-1261?,"

legitimization of his usurpation of the throne. His claim for the throne was based on several arguments. The most important of them is that it was the God who chose Michael as the emperor, thus who could question his decisions? Moreover, he was coming from a very noble and glorious ancestry which was already related with the emperors and worthy of high honors that prepared Michael to become the emperor one day. And lastly, he was also related to the previous ruling dynasty of the Romans; John III –whom the pro-Laskarid/anti-Palaiologan parties respected the most— was his uncle, and he was loving Michael so much that he was personally involved in his upbringing and gave his niece who was like a daughter to him in marriage to Michael to create stronger ties with him. Theodore II was also his relative as being the son of his "uncle" John III and he was Michael's "cousin." Even though usurpers generally wanted to differentiate themselves from the ones that they replaced,[338] Michael wanted to emphasize his relationship with the Laskarids and establish a link between him and them. Michael, being aware of the bad reputation he had and the existence of a strong pro-Laskarid opposition to him, wanted to create an image of him related with the name of the Laskarids. Therefore, among the points that he made, the most important one seems to be his efforts of associating himself with the Laskarids to portray himself as a rightful heir to the throne which would be the main tool for his legitimization of the usurpation.

[338] Angelov, "Power and Subversion," 9.

4.2 Laskarids and Palaiologans in the *History* of Georgios Akropolites: a *kaiserkritik* of the Laskarids

The *History* written by Akropolites covers the period from 1203 to 1261, thus it can be called as the history of the Nicaean State. His narrative contains many autobiographical information as he is one of the active characters in the narrative. He wrote his account during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos and he wrote under his patronage; he was the grand logothete in Michael's court while writing his history.[339] It is probably as a result of this fact that, unlike the account of Pachymeres, in Akropolites the good and the bad in the Laskarids versus Palaiologan dichotomy changes sides; this time the faulty Laskarids are compared with the excellence of Palaiologans. His main aim was to justify Michael Palaiologos' rule as the proper emperor, and the role of the Nicaean State for the continuation of imperial succession.[340] His account resembles the autobiographical information that Michael provides in his *typika*: he also emphasizes the noble ancestry of Michael VIII and God's intervention in his accession to the throne. However, the additional aspect of Akropolites' account was his criticism directed to the Laskarids, especially to Theodore II after whom Michael Palaiologos took hold of the throne.

In the preface, just like Pachymeres, Akropolites states that he does not write because of hatred or favor but only for the sake of history so the things will not be forgotten by time. His favor for Michael, however, makes itself felt in the account even though Akropolites' claim of no such inclination. For example, Akropolites demonstrates dislike for the people who were appointed by or close to Theodore II whereas he favors the ones around Michael VIII Palaiologos.[341] Also his preference

[339] Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 257.
[340] Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History,* 31.
[341] Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History,* 41.

for mentioning or omitting certain things, and his explanation of the events seems to be affected by his favor as well. He does not mention things like justice, patronage, charities, or the orthodoxy of emperors in his account; Macrides believes this could be the result of the fact that John III Vatatzes excels Michael in these regards.[342] Also his explanation of events with the divine intervention is highly related with his pro-Palaiologan stance. In the *History* he does not give many references to divine intervention, he rather prefers to explain things rationally; however, divine intervention seems to be at work when it comes to the affairs of Palaiologans. As Macrides points that ten out of fourteen references for divine intervention in Akropolites are related with Palaiologans and their relatives.[343] For example Michael's reconquest of Constantinople was a result of God's intervention.

4.2.1 Portrayal of Laskarids in the *History*

The first of the Laskarids receives quite a mixed evaluation from Akropolites, he is portrayed neither in a fully negative way nor in a positive one. Concerning his appearance Akropolites relates him as someone "small in body" and "quite dark" with "eyes differing slightly in color."[344] Regarding his character, Akropolites says his "temper" and "sexual pleasures" overcomes him. Whereas in matters of war he was "fierce," he gained many successes in the east and west; moreover, he was the one who ensured the continuation of Roman rule thus Romans must show him "gratitude."[345] Throughout the account Akropolites refers to the Nicaean State as the real continuator of Roman imperial rule; this attitude of him can be understood as he was a subject of that empire; moreover, Michael was an emperor of the Nicaean

[342] Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History,* 44.
[343] Macrides, *George Akropolites, The History,* 55.
[344] Akropolites, *The History,* 18, 157.
[345] Akropolites, *The History,* 18, 157.

State. Therefore, it was a must for Akropolites to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Nicaean State as the Roman rule. Therefore, this attitude of Akropolites can be linked to his portrayal of Theodore I; he needed to acknowledge him to a certain degree to acknowledge the state he created. However, he also had to belittle Theodore's character so that he might portray Laskarid dynasty as a negative counter of the Palaiologans.

When it comes to John III, the first notice of his reign starts with his military successes, and with a comment on his "brave spirit" in matters of war.[346] In the following pages he is also praised as being "most suited for command" and as someone who can govern well; and this praise was put in the mouth of a Latin ruler.[347] In addition to his military engagements, John was also "skillful" at solving problems with diplomacy. Akropolites states that the military successes of the emperor were a source of great pleasure for the subjects. He also describes John as a gentle and compassionate man and says that he ruled "well and wisely."[348]

Even though Akropolites seems to be praising John's military achievements, John cannot escape to be criticized for his preferences in the battlefield; Akropolites states that John was afraid of close combats and he was mostly able to win victories as a result of his stubborn characteristic that made him wait for a long time in the lands of the enemy so that the enemy gets exhausted.[349] Hence, Akropolites both seems to be praising his military successes and questioning his victories.

Beside this, John was also described by Akropolites as a man with passion for women, even worse he was acting like a "slave" for the desires of his mistress. In

[346] Akropolites, *The History,* 22, 166.
[347] Akropolites, 27,184. According to Akropolites, John of Brienne, the king of Jerusalem after his arrival at Constantinople had thought in such a way concerning John III Vatatzes.
[348] Akropolites, *The History,*
[349] Akropolites, *The History*, 52, 271.

one occasion Akropolites compares John III with his wife Eirene and this comparison seems like a hidden criticism for John. Eirene was more "manly" and "imperial" than her husband,[350] which can be considered as a pun intended for John; both a reminder of the fact he was not imperial by blood, and a reference on him not acting accordingly to his imperial dignity. Moreover, describing him as being less manly than his wife must be considered as a kind of insult for the man.

Moreover, Akropolites also criticizes John for showing much generosity to the foreign ambassadors that he did not show to his own subjects.[351] However, as it is discussed above in this thesis John III Vatatzes had a reputation for being so generous to the people and engaging in many philanthropic activities. Moreover, Akropolites also disregards John's reputation as a blessed person which caused by his good treatment of his subjects; Akropolites claims that John's son Theodore treated his subjects so bad that people regarded John as a blessed person in comparison.[352] Therefore, it must be questioned why Akropolites chose to portray him differently. Regarding this, one can claim it to be related to his portrayal of Michael as the representation of good ruler as opposed to the Laskarids.

He also adds that everyone, but especially the ones in the army and the palace had lost many things in the time of John III like being troubled in terms of money and properties.[353] This statement reveals the tension between the noble families and aristocrats of the empire and the Laskarids. Considering that these noble families that were treated bad by the Laskarids had supported Michael's usurpation, it is important to see here a reference to that people's dislike for the Laskarids. It is also among the proofs that support the argument that the tension between the supporters of Laskarids

[350] Akropolites, *The History,* 23, 170. Macrides, 57.
[351] Akropolites, *The History,* 52, 271. Macrides, 56.
[352] Akropolites, *The History,* 52, 271. Macrides, 57.
[353] Akropolites, *The History,* 52, 271.

and Palaiologans was a tension of lower and higher classes along with being a tension of center and periphery. It is not surprising that someone like Akropolites who portrays himself as a noble person sides with the other noble families in support of Palaiologan side. Consequently, when we examine his account on the reign of John III Vatatzes it is clear that he receives quite a negative representation than a positive one compared to his predecessor.

When it comes to the reign of Theodore II Laskaris, his account starts with a negative preview of the reign. Akropolites states that those who had lost things in the reign of his father expected Theodore to fix their situation; however, it did not turn out as they hoped. According to Akropolites what made them to hope in this way was Theodore's "cheerful" manners and "his gentle behavior;" however, all these were "deceptive" gestures of the emperor and he acted "hypocritical."[354]

Akropolites also emphasizes that Theodore treated his subjects and those who were under his comment so badly; which can be read in the light of his class consciousness.[355] Akropolites criticizes Laskarids in several occasions concerning their treatment of the nobles or title holders, and their preference for the men of lower origins. As it is discussed before in this thesis, John III and Theodore II Laskaris preferred men of merit to the members of noble families; this seems to be a disturbing move for the consideration of Akropolites. It can be clearly observed in the following example: while Akropolites mentions one of the expeditions of Theodore early in his reign, he mentions the names of several people appointed by Theodore to high offices. One of such men was Constantine Margarites whom Theodore appointed him as a commander. Akropolites says he was previously a

[354] Akropolites, *The History,* 52, 282-283.
[355] Imperial criticism that is driven by the personal interests and class consciousness of the author is among the characteristic features of Byzantine *kaiserkritik* according to Tinnefeld. See Tinnefeld *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik* and chapter 3 of this thesis.

soldier in a theme, but Theodore considered him as a capable man to serve in the palace; this shows how Theodore based his decision of appointing to the capability of the man. However, while describing him, Akropolites says he was "a peasant born of peasants" who was raised with "barley and bran."[356] It is evident that Akropolites regarded a man of such origins as someone unworthy of high honors and titles. He also makes similar comments for many others who were raised in the ranks by Theodore II. For example, Georgios Mouzalon and his brother Andronikos were also hated by Akropolites; he emphasizes that Theodore loved Georgios Mouzalon the most[357] and even calls him as "his beloved Mouzalon."[358] While relating that Theodore appointed the Mouzalon brothers to high ranks Akropolites says they were "pitiful men," not worthy of such honors but "worth no more than three obols".[359]

The same applies to the appointment of the patriarch Arsenios by Theodore II as well. Regarding the appointment of a new patriarch, Akropolites says that emperors want to find someone who fits their liking, someone who would not oppose the emperor. He repeats the same judgment concerning the appointment of Arsenios. Akropolites says that the most suited person for the title was Blemmydes –being whose student Akropolites took a great pride in—, but both Blemmydes and Theodore were not willing. Blemmydes was unwilling because he knew the character of the emperor; Theodore, on the other hand, would rather prefer someone that could listen to his wishes. To achieve his goal, Theodore preferred a man named Arsenios, who was just a simple monk at the time and who only had a little education. The emperor ordered bishops to raise Arsenios to the throne; to do so he was made first

[356] Akropolites, *The History,* 60, 297.
[357] Akropolites *The History,* 60, 297.
[358] Akropolites, *The History,* 59, 292.
[359] Akropolites, *The History,* 60, 298.

deacon, then priest, and finally patriarch only within a day, claims Akropolites.[360] Therefore, Akropolites both criticizes the Laskarid emperor for his appointment of an unworthy man to such a high office, while at the same time he belittles Arsenios and reveals the inappropriateness of the process of his accession as he was one of the main rivals of Michael VIII Palaiologos.

Among the emperors he narrates about, Theodore II was the one who was closest to Akropolites and whom Akropolites knew the most as Theodore was his student. However, what made him so rival against Theodore might be an incident that took place between the two that ended up with Akropolites being beaten by the order of Theodore. It was concerning the Russian ruler Ouros' break of his oath to the emperor that somehow Theodore blamed Akropolites for. Akropolites refuses emperor's accusation and stop answering to his insistent questions on the matter. Theodore getting mad and filled with anger ordered him to be beaten.[361] After this event, Akropolites states that he never acted intimate to emperor as he was before.[362]

The last incident Akropolites mentions concerning Theodore II was his appointment of Georgios Mouzalon as regent for his little son John. He claims, even though Theodore claimed this to be for the benefit of his son, it was actually for the benefit of Mouzalon.[363] Therefore, for one last time Akropolites showcases his hatred for Mouzalon and appointments of Theodore. This marks the end of his account of the reign of Theodore II.

When we examine the overall image depicted by Akropolites concerning the Laskarids we encounter with a negative portrait. The one who gets the least amount of criticism was the first of the Laskarids both because Akropolites did not know

[360] Akropolites, *The History,* 53, 277-278.
[361] Akropolites, *The History,* 63, 305-307.
[362] Akropolites, *The History,* 66, 319.
[363] Akropolites, *The History,* 75, 339.

much about him and because he respected him as the continuator and savior of Roman imperial tradition. However, as we discussed before this attitude of him is highly related with his relationship with Michael and his efforts to legitimize Michael's rule as the emperor of the Romans whose claim for the throne was based on his Nicaean past. John III cannot escape from receiving criticism from Akropolites, even though he was the one who introduced him into palace and granted him the education he received. His negative portrayal especially show itself in and after the narration of his court for Michael's case. Therefore, his criticism was highly related to his treatment of Michael. Among the three Theodore II receives the highest amount of criticism. This was because he treated the nobles/higher classes, Akropolites, and Michael badly. Akropolites himself could not run away from the wrath of the emperor, the class that Akropolites portrays himself as belonging to also was the target of Theodore's mistreatment, and finally Michael Palaiologos who Akropolites was a supporter of and who sponsored Akropolites was also treated badly by him. Moreover, it was Theodore II following whose reign Michael usurped the throne by disregarding his appointment of the regent; this Akropolites also had to legitimize by portraying him as a mad person and a bad ruler. Unlike Pachymeres, who depicts the Laskarids rulers as the example of ideal emperor, Akropolites' narrative does not depict such an image as it would not serve for the purpose of his writing. He depicted the Laskarids in a way it might serve for the propaganda of the current rule of Michael. As a consequence, Akropolites *kaiserkritik* directed to the Laskarids was connected to his personal interest, his class consciousness, and the legitimization of the party he supports.

4.2.2 Portrayal of Palaiologans in the *History*

The first appearance of a Palaiologan happens in the first pages of Akropolites' account along with the Laskarids; Alexios Palaiologos –great grandfather of Michael VIII— is mentioned as the son-in-law of the emperor just like Theodore Laskaris was.[364] Akropolites also mentions the grandfather of Michael, Andronikos Palaiologos, who was married to the eldest daughter of Theodore I and was given the title of despot.[365] It might not be a coincidence that Akropolites mentions the names of grandfathers of Michael as the first sons-in-law of ruling emperors; thus showing that the Palaiologan family was considered as the suitable heirs for the throne. However, both of the cases ended with the death of Palaiologans and a second marriage of the emperors' daughters.

It is not surprising to see Michael's father Andronikos Palaiologos was also mentioned in the narrative. Akropolites says he was the *megas domestikos* under John III and he was trusted in military affairs by the emperor.[366] He was counted among the "distinguished men" that accompanies the emperor in his expeditions as the director of the army.[367] Akropolites mentions his name again and again in several occasions which shows his stand in political and military affairs as a respected man by the emperor. One of such occasions is about his advice about an attack to the town of Serres; while others advised the opposite way, Andronikos Palaiologos advised the emperor to attack on the town by supporting his advice with several arguments. This, Akropolites concludes by stating that, the emperor considered as an "excellent advice."[368] The last occasion Andronikos appears in the narrative is the

[364] Akropolites, *The History,* 5, 114.
[365] Akropolites, *The History,* 15, 148.
[366] Akropolites, *The History,* 28, 187.
[367] Akropolites, *The History*, 40,215.
[368] Akropolites, *The History,* 43, 225-226.

one that we are introduced with Michael as his eldest son. It was after the capture of Thessaloniki in 1246 that Akropolites narrates that Andronikos was left in there to govern as he was the "most intelligent and gentle man, well-acquainted with arming for battle and governing…"[369] The use of the adjective 'most gentle' for a subject of the emperor is an exceptional situation, and Macrides suggests that this shows how Akropolites wanted to attribute imperial qualities to him.[370] Akropolites ends the narration of Akropolites with such comments and establishing an imperial outlook he paves the way for the introduction of Michael.

Michael's first mention in the narrative comes along with his father's stay in Thessaloniki; Michael was left in Serres and Melenikon to guard the towns under the command of his father. Akropolites does not miss the opportunity to manifest Michael's future office from his first appearance in the account. Introducing him as Michael Komnenos –thus he demonstrates his descendance from the former dynasty—, Akropolites states that he will be the future ruler of the Roman state in whose control the imperial office was raised with fortune and honor.[371]

Second appearance of Michael is related to an accusation of plot. He was reported to the emperor John III by Manglavites, a powerful local of the town Melenikon. Emperor arrange a court to investigate the accusation. Akropolites says he was involved in the court as a judge, and his account is clearly defending the side of Michael as the victim of a false-accusation resulted by a misunderstanding. Akropolites narrates this event with details in a quite long section, thus, it is better to follow his account and look into details he shares to clear Michael.

[369] Akropolites, *The History,* 46,241-242.
[370] Macrides, *The History,* 243 see note 3.
[371] Akropolites, *The History,* 46, 242.

Following the death of Demetrios Tornikes, who was a relative of Michael, Michael was sorry, feeling "distressed" and he looked "sullen." This appearance of him lead a questioning among some of the people around him; one person expressed his suggestion that his distress cannot be solely related to Tornikes, he might have some plans regarding the emperor that distresses him. And the other suggested that if he really has any plan against the emperor it would not be bad for the people, and Michael would be able to create a marriage alliance with Bulgars which is beneficial for the population of western regions. Then, one of these men went to the abovementioned Manglavites and related the conversation; Manglavites reported this to the emperor as a plan of plot. The men were questioned but they declare that Michael had nothing to do with it, it was just their supposition. They were tortured to learn the truth, but they stayed true to their words.[372] Even though here Akropolites provides an account that tries to reveal the misunderstanding concerning the accusation against Michael; it is strange that he makes the two men approach to such a plot by Michael in a positive way by declaring that it would not be bad for the people as he was a great man. Thus, even though he is trying to prove Michael innocent of any plot, he is inserting the idea that he would make a good ruler.

However, the accusation against him did not came to an end there and Michael was called to prove his innocence by an ordeal with red-hot iron. He refused it by saying that he was innocent and there was no one accusing him. He continued by stating that no living being could be able to not burn from a red-hot iron placed in their hands; and he was no exception to this since he was not a man who could show miracles. He also replied the metropolitan Phokas, who insisted him to engage in ordeal for his own good, by saying that if he wants Michael to prove his innocence

[372] Akropolites, *The History,* 50, 260-261.

by such an ordeal, he –as a holy man— himself must hand the iron to Michael with his own hands which must not burn him according to his logic. This was refused by Phokas, he said it was a barbarian practice and not a divine thing to perform, but it was practiced as a result of imperial order.[373] Through this conversation Akropolites both shows the logical and clever character of Michael as well as he indirectly accuses the emperor for performing barbarian practices.

He also accuses the emperor John III for not caring about the truth but wanting to found Michael guilty without any proof. Akropolites claims that the emperor wanted everyone to vote with him against Michael, but those who were the lovers of truth like Akropolites himself did not do so. Akropolites states that many sided with Michael because he was "gentle," "gracious," "skillful," "mature," and intelligent. Moreover, Akropolites states his belief that God wanted to prepare Michael for the future; having lived this experience, when he will be the emperor he might not immediately believe in false accusations.[374] With this account Akropolites situates Michael and John III in opposing sides. Michael here portrayed as an innocent man whereas John is the one who accuses him without an evidence. Michael was the one who stated his cause with logical words whereas John demanded for illogical ordeal. Michael defends himself by stating that there is no one accusing him whereas John is torturing the abovementioned two men to make them witness against Michael.

Comparing this account with the Pachymeres' one makes it clearer that Akropolites only dwells on certain aspects of the trial to make Michael look innocent. He is only concerned with the way he is judged with illogical means, but he does not really reveal what he was accused of. The end result that Michael was

[373] Akropolites, *The History,* 50, 261-262.
[374] Akropolites, *The History,* 50, 262-263.

married to a niece of the emperor John III and he was moved to a place in Asia Minor shows that he was really suspected of creating a marriage alliance with a western power to plot against the emperor. Moreover, Akropolites states that the reason why Michael was not punished is his family relations and his "intimacy with the magnates;" therefore, even he himself reveals that there might be other reasons to close the case rather than only his alleged innocence. In addition to this, Michael was also required to swore oaths of loyalty to the emperor in the presence of the patriarch.[375] All these makes it look like the accusation was stronger than Akropolites narrates it and emperor tried to take measures against a future threat from Michael.

A later mention of Michael was again related to an alleged plot; it was the time when he fled to the Turks. After hearing the incident, Akropolites says that emperor Theodore II called him and asked him his opinion about the matter. He claims to defend Michael against Theodore by stating that Michael would never act against the Romans, and the reason of his escape was the threats and mistreatment of the emperor which made Michael to fear for his life.[376] It is clear here that Akropolites provides a similar explanation for the escape of Michael to the Turks and his loyalty for the Romans as Michael himself provides in his *typika*. Therefore, it is evident one more time that Akropolites wrote his work from the viewpoint of Michael to legitimize his actions.

Concerning Michael's accession to the throne, Akropolites does not held him responsible from the murder of Mouzalon by the army; instead he indicates it was a group of people from army and nobles that lost many things under the rule of

[375] Akropolites, *The History,* 51, 268.
[376] Akropolites, *The History,* 64, 312-313.

Laskarids.[377] Then, it was an assembly of members of clergy, military and senate that agreed on Michael Palaiologos as the most suitable candidate for the duty.[378] Moreover, it was not Michael who asked for receiving higher dignities and proclaiming as co-emperor, but it was the ones who concerned for public affairs raised him to this ranks.[379] Just like the *typika* of Michael VIII, Akropolites also does not mention John IV and what happened to him in his account after the murder of Mouzalon. Therefore, once again his account provides a similar narrative to those of Michael as both omit John IV and both mention that Michael was offered these dignities by others.

Michael gets praise from Akropolites in several occasions. Michael was rational according to Akropolites, this characteristic of him situates Michael against the irrational nature of Theodore II as he was depicted by Akropolites. Michael was also someone who is "strong in arm and brave in disposition."[380] Beside this, unlike the former rulers Michael was generous to everyone,[381] Akropolites does not specify his 'generous' approach to the members of senate. Michael also possessed "goodness" and was ready "to do good".[382] And it was Michael who brought the "light of the sun," calmness, spring, and pleasure to the Romans.[383]

Consequently, Akropolites' *History* can be considered as a work of propaganda written for Michael VIII to legitimize his rule and justify his actions as in the case of *typika* that are discussed above. He provides a *kritik* for the Laskarids in his account, especially for Theodore II. Keeping in mind the events that took place

[377] Akropolites, *The History,* 75, 339.
[378] Akropolites, *The History,* 75, 339-340.
[379] Akropolites, *The History,* 77, 346.
[380] Akropolites, *The History,*71, 330.
[381] Akropolites, *The History,* 78, 351.
[382] Akropolites, *The History,* 84, 371.
[383] Akropolites, *The History,* 78, 351.

after the usurpation of throne by Michael VIII that were discussed previously in this thesis, one would not expect Akropolites to not being aware of the existence of an anti-Palaiologan party that were mainly pro-Laskarid as a reaction to Michael's usurpation. He also must be aware of the use of the name and memory of the Nicaean rule as a tool for criticism against Michael. Therefore, it is not surprising to encounter a negative portrayal of Laskarids in a work written for the propaganda of Michael.

As opposed to the criticism that Laskarid rulers receive Palaiologans are praised in the account of Akropolites. He devotes several references to the ancestors of Michael and they always depicted in a constructive way. He describes them as men being worthy of imperial dignity. Thus, just like his ancestors, Michael was a man that is worthy of the office that he occupies. He was destined to be the ruler of the empire; it was God who opened the way for him and tested him in several occasions to prepare him for the future. Michael was the definition of the ideal ruler with everything he achieved and depicted in a good light. Hence, Akropolites' work reveals the standpoint of pro-Palaiologan party and it coincides with the official propaganda of Michael delivered by himself.

4.3 Andronikos II's interference for resolution

Andronikos II had to face the bad reputation of his father as a result of his acts of usurpation, excommunication, and the union of churches which also threated the legitimacy and continuity of his dynasty. Andronikos II had to overcome all the threats posed by anti-Palaiologan factions: both the supporters of Laskarids and Arsenites. To find a middle ground between the opposing parties he engaged in many

mild policies towards his opponents and tried to dissociate themselves from his father.

Michael's policy of Union was so hated among his subjects; Andronikos had embraced the union when his father was still alive, but after the death of his father he took an opposing stand. He tried to dissociate himself from his father's religious policies.[384] He did not arrange an imperial funeral for his father, not even he was buried with any religious rite or ceremony which was due to Michael's unorthodox stance.[385] After his death who opposed his stance became much more vocal in their opposition and the first maneuver of Andronikos II as the emperor was to restore the Orthodoxy.[386]

Andronikos was opposite of his father in character and he was not a good soldier. Michael was not pleased with him and he wanted his younger son Constantine as the heir to the throne. What stopped Michael from appointing Constantine as the heir was his status as a usurper, Laiou claims; being aware of his reception as the usurper, Michael did not want to open the legitimacy of his dynasty for further questioning.[387] Laiou believes that it is not a coincidence that Andronikos II replaced all the men who was close to his father after his death; and "his tolerance for the religious and political groups" that were opponents of his father was a result of his emotional reaction to his father.[388]

Moreover, as opposed to his father, Andronikos' interest was mostly based in Asia Minor. He tried to defend Asia Minor and reorganize state policies concerning

[384] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 21.
[385] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 30-31.
[386] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 32.
[387] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 6.
[388] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 7.

the region.[389] Andronikos spent three years of his reign in Asia Minor from 1290 to 1293, his motivation must be a political one: to make his presence –thus, the presence and interest of the state— felt in the region.[390] However, his efforts does not seems to be received well by the population of the region as they continued their anti-Palaiologan stance.

As we discussed before, Andronikos also showed his respect for the Laskarid figures that considered to be holy by their supporters. It was Andronikos who transported the body of John IV Laskaris to the Monastery of St. Demetrios which was an establishment of his father Michael VIII. This can be considered to done with a purpose of a compromise between the pro-Laskarid and Palaiologan parties,[391] and as an apology for the deeds of his father. Considering that Andronikos even visited John Laskaris when he was alive while he was going to Asia Minor; asked for his forgiveness regarding the wrongdoings of his father against John and wanted John to recognize him as emperor[392] supports the above argument. These, one can argue, are the indicators of the fact that to strengthen his stand in the throne Andronikos II had to acknowledge the past mistakes and dissociate himself from them by showing his respect to the John and his memory.

Another similar example was Andronikos' transportation of the body of the patriarch Arsenios. Andronikos' action might have two political aims: one is about the current crisis, so he wanted to ease Arsenites to end the schism, and the other is again might be about his trying to dissociate himself from the wrongdoings of his father.

[389] For details see Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*.
[390] Laiou, *Constantinople and Latins*, 79.
[391] Sevcenko, "Notes on Stephen," 173-175.
[392] Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 99.

His own reputation and the fame of his family was troubled by both the acts of his father and his own support to his father's policy –along with his father, he also signed the agreement made with the Pope—. It cannot be a coincidence the sanctification of all the afore mentioned saints took place in the time of Andronikos and their relics were transferred to Constantinople by him. Also, we observe the revival of hagiographies and miracle collections during the reign of Andronikos II,[393] being related to the restoration of Orthodoxy. Therefore, all these reasons led Andronikos II to recognize the respect that this people deserved and, in a way, condemn his father by this sort of acts to guarantee the future of his and his family's rule, and may be to save his soul from his former sin of acknowledging the union.

Andronikos was not the only member of Michael's family that dissociated themselves from the memory of Michael. Michael's wife Theodora also engaged in a similar action. She does not mention the name of her husband in the *typikon* she issued for the Monastery of Lips.[394] The only reference to Michael mentions him not as her husband but as the father of Andronikos. Talbot claims this to be related with the policy of union adopted by Michael in his lifetime. When Michael died, she reconfessed her Orthodox beliefs for the salvation of her soul from sin.[395] When the Union of Lyons was accepted by Michael VIII, Theodora was sympathized with the anti-unionists; however, officially she followed the policy of her husband.[396]

After the death of her husband, she renounced her decision and returned to her Orthodox belief; moreover, she agreed that Michael will never receive a Christian burial.[397] She designed the church of St. John the Baptist as a mausoleum

[393] Talbot, "Hagiography in Late Byzantium," 179.
[394] Palaiologina, "*Typikon* of Theodora Palaiologina for the Convent of Lips in Constantinople."
[395] Talbot, "Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII."
[396] Talbot, "Empress Theodora," 297.
[397] Talbot, "Empress Theodora," 298.

for her family; she mentions herself, her mother and her children as the ones that can be buried in the monastery.[398] Since Michael was denied Christian burial his name is not mentioned among those who can be buried there, his name is also not in the list of those to be commemorated in the monastery.[399]

Therefore, being aware of the threat that the reputation of Michael poses to their family; the relatives of Michael chose the way of dissociating themselves from his memory. And in the case of Andronikos II, he even embraced the memory of Laskarids by paying his respect to them which can be considered as an attempt to associate his name with the memory of the Laskarids to secure his rule from any oppositional movements in the name of abovementioned figures.

4.4 Conclusion

An examination of the two *typika* issued by Michael Palaiologos along with the *History* written by Akropolites, and the steps taken by Andronikos II had enabled us to see the ways in which Palaiologans themselves made use of the Nicaean memory as a tool for their own propaganda. It is evident in Michael' autobiographical account that he tries to create a kinship association with himself and the Laskarids hoping it would justify himself as the rightful heir of the throne after the Laskarids. To strengthen his stand he makes no mention of John IV in his accounts, and he portrays close links between himself and former Laskarid emperors. He also justifies his actions taken against the Laskarids and emphasizes his loyalty to their rule all of which served his goal to legitimize his usurpation of the throne.

[398] Talbot, "Empress Theodora", 299. For a detailed account on the burials there see Marinis, "Tombs and Burials in the monastery tou Libos in Constantinople."
[399] Talbot, "Empress Theodora," 303.

Akropolites' account provides also a similar narrative to the one of Michael VIII. In his work he praises the ancestors of Michael and emphasizes that all his ancestry including him are worthy of imperial dignity. Moreover, he depicts a positive image of Michael as Pachymeres did for Laskarid rulers. Whereas, his depiction of Laskarids is highly different than the one Pachymeres provides. He mostly criticizes the members of the previous dynasty both in terms of their personality and their rule of the state. His criticism especially directed to the last reigned emperor of the Laskarids, Theodore II, who Akropolites portrays in comparison with Michael in a dichotomy of bad and good ruler. Just like Michael, Akropolites also does not mention the events took place during the usurpation of Michael nor he mentions what happened to John IV Laskaris. His account reveals his stand in favor of Michael VIII Palaiologos just like many other high rank and noble originated supporters of him. Akropolites' stance is influenced by his own interest and his class consciousness as Laskarids were associated with the lower classes more. Therefore, combined with his personal interest and Michael' patronage his account offers a negative image of Laskarids as opposed to a positive one of Michael.

Lastly, Andronikos II also tried to legitimize his rule with creating an association with the Laskarids but his approach was different than the two above examples. What he did was an attempt of dissociating himself from the memory and bad reputation of his own father and associating his rule with the memory of Laskarids. What he did to achieve this end was that he asked for forgiveness and recognition as emperor from John IV and he showed his respect for his memory by placing his body in the monastery that was built for his father. Moreover, he also showed his respect for the patriarch Arsenios in a similar fashion by transporting his

body to Hagia Sophia hoping that it would create a resolution for the Arsenite opposition.

Consequently, Palaiologans and pro-Palaiologans also made use of the memory of Nicaean rule in different ways for their own good and propaganda. While one tried to make peace with their memory and supporters, the other tried to create bonds between themselves and Laskarids, and also supported the criticism directed towards them from an unofficial point both of which would serve for their legitimization in the end.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to analyze the importance of the Laskarid name for the opposition of Palaiologan rule in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century Byzantium. The ways in which Byzantines reacted to the usurpation of the throne by Michael VIII Palaiologos and how their reaction took different shapes were among the main questions of this study. Several sources have been examined in an attempt to understand the creation of a Laskarid versus Palaiologan dichotomy as the representatives of good and bad government that was used as a tool for political opposition and criticism. Besides this, the Palaiologan reaction to the opposition in the name of the Laskarids has also been analyzed.

To have a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, the thesis first provided a brief historical background of the Nicaean state and its political and social conditions. Then, an account of Michael Palaiologos' usurpation of the throne from John IV Laskaris has been given. The given context enables the reader to comprehend the reasons behind the existence of such an opposition against the Palaiologan rule in the name of the Laskarids.

After the historical background, the thesis dealt with the political opposition and reactions that emerged after the act of usurpation. It started from immediate political and social opposition against the act of usurpation in the form of defending the right of John Laskaris; this defense sometimes took the form of a revolt in the name of John Laskaris, or the emergence of the Arsenite schism. The first one is the Nicaean/Anatolian revolt that took place in 1262 at a frontier zone near Nicaea

where a pseudo-John appeared and gained the support of people to defend his rights. This event is important as it shows the inhabitant of the Anatolian borders were highly attached and loyal to the Laskarids due to the Laskarids' good treatment of them as opposed to Michael's distancing from them. Besides this, another pseudo-John was also used as a political tool against Palaiologans. The second pseudo-John appeared this time in the west, at the court of Charles d'Anjou. The significance of this incident comes from the fact that even a foreign enemy of Michael VIII had brought the name of Laskaris to the front. This can be considered as a clear indication that Charles was aware of the interval problems that Michael VIII was facing; the support of Laskarids must have been strong within the Byzantine realms so that Charles thought having John with him can assure support from within.

The immediate reactions then took the form of a general opposition against Palaiologans and the memory of the Laskarid rulers was used for this. This is evident in the later revolts and oppositions that took place to restore the Laskarid dynasty or the sanctification of Laskarid related figures as the victims of Palaiologan mistreatment as if they were martyrs. The revolts of Philanthropenos and John Drimys can be taken as proper examples of this. Even though the first one was not directly related to the name of Laskarids, it was supported by those who sympathized with the Laskarids and wee opponents of Michael for that reason. Its importance lies in the fact that one more time it shows the anti-Palaiologan stand of the Anatolian population. The latter, however, was directly related to the cause of the Laskarids. John Drimys claimed to be a member of the Laskarid dynasty and the legitimate heir of the throne. He managed to gather huge support from different strata of the society. Even though his claim of being a Laskarid was not strong, people chose to support

him anyway; this is another sign that anti-Palaiologan parties united under the name of Laskarids as it represented an important foil for their opposition.

Another important issue was the sanctification of political figures in the early Palaiologan period. These new saints were not related to the religious realm or recognized for their ascetic value; instead, they were the faces of anti-Palaiologan opposition. This sanctification also demonstrates the perception of the Laskarids in the minds of people; they were related to the 'good old days' and 'the ideal model of a good rule.' Therefore, the first chapter revealed the ways in which the memory of Nicaean rule was used both by internal and external enemies of the Palaiologans. The sympathy towards the Laskarids and the positive image of their reign was still apparent in people's minds so that their name continued to be a significant device for the people who opposed the Palaiologans.

Laskarids also became a historical foil of criticism for the policies of the Palaiologans and the memory of the Nicaean rule served aa a tool for *kaiserkritik*. Social, fiscal, and military policies of the Nicaeans were compared with the policies of the Palaiologans along with their personal traits to criticize the latter. Nicaean rulers and their policies were used as the ideal model to define while relating the mismanagement of Palaiologan rule. Their memory on its own became a tool for the imperial criticism of the time period. All these things were analyzed in the third chapter of this thesis. Chapter three examined the written criticism, and the main source that was analyzed was the *Historia* of Georgios Pachymeres. Pachymeres' work was analyzed in terms of its critical stand. After providing information on the patterns and methods of Byzantine *kaiserkritik*, and the life and motives of Pachymeres to compose his history, *Historia* was analyzed within the given framework of Byzantine *kaiserkritik.*

The patterns of Byzantine *kaiserkritik* can be divided into two categories: the traditional one, which was followed from the sixth century onwards and the new themes that were introduced in the twelfth century as a response to Komnenian politics. Traditional criticism was mainly based on the personality of the emperor along with a moral and ideological judgment of the emperor based on an image of an ideal ruler. Whereas, in the twelfth century, criticism changed its direction from the persona of the ruler to a criticism of the system in which the emperor uses his power and the policies of the rulers. New themes like the emperor's treatment of his subjects, his favoritism, and public accountability on financial matters emerged at the time.

Pachymeres' history provided a great number of critical statements about the Palaiologan administration. Pachymeres' account merged the two models into one: he both criticized the emperor as a person as well as the way the system operated during his reign. Concerning the traditional patterns, immoral acts of Michael and some of his personality traits were criticized; while doing this Pachymeres' model for the ideal ruler to compare was the Laskarids. On the other hand, Pachymeres also criticized the financial and political policies of the emperors, like taxation practices, use of public sources, sales of offices all of which resemble the twelfth-century themes of *kaiserkritik*. For these matters too, Laskarids and their government were the foil to compare with the Palaiologans; their memory was associated with the good policies and order as opposed to instabilities and failures of the Palaiologans.

Besides Pachymeres' *Historia*, the chapter also mentioned other references to the Laskarids as the representatives of ideal rule in literary sources in the following decades. For instance, patriarch Kallistos used John Vatatzes' name as a 'fitting and proper' example of a generous emperor. Another example was Georgios of

Pelagonia's *vita* of John Vatatzes in which he described John as an imperial model for the current rulers of his time. In the preface of his work, he stated that his aim was to provide an example to his contemporaries to judge the Palaiologans; and in the work, he compared the virtues of John Vatatzes with the opposite character of the rulers of his time. Thus, even after more than a hundred years, the Laskarid memory was in the stage of politics as an oppositional and critical tool.

In the fourth chapter of the thesis, the use of Nicaean memory for the propaganda of their rule by the Palaiologans and their supporters has been examined. The ways in which the Palaiologans themselves reacted to this opposition were analyzed via some written sources and a few examples of events that took place at the time. How they tried to associate themselves with the memory of the Laskarids and emphasized their kinship relations to legitimize their hold of power was examined based on the documents issued by Michael himself. To achieve this end, two *typika* of Michael that he had issued for his monasteries were analyzed. These documents contain autobiographical information, and they were analyzed to see how Michael portrayed his take of the throne and how he tried to create a link between himself and the Laskarids by emphasizing their kinship relations, and how he legitimized his usurpation by emphasizing God's intervention. This analysis demonstrated his intention of portraying himself as the direct and rightful heir to the throne.

In addition to this, Akropolites' history was also analyzed in terms of its critical value and treatment of Laskarids and Michael. Akropolites' account provided us a portrait of a different take on the Nicaean memory as the bad ones to legitimize the Palaiologan rule unlike the account of Pachymeres. This time the criticism was directed to the Laskarids especially to Theodore II as the work aimed to propagate

Michael. To legitimize Michael, Akropolites also provided a similar account to the one that is provided in Michael's autobiography; however, unlike Michael, he criticized the Laskarids and created an overall negative image of them.

Then, chapter four closed with an analysis of Andronikos II's reign to see how he reacted to the situation. He was aware of the strong opposition that was directed to his family and the threat it posed. He tried to find a middle ground between the opposing party and his family and tried to dissociate himself from his father's policies by reversing most of them.

All these things and the emergence of a Laskarid versus Palaiologan dichotomy were the result of the usurpation of the throne from John IV Laskaris by Michael VIII Palaiologos. Michael helped to the creation of a symbol for the opposition of his own dynasty. His act of usurpation was the reason behind the emergence of Nicaean memory as a tool and foil for opposition and criticism. Even though he ended the physical presence of the Laskarid dynasty in the politics of the empire, he caused the creation of a discourse that positioned Laskarids against his dynasty. Thus, their name continued to live for decades, even for centuries in the minds of the opponents of Palaiologan rule. The memory of the Laskarids as a subversive means of criticism and opposition reached such a high level that even some members of Michael's own dynasty embraced the Laskarids and tried to dissociate themselves from Michael's memory.

This thesis aimed to provide an introduction for a discussion on the emergence and use of Nicaean memory as an oppositional tool and a means of *kaiserkritik*. For the purposes of precision within the limits of a master's thesis, two main historical works have been analyzed in this work along with some other written sources. For further studies on this subject, other written sources can be included and

analyzed like the histories of Blemmydes, Skoutariotes, and Gregoras, as well as orations, poems, hagiographies, etc. Also, the creation of a dichotomy between the two dynasties and the motivation of the pro-Laskarid party can be analyzed within the frame of class conflict and center-periphery relations with reference to the mainly Anatolian characteristics of the opposition.

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