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THEOPHYLACT OF OHRID BETWEEN
THE DOUKAI AND THE KOMNENOI

Along with Michael Psellos, Theophylact of Ohrid is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable scholar-courtiers of 11th-century Byzantium¹. The master and the pupil, however, represent two rather contrasting phenomena. Dynamic and authoritarian, Psellos is a living embodiment of the *βίος πρακτικός*: always heavily involved in the

1. The pioneering efforts of the 16th and 17th-century scholars (Baronio, Bellarmino, Labbé, Du Cange *et al.*) to establish a sounder picture of Theophylact's life circumstances resulted in the first comprehensive prosopographic work carried out by B. M. DE ROSSI (= DE RUBEIS) and B. FINETTI, the 18th-century editors of the complete literary opus of the Bulgarian archbishop (*Theophylacti Bulgariae archiepiscopi opera omnia sive quae hactenus edita sunt, sive quae nondum lucem viderunt*, I-IV, Venice 1754-1763; repr. 1864 in *PG* 123-126). The edition was prefaced by DE ROSSI's "Dissertatio de Theophylacti Bulgariae archiepiscopi aetate, gestis, & scriptis, ac doctrina", the first modern study of Theophylact's life and oeuvre (*Theophylacti opera*, I, Venice 1754, i-lxiv; repr. 1864 in *PG* 123, col. 9-130), which was further to be supplemented by a thorough description of all hitherto known works by Theophylact in FINETTI's Preface to the third volume (*Theophylacti opera*, III, Venice 1758, iii-xl; repr. 1864 in *PG* 125, col. 405-478). An important step forward, enabled by J.-P. Migne's (partially supplemented) re-edition of *Theophylacti opera*, as well as by new discoveries made in the meantime, was marked by the study of V. G. VASIL'EVSKIY, *Vizantiya i Pechenegi (1048-1094)*. Prilozh. III. Feofilakt Bolgarskiy i yego sochineniya [Byzantium and Pechenegs (1048-1094). App. III. Theophylact of Bulgaria and His Works], *ŽMNP* 164 (Dec. 1872) 306-316 (repr. in: *Trudy V. G. Vasil'evskago*, I, St Petersburg 1908, 134-149) [hereafter: VASIL'EVSKIY, Feofilakt]. Numerous studies in the 20th century culminated in a series of groundwork papers prepared by P. GAUTIER, especially his *L'épiscopat de Théophylacte Héphaistos, archevêque de Bulgarie*, *REB* 21 (1963) 159-178 [hereafter: GAUTIER, Épiscopat], and the extensive introductory monographs accompanying the latest up-to-date critical editions of Theophylact's discourses: *Théophylacte d'Achrida, Discours, traités, poésies* (ed. P. GAUTIER [CFHB 16/1, Thessaloniki 1980 [hereafter: GAUTIER, Théophylacte I]), and letters: *Théophylacte d'Achrida, Lettres* (ed. P. GAUTIER [CFHB 16/2], Thessaloniki 1986 [hereafter: GAUTIER, Théophylacte II]). The pastoral and educational work of the Bulgarian archbishop was seen in a new and more versatile perspective in the superb historical portrait by D. OBOLENSKY, drawn in his *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford 1988, 34-82. In this century, critical importance still retains the monograph by M. MULLETT, *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* [BBOM 2], Aldershot 1997 [hereafter: MULLETT, *Theophylact*], as well as a series of related papers by the same author.

current events on the political and cultural scene of the Byzantine capital, he acts as a reformer of the highest state institutions, an imperial minister and tutor, an ultimate arbiter in issues of succession to the throne as well as in the most serious political and strategic decisions of the day. On the other hand, Theophylact, one of the most gifted among those who came out of Psellos' cloak, features a true picture of a restrained and cautious intellectual in court service, a loyal subject who knows how to bridle his own self-initiative, largely allowing his professional and human fortunes to be orchestrated by external circumstances and the will of the superiors.

The occupation of the City's professor of rhetoric appears therefore to be the only authentic choice in the public career of Theophylact –the only one resulting from an entirely personal motive. However, the influential patrons from the leading aristocracy will nearly bring him into the very focus of courtly life, making him instrumental in a complicated game of various competing interests, personified in the elite representatives of the two co-governing families, the Doukai and the Komnenoi. In the backstage game, filled with lasting tension and muted rivalry of the two parties, the considerate and tactful servant mostly succeeds in keeping a foot in both camps, understandably “indefinite” between his powerful protectors –equally committedly offering his intellectual, i.e. paedagogical and rhetorical, services to both.

As a result of a decisive shift in power relations, and the ultimate disruption of balance for the benefit of only one, Komnenian side, a substantial change occurred also in the position of the court orator in his somewhat schizophrenic role of a double panegyrist. Having been bestowed with the rank of a high ecclesiastical dignitary with an appointment in a hugely important and sensitive border diocese –the arena of a lasting foreign-policy and spiritual-ideological crisis²– Theophylact will look upon his mixed blessing as an actual punishment of exile (possibly “deserved” by the untimely hesitation and delayed joining the “winning” side). Thus, the ambiguous reward served as an effective means of turning the undecided subject into a devoted servant of the newly established autocracy of the Komnenian *genos*, now undisturbed by the dynastic controversies of the opening phase.

Having accepted the burden of new responsibilities, indeed not without initial reluctance and strong resistance on his part, Theophylact will eventually come to a kind of spiritual reconciliation with the new environment. He will ultimately embrace it, not only as an object of the conscientious pastoral care, but also of intense intellectual attention and fruitful literary studies. Although the new intellectual familiarity with the local flock and its religious and cultural background will at length retain some of the condescending attitude of a “senior

2. M. ANGOLD, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261*, Cambridge 1995, 158-160 [hereafter: ANGOLD, *Church and Society*].

colonial official”, Theophylact’s literary oeuvre of the last, full-fledged stage of his career will not be marked only by a purely “scientific”, that is to say antiquarian interest in the positive facts of the local culture. It was actually motivated by deeper and broader objectives, imposed by the need for essential integration of the indigenous Slavic spiritual tradition into the main currents of Byzantine theological thought. By recognising and favouring all that in which the domestic tradition remained coherent with the authentic, canonical values of Eastern Orthodoxy, the archbishop of Ohrid will assume an invaluable role in the process of further Byzantinisation of Slavic spiritual space, precisely at the moment when the latter was facing a serious challenge in the form of the growing heresy of local origin³. Theophylact will be able to resist it by means of the orthodoxy of native provenance, by its Slavic saints and the local martyrs for faith⁴. Having

3. D. OBOLENSKY, *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*, Cambridge 1948, still occupies a seminal place in the vast bibliography on the Balkan Bogomilism. Among the other key monographs, the following are also to be mentioned: S. RUNCIMAN, *The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge 1947; Yo. IVANOV, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi* [Bogomil Books and Legends], Sofia 1925; D. ANGELOV, *Der Bogomilismus auf dem Gebiete des byzantinischen Reiches. Ursprung, Wesen und Geschichte I-II*, Sofia 1948-1950; IDEM, *Bogomilstvoeto v Bŭlgariya* [Bogomilism in Bulgaria], Sofia 1947; M. LOOS, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, Prague 1974; V. PARASKEVOPOULOU, *Some Aspects of the Phenomenon of Heresy in the Byzantine Empire and in the West, During the 11th and 12th Centuries*, Ann Arbor 1976; R. KUTZLI, *Die Bogumilen: Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur*, Stuttgart 1977; J. M. GEORGE, *The Dualistic-Gnostic Tradition in the Byzantine Commonwealth with Special Reference to the Paulician and Bogomil Movements*, Ann Arbor 1980; K. PAPASOV, *Christen oder Ketzer – die Bogomilen*, Stuttgart 1983. On a slightly revised assessment of the issue, see MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 59 n. 251 and 127 n. 225.

4. Theophylact devoted two hagiographic works to the local saints of the nearer and distant past respectively. The one is the *Life of St Clement of Ohrid*, printed in PG 126, col. 1193A-1240B, on the basis of the *Vita S. Clementis, episcopi Bulgarorum*, ed. F. MIKLOSICH, Vienna 1847, 1-34, which in its turn was based on the anonymous *editio princeps* of 1741, issued in Moschopolis; the *Life* is reviewed and critically edited by P. GAUTIER as part of his unpublished doctoral thesis *Deux oeuvres hagiographiques du pseudo-Théophylacte*, Paris 1968, 47-91; and once again released in a new critical edition by I. G. ILIEV, *Theophylacti Achridensis, archiepiscopi Bulgariae, scripta ad historiam Bulgariae pertinentia. Secunda pars. Vita S. Clementis Achridensis ...* [Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae IX/2], Sofia 1994, 11-41. The other hagiography is *The Martyrdom of the Fifteen Martyrs of Tiberiopolis/Stroumitza suffering during the reign of Julian the Apostate*, firstly issued by DE ROSSI – FINETTI, *Theophylacti opera* III, Venice 1758, 477-512, and reprinted in PG 126, col. 152A-221A; then critically edited by GAUTIER, *op. cit.*, 226-283; and re-edited by ILIEV, *op. cit.*, *Historia martyrii XV martyrum Tiberiopolitanorum*, 42-79 –this time by simply repeating the text of the PG (see ILIEV, *ibidem*, 7-8); it finally appeared in the recent critical edition by E.-S. ΚΙΑΡΙΔΟΥ, *Θεοφύλακτος Αχρίδος, Μαρτύριο των δεκαπέντε μαρτύρων της Τιβεριοπόλης* [Κείμενα Βυζαντινής Λογοτεχνίας 8], Athens 2015. See G. PODSKALSKY, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters in Bulgarien und Serbien 865-1459*, Munich 2000, 285-288. Gautier (with Miklosich, Snegarov, Maslev *et al.*) considered the compositions as inauthentic (GAUTIER, *op. cit.*, 24-35), although most scholars (including Tunitskiy, Jugie, Milev, Obolensky, Iliev, Dragova *et al.*) accept at least partial authorship of Theophylact; see MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 235-239.

established continuity with the activity of Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, Theophylact confirmed himself as one of the most important links in the long-lasting and complex process of evangelisation of the Balkan Slavs⁵.

Playing the highly responsible role of the leading missionary of the Byzantine spiritual commonwealth in the remote regions within the Balkan Peninsula, the role that marked the years of his full intellectual and human maturity, the archbishop of Ohrid demonstrated determination and uncompromisingness that he somewhat lacked in his younger years. Although more theoretically-minded, chiefly attached to literary studies and to a slightly simplified, bookishly conceived world of the classical antiquity – a lasting consolation in the Slavic barbaria – Theophylact of Ohrid ultimately managed to reconcile his most intimate intellectual leanings with the overall public interests and the present-day *raison d'état*, by putting his own skills and knowledge at the service of a vast, state controlled programme of cultural and religious policy.

Education and first contacts with the Doukai ...

Son of a well-established civilian family from Euboea, Theophylact Hephaistos (c. 1050-after 1107, or after 1126)⁶ found himself in Constantinople sometime in his early teens, obeying both the call of his talents as well as parental ambitions (responsible for the public service careers of Theophylact's brothers as well)⁷. Here the young man attended the usual *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) in a school somewhat close to the patriarchate⁸, the same one in which he himself would be lecturing in later years⁹. This is the period of the first intellectual contacts with Michael Psellos (1018-c. 1078, or after 1081), whom Theophylact later recalls with deep appreciation as “the one whose Muse has greatly benefited [him]”¹⁰. Although we cannot know anything about the details of this connection, which did not even need to have the character of a formal pupil-teacher relationship¹¹, Psellos was undoubtedly the figure that made a most decisive impact on the final shaping of the intellectual preferences of young Theophylact – his deep affectionate commitment to rhetorical practice (combined with the distinguished lack of interest in rhetorical

5. ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, 170-172.

6. GAUTIER, *Épiscopat*, 165-168; IDEM, *Théophylacte I*, 14.

7. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 15ff.

8. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 22ff.

9. Possibly named *Kosmos*, cf. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 1, p. 131.15; or. 2, p. 161.18. A similar comparison is found with Psellos, see L. BENAKIS, *Μιχαήλ Ψελλοῦ «Περὶ τῶν ἰδεῶν, ἃς ὁ Πλάτων λέγει»*, *Φιλοσοφία* 5-6 (1975-1976) 415.

10. See below, n. 17.

11. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 8 n. 56: “He [Theophylact] fell under the influence of Michael Psellos, though it would be rash to say that he was actually his pupil” (see also *ibidem*, 371). The majority of scholars do not question the usual student-master relationship of the two.

theory)¹², a strong liking for classical antiquity rethought in a modern, “humanistic” key, as well as a not insignificant flair for theoretical argumentation, which –in contrast to the largely philosophical predilections of the master– always remained within the scope of properly theological speculation. Here the sources of Theophylact’s erudite antiquarianism should be sought as well, not least a certain openness to scientific, especially medical and pharmaceutical issues¹³.

As a man of court, tightly associated with several generations of the Doukas family, Psellos was most probably also the one who brought the gifted provincial close to the court circles, commending him to the attention of his own royal patrons¹⁴. It seems that at that time (the second half of the 1070s) a profound and lifelong spiritual attachment took hold between Theophylact and a young, about coeval, empress Maria of Alania (c. 1050-after 1103), a beautiful and intelligent consort of the emperor Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078). The latter’s deposition urged the cautious empress and mother of the legitimate heir to the throne to remarry the victorious usurper, the elderly general Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078-1081)¹⁵.

12. Cf. e.g. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 2, p. 147.23-149.16 and 157.3-6. According to GAUTIER (*ibidem*, 156 n. 16), “Théophylacte a dû hériter de l’aversion de Psellos pour la *τέχνη* d’Hermogène” (namely H.’s *Περὶ ἰδεῶν*, advocating the ornate and artificial style of oratory; see *ibidem*, 148 n. 5). Cf. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 51 n. 211 (referring to the corresponding passage in Psellos’ *Τῆ μητρὶ τὸ ἐγκώμιον*, ed. U. CRISCUOLO, *Autobiografia: Encomio per la madre*, Naples 1989, 152.1925-153.1930); see also M. ANGOLD, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204: A Political History*, London-New York 21997, 102 [hereafter: ANGOLD, *Empire*].

13. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 49, 102-111.

14. Psellos was an intimate friend of two Doukas emperors, Constantine X and his firstborn Michael VII, once pupil of the philosopher, see D. I. POLEMIS, *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* [University of London Historical Studies 22], London 1968, 29-30, 33, 43-45 [hereafter: POLEMIS, *Doukai*]. However, it was the *kaisar* John Doukas, Constantine’s younger brother, the influential grey eminence of several regimes, and for some time the true “driving force behind the weak ruler” (i.e. his nephew Michael VII, see POLEMIS, *ibidem*, 37), who was perhaps the closest and most congenial amongst Psellos’ blue-blooded protectors (himself likewise “protected” by Psellos, see POLEMIS, *ibidem*, 36). See B. LEIB, Jean Doukas, César et moine. Son jeu politique à Byzance de 1067 à 1081, *AnBoll* 68 (1950) 163-180.

15. Maria’s second marriage (even though Michael was still married to her) was the result of the energetic intercession of the *kaisar* John, always deeply concerned about the preservation of the dynastic interests of the family, now naturally centred in the former daughter-in-law and her purple-born Doukas progeny, about four-year-old Constantine. Skylitzes Continuatus (ed. E. TH. TSOLAKIS, Thessaloniki 1968), 181-182; Bryennios, III 25 (ed. P. GAUTIER [CFHB 9], Brussels 1975), p. 253-255; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 2, 3 (ed. D. R. REINSCH – A. KAMBYLIS [CFHB 40/1], Berlin-New York 2001), p. 90-91; Zonaras, XVIII 19 (ed. TH. BÜTTNER-WOBST, Bonn 1897), p. 722; Manasses (ed. O. LAMPSIDIS [CFHB 36/1], Athens 1996), p. 356, vv. 6568-6571; Ephraem (ed. O. LAMPSIDIS [CFHB 27], Athens 1990), p. 128, vv. 3454-3455. See B. LEIB, Nicéphore III Botaniatès (1078-1081) et Marie d’Alanie, *Actes du VIe Congrès international d’études byzantines (Paris, 27 juillet-2 aout 1948)*, I, Paris 1950, 129-140.

In the years when the political influence of the aged Psellos (if still alive)¹⁶ must have been greatly weakened due to his eventual falling into disfavour with Michael VII, the empress certainly remained a faithful benefactor of the young professor of rhetoric, himself one of the the most prosperous legatees of the old master¹⁷. His simultaneous position as deacon of Hagia Sophia clearly testifies to the steady and unimpeded advance up the social ladder¹⁸. So it is not at all surprising that with the change of political constellation over the next few years, it was precisely Theophylact who will be entrusted with the privileged role of the court tutor to the little prince Constantine Doukas (c. 1074-1095/97), the ex-empress' minor son of the first marriage, now officially crowned co-emperor at the newly established Komnenian court (1081).

... and the Komnenoi

It is difficult to trace any contact between Theophylact and the chief representatives of the Komnenian aristocracy in the period preceding the reign of the first Komnenos, Alexios I (1081-1118). As if before this date there had been neither opportunity nor any particular reason why the career path of the young rhetorician would traverse the public ambitions of any of the leading figures of the Komnenoi *genos*. It appears that the mutual circumvention might likewise be explained by Theophylact's proximity with the intellectual circle of Michael Psellos. The latter's fairly controversial political attitude towards the first imperial generation

16. According to the traditional view, Psellos died about 1078 (when his name is last found in our sources). However, there are pretty valid reasons to consider him still alive until well into the 1090s. See MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 48 n. 196 (with related references): "So far no overwhelmingly convincing arguments point to a death either in 1078 or after 1097".

17. The sparse and indirect testimonies to the intimate bonds between the older and younger scholars provide sufficient evidence of a relationship that proves to be a lot more than merely professional one. How else can we explain the fact of Theophylact playing the part of a dedicated custodian of Psellos' grandson, a misfortune-stricken child of the latter's adoptive daughter? The whole context of the given document testifies to a deep gratitude and commitment to the memory of the late teacher. It is the letter addressed to the high court official Gregory Kamateros (1093?) in which Theophylact, now from the position of a church dignitary, recommends his young protégé (himself bearer of the letter) for some acceptable employment, probably in the central administration, see GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 27 (cf. also p. 74-75). The letter otherwise opens with a warm eulogy to the deceased master, τῷ τρισμακαρίτῃ ὑπερτίμῳ τῷ Ψελλῷ, καὶ ἀπαραμίλλῳ τὴν γλῶτταν ... πολλὰ γὰρ οἶδα τῆς μούσης τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀπονάμενος ("thrice blessed *hypertimos* Psellos, a man of unrivalled eloquence ... for I am aware of having greatly benefited from the Muse of this man", GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 219.4-6; all translations are my own). See GAUTIER, *ibidem*, no. 132, an affectionate consolation of Psellos' brother (anonymous and otherwise unknown), occasioned by the death of his great sibling (in 1078, according to Gautier).

18. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, 23, 30.

of the Komnenoi and their political favourites¹⁹ could easily have cast a shadow of suspicion and mistrust not only on the master himself, but also on his disciples and associates from the closer spiritual environment²⁰. So it seems that the famed 1082 Komnenian clash with John Italos, Psellos' successor as head of the philosophical school (*ὑπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων*) –the official ecclesiastical anathema thrown on the philosophical teachings bearing a clear stamp of their Psellian origin– was motivated not so much by an overarching anti-philosophical or anti-intellectualistic sentiment of the new regime, but by the practical need for decisive ideological distancing from the last remnants of Psellos' heritage in contemporary politics and theory²¹. This open and vigorous demonstration of the new –largely politically biased– anti-Psellian course implied, first of all, an official renunciation of the then fashionable ideology of the “new humanism”, largely labelled as the “redivived Platonism”, which was, for this occasion, declared tantamount to the heresy of paganism, if not the open atheism²². The natural countermove of the opposite side was an energetic renewal of a mystical religiosity in the vein of St

19. Notably Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071), eagerly supported by the Komnenoi, in clear opposition to the long-term dynastic strategy of the Doukas clan, cf. Bryennios, I 22, p. 129.25-26; see F. CHALANDON, *Les Comnène. Études sur l'empire byzantin aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, I: *Essai sur le règne d'Alexis Ier Comnène (1081-1118)*, Paris 1900, 26-27 [hereafter: CHALANDON, *Alexis Comnène*].

20. Although Psellos himself fell into disrepute at the end of Michael's reign, pushed by a new favourite of the capricious ruler, the infamous eunuch Nikephoritzes, see Attaleiates (ed. E. TH. TSOLAKIS [CFHB 50], Athens 2011), 141; Skylitzes Continuatus, 156. Cf. POLEMIS, *Doukai*, 37, 43-44. It is generally believed that Psellos' death came shortly after his disappearance from the political scene (but see above, n. 16).

21. According to MULLETT (*Theophylact*, 72 n. 302), “[it] is the small political issues ... the shadow of the Doukai and the Normans in the Italos affair” which proved to be more serious a motive for the heresy trial “than any great Komnenian conspiracy against academics and free speech”; on the possibility of looking upon the Italos case in terms of “Doukas-bashing”, see MULLETT, *ibidem*, 52 n. 217). As a trusted personage of Michael VII, a Calabrian-born Italos had been initiated into the emperor's fanciful plans for the recovery of the old Southern Italian possessions as well as “the whole of Italy”, and sent to Dyrrachium on an espionage mission, but soon fell under the suspicion of hatching a plot on behalf of his fellow compatriots and fled to Rome, whence he eventually returned to Constantinople only after his declaration of repentance and loyalty was accepted by the emperor (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, V 8, 4-5, p. 163).

22. On Psellos' revisionist views of a Platonising “théorie sur la civilisation politique”, see P. GOUNARIDIS, Le procès de Jean dit Italos révisé, *Histoirein* 6 (2006) 39-40, with reference to Psellos, *Chronographia*, VI 210-211 (a 7-8), esp. 210.11-12 (ed. D. R. REINSCH [Millennium-Studien 51], Berlin 2014), p. 199: *ὁ δὲ γε μετὰ σώματος βίος, ἅτε πολιτικώτερος, ἀρμοδιώτερος τοῖς παροῦσι καιροῖς* [“our life in the body, since it is more political, adapts better to our present (this-worldly) circumstances”]; cf. A. KALDELLIS, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia* [Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 68], Leiden-Boston-Cologne 1999, 158ff. According to ANGOLD (*Empire*, 108), Psellos “seemed to be coming close to denying the importance of God in human affairs and, instead, to be exalting the power of human reason over revelation”.

Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), which we know will assume the character of an almost official ideology of the Komnenian court for decades to come²³.

The contentious reputation of the “Doukas man” and Psellos’, if not Italos’ pupil²⁴ could have actually been a kind of serious handicap for Theophylact’s career in the conditions of the recently established Komnenos dynasty. However, some of the very leading Komnenoi were themselves largely dependent on a kind of agreement and cooperation with their imperial rivals from the Doukas camp. In Theophylact’s case, the decisive weight had precisely the patronage of Maria of Alania²⁵. It is she who is to be considered as a natural link between her learned protégé and the most conspicuous representatives of the Komnenos nobility of the day, the brothers Isaac (c. 1050-1102/04) and Alexios²⁶, victorious generals in the service of several emperors (including Botaneiates), whose relations with the empress grow ever more intense by the end of the 1070s. In point of fact, unforeseen

23. See Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 8, 2 (70-73), p. 105 (comparison of the Komnenian court to a monastery); also V 9, 3, p. 165-166; XII 3, 2, p. 364-365 (on the mystical predilections of the empress Eirene). Cf. ANGOLD, *Empire*, 109.

24. There is really nothing unusual about the rhetorician’s prudent silence regarding his notorious fellow colleague, whose affair shook the capital just at the time when Theophylact’s own public career quietly progressed in the direction of the eventual engagement at the new court. Hence in all Theophylact’s former and later writings we seek in vain for any mention or allusion to the figure that once was in the focus of attention of the intellectual public of Constantinople. There is nothing strange about it if we consider that the emperor’s decree, read at trial, prohibited any intellectual contact with Italos under threat of permanent expulsion from the City, see F. I. USPENSKIY, *Deloproizvodstvo po obvineniyu Ioanna Itala v yeresi* [Proceedings on charges of heresy against John Italos], *IRAİK* 2 (1897) 58 [hereafter: USPENSKIY, *Deloproizvodstvo*]; R. BROWNING, *Enlightenment and Repression in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, *Past and Present* 69 (1975) 17 [hereafter: BROWNING, *Enlightenment*]; J. GOUILLARD, *Le procès officiel de Jean l’Italien. Les actes et leurs sous-entendus*, *TM* 9 (1985) 159. “John the philosopher”, an addressee of GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 100, could certainly not have been John Italos (cf. *ibidem*, 68; see also V. G. VASIL’EVSKIY, *Kriticheskiya i bibliograficheskiya zametki. Obrazovaniye vtorago Bolgarskago tsarstva* Fyodora Uspenskago [Critical and Bibliographical Notes. *The Foundation of the Second Bulgarian Empire* by Fyodor Uspenskiy], Odessa 1879, *ŽMNP* 204 [July 1879] 152-153 [hereafter: VASIL’EVSKIY, *Kriticheskiya zametki*]).

25. Theophylact’s first contacts with the imperial house may have already been dated to the reign of Michael VII, since Psellos used to recommend the gifted pupils to his imperial patrons (as was the case of John Italos, who enjoyed the support of the royal couple, see BROWNING, *Enlightenment*, 13; L. CLUCAS, *The Trial of John Italos and the Crisis of Intellectual Values in Byzantium in the Eleventh Century* [MBM 26], Munich 1981, 91; M. MULLETT, *The “Disgrace” of the Ex-Basilissa Maria*, *BSI* 45 (1984) 202-203 and n. 8 [hereafter: MULLETT, *Disgrace*]; Italos as “Maria’s puppet”); J. M. HUSSEY, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, Oxford 1986, 140. However, the acquaintance between Theophylact and Maria of Alania might as well have been accomplished via *kaisar* John Doukas, both an intimate friend of Psellos’ and affinal uncle of the empress, who arranged her second marriage to Botaneiates, see above, n. 15.

26. See MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 210.

circumstances in the last two years of the reign of Nikephoros III strongly encouraged the mutual convergence of the two families. The shaky balance of competing motives rested on a partial compromise, from which both sides sought to extract the highest possible benefit for themselves and their chief exponents. The dynastic interest of the Doukai was at that time largely focused on the fate of the little Constantine, Maria's porphyrogenita son by Michael VII²⁷, whose royal prerogatives were seriously endangered by Botaneiates' refusing to recognise the boy's right of inheritance, and turning instead to one of his own lateral kinsmen²⁸. Such reversal only bolstered the alliance between the anxious empress and the ambitious and enterprising Komnenos brothers –the older Isaac, already married to one of Maria's royal cousins from Georgia²⁹, and the younger Alexios, recently linked with the Doukas family by a diplomatic marriage with minor Eirene (c. 1066-1123/33), the great-niece of Constantine X (1059-1067)³⁰. The secret covenant was sealed by Maria's formal adoption of only a few years younger Alexios³¹, who in turn bound himself by oath to safeguard the hereditary right of his adoptive Doukas brother³², securing thereby both the needed legitimacy for the forthcoming coup and the empress' connivance in plotting against the common adversary³³.

Although the most exposed, the Komnenos brothers and the empress Maria were not the only players in the complicated game of concocting the plot to seize power. It is hard to overlook in its background the all-overseeing eye of the *despoina* Anna Dalassene (c. 1025-1100/02), "mother of the Komnenoi", the true designer of the global strategy of the *genos*³⁴. According to the neat observation

27. POLEMIS, *Doukai*, 60-63.

28. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 2, 1, p. 57.

29. Bryennios, II 1, p. 143.10-13; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 1, 4, p. 56. An important fact which made the brothers' frequentations of the imperial *gynaecium* pass unsuspected.

30. The marriage took place in 1078, at the energetic insistence of the bride's grandfather, John the *kaisar*, Bryennios, Praef. 9, p. 67.12-18; III 6, p. 219-223; III 13, p. 235.27-30. See CHALDON, *Alexis Comnène*, 33; D. POLEMIS, Notes on Eleventh-Century Chronology (1059-1081), *BZ* 58 (1965) 68-69; IDEM, *Doukai*, 70; K. VARZOS, *Η γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών* [Βυζαντινά Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται 20], I, Thessaloniki 1984, 88 [hereafter: VARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*].

31. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 1, 5, p. 56. Cf. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 61: "à la suggestion d'Isaac, le personnel du gynécée aurait persuadé Marie d'adopter Alexis ... sans doute en 1080". Bryennios (IV 2, p. 259.16-18), less convincingly, moves the adoption at the beginning of the reign of Botaneiates, synchronising it with Alexios' appointment to the Domestic of the West (1078).

32. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 2, 3, p. 58-59; III 4, 6, p. 97.

33. Despite the alarming warnings of Botaneiates' loyal henchmen Borilos and Germanos, Maria succeeded in remedying the emperor's suspicions and buying precious time for the fugitive brothers as they were hurriedly assembling a rebel army in Thrace (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 4, p. 61-65).

34. Cf. e.g. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 1, 6 (63-64), p. 57; II 2, 2 (91-92), p. 58; II 4, 5 (51), p. 63.

of a modern scholar, “one secret of his [Alexios’] success could be the fact that he had two mothers: his biological mother Anna and his adopted mother, Maria of Alania”³⁵. Although this is by all means true of both maternal allies of the would-be emperor, it certainly was Anna who, with all her tireless planning, manoeuvring and crafty transformations, more than anyone else contributed to her son’s accession in 1081³⁶. However, as the bitter lifelong foe of the rival party³⁷, it was also she who tried to urge the newly enthroned Alexios to dismiss his young Doukas bride for the ex-empress Maria (anyway rumoured to be his lover)³⁸. Fortunately enough, the one-sided attempt was timely thwarted by the dexterous counter-action of the *kaisar* John Doukas (?-c. 1088), a worthy match for the Komnenian mother, who ultimately managed to outwit the rival and extort the crowning of his granddaughter Eirene, once and for all firmly establishing her imperial right³⁹.

Thus the reign of the new dynasty began under the sign of a hardly reached compromise between the two most powerful families of the age. It balanced many conflicting interests by taking over, and incorporating into its political organism, the main functional elements of both family traditions. Therefore, neither the stubborn family-centred action of the mother of the Komnenoi, that will not cease in the coming decades either, nor the occasional conspiracies of this or that family faction within the alliance, could ultimately interfere with this healthy and relatively stable trend of partnership and balanced participation in power, in which both sides were able to achieve at least a partial satisfaction of their political aims⁴⁰.

35. B. HILL, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, Harlow-New York 1999, 142; cf. EADEM, Alexios I Komnenos and the Imperial Women, in: M. MULLETT – D. SMYTHE (eds.), *Alexios I Komnenos* [BBTT 4/1], Belfast 1996, 39 [hereafter: HILL, Alexios Komnenos]; EADEM, Actions Speak Louder Than Words: Anna Komnene’s Attempted Usurpation, in: TH. GOUMA-PETERSON (ed.), *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, New York-London 2000, 51 [hereafter: HILL, Anna Komnene]; L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527-1204*, London-New York 1999, 183 [hereafter: GARLAND, *Empresses*].

36. See notably Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 5, p. 65-69. Cf. HILL, Anna Komnene, 51.

37. Bryennios, III 6, p. 221.23-24.

38. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 1, 2, p. 87-88. On Anna Dalassena’s attempts to instrumentalise Maria in undermining Doukas connections, see S. RUNCIMAN, The End of Anna Dalassena, *AIPHOS* 9 [= *Mélanges Henri Grégoire*] (1949) 517-524; GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 63-64.

39. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 2, 7, p. 92-93; Zonaras, XVIII 21, p. 733.4-6. On John’s merits for Eirene’s marriage, see Bryennios, III 6, p. 221. The *kaisar* was also the one who heavily backed the Komnenoi brothers in their preparation for the final combat, and his word was crucial for the imperial promotion of the younger sibling, his own son-in-law (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 7, 1-4, p. 72-74). See the brief character sketch of the *kaisar* John Doukas in POLEMIS, *Doukai*, 40; also the cautious reappraisal thereof at ANGOLD, *Empire*, 127.

40. CHALANDON, *Alexis Comnène*, 33.

A man of compromise

The new era required an appropriate intellectual elite of its own, a new type of public intellectual, who, in a way, would epitomise the most desirable virtues of the new order –above all, its staunch aversion towards all kinds of extremism and partisanship, which proved so detrimental to the previous period. Such deficiencies were no doubt considered to be the greatest danger to the hard-earned, still fairly unstable and vulnerable political equilibrium, based on the coupling of strong centrifugal forces. The case of Italos clearly showed what kind of public intellectual the new regime *did not want* to collaborate with. It seems that the greatest sin of Psellos’ successor was not so much the “shadow of the Doukai” that accompanied his name, nor perhaps his contentious all-too-Platonic-minded intellectuality, but indeed the *inadmissible polemicity and one-sidedness* of his public sermon (classically reported by Anna Komnene)⁴¹. The spectacular nature of the Italos’ trial, in which all the highest representatives of church and state took part, was therefore to serve largely as a vivid demonstration of the new regime’s clear commitment to putting a final end to this old, *previous* type of public intellectual –too radical, too partial and inflammatory, too “Savonarolesque”. Paradoxically, Italos, the most *avant-garde* spirit of Byzantium, bothered the new regime notably as a man of the past⁴².

Theophylact, on the other hand, demonstrated that it is perfectly feasible to be both Psellos’ disciple and conciliatory-minded, nonpartisan and cooperative at the same time; after all, entirely responsive to the current imperative of unity and concord. *Pax Alexiana* marked the end of the civil war and restored the hugely needed unanimity before the external enemy, that was hastily piling up at the increasingly narrower state borders. The collateral victims of the “national reconciliation” –best symbolised by the ultimate merger of the ruling families– were indeed some rare philosophical hotheads, too short-sighted to conform to the new, conciliating and harmonising spirit of the day. This, however, demanded an entirely different type of public intellectual, a new kind of “public ideologist”⁴³.

As a man of the new age, Theophylact was himself a typical outgrowth of compromise. An intellectual adoptee of a Doukas empress and part of her “royal appurtenance”, he will soon fit perfectly into the environment of the Komnenos court as well. Anyway, his public activity in the first, about decade-long, Komnenian period preceding the episcopate (c. 1090/91) took place in two characteristic

41. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, V 8-9, p. 161-167.

42. ANGOLD, *Empire*, 140: “Italos’ teachings were but one manifestation of a corrupt regime”.

43. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 99: “A philosopher for Theophylact keeps his head in the air and his feet on the ground, a wise precaution, perhaps, after the Italos trial. Platonic vocabulary is not as frequent as one might expect from someone in close contact with Psellos”.

surroundings: the school and the royal court. The engagement in the school of rhetoric appears never to have been really interrupted. Moreover, it constituted the dominant part of Theophylact's public activities during the entire civilian stage of his career⁴⁴. Now the new court employment stemmed directly from the close relationship with the ex-empress, who at one point decided to entrust the education of the little Constantine to her erudite protégé. Thus, Theophylact, like his master Psellos at the height of his career, found himself in a privileged position of a royal tutor, that would allow him to strengthen and deepen, alongside his old Doukas connections, also a number of relationships with the chief representatives of the new Komnenos establishment. However, many dates and details escape our knowledge. As for the ex-empress, the new position had brought partial satisfaction to her ambitions, at least to the most important one, that concerning the fortunes of her son. His hereditary right was eventually restored by the proclamation of co-emperorship, but no less by his soon engagement with Alexios' firstborn Anna (1083-1148/55), which ensued two years later (1083)⁴⁵. Thus, the new ruler fully respected the promise given at his adoption. However, the more intimate ambitions of the ex-empress, those probably fed with a certain hope that the rival Eirene could be suppressed, had to remain dissatisfied⁴⁶. The

44. Although under the patronage of the patriarchate, Theophylact's rhetoric school was almost certainly not a clerical one. It educated mainly civil service officials, some of whom –the future recipients of Theophylact's letters– were destined to play vital roles in the public life of Komnenian Byzantium. Recalling his teaching years, the future archbishop will always pronounce himself as a professor of rhetoric, whence we are allowed to conclude that the other subjects –philosophy, and maybe the rest of *μαθήματα*– have been left out of his academic and paedagogical interest. Thus, while the other colleagues would be responsible for the remainder of the literary curriculum (i.e. philosophy and grammar), Theophylact's competence would in fact be limited solely to the teaching of rhetoric, namely the "fine literature", no doubt mainly that of classical antiquity, whose broad if perhaps not as profound, knowledge is widely attested in the discourses and letters. The title *μαίστωρ τῶν ῥητόρων* ("master of rhetoricians") appears to relate precisely to the management of the literary chair at the school of rhetoric, see GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, 24. On somewhat different understanding of the notion, see MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 209 n. 48 (with special reference to USPENSKIY, *Deloproizvodstvo*, 41.1); EADEM, *The Imperial Vocabulary of Alexios I Komnenos*, in: MULLETT – SMYTHE (eds.), *Alexios I Komnenos* (as in note 35), 364 [hereafter: MULLETT, *Imperial Vocabulary*]; EADEM, *Theophylact*, 233 and n. 50.

45. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VI 8, 3, p. 184-185; Zonaras, XVIII 22, p. 738.12-15. See G. BUCKLER, *Anna Comnena: A Study*, Oxford 1929, 40-41. Constantine was originally engaged to Olympias-Helena, daughter of Robert Guiscard. The betrothment was dissolved immediately after the accession of Botaneiates, which would serve the Norman chieftain as an excuse for the later invasion of the Byzantine mainland, see Skylitzes *Continuatus*, 167.5-6, 170.14-15; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, I 10, 2, p. 35; I 12, 2, p. 39-40; Zonaras, XVIII 17, p. 714. See CHALANDON, *Alexis Comnène*, 63.

46. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, 63-64: "Il n'est pas douteux que le nouveau basileus, qui était encore jeune, nourrissait de tendres sentiments à l'égard de la basilissa et envisageait d'abandonner son épouse, à peine pubère et laide de surcroît, pour contracter mariage avec Marie d'Alanie". According to POLEMIS (*Doukai*, 70), Eirene's position was initially threatened by the "highly suspicious

paramount interest of the interfamilial consensus required the current marriage of Alexios (seemingly still unconsummated) to receive its imperial sanction in the form of the coronation of Eirene Doukaina, and her attaining the status of *augousta*⁴⁷. Accordingly, Maria of Alania was forced to retreat in the palace within the enclosure of the convent of St George of Mangana⁴⁸, and soon after changed her court robe for a nun's habit (certainly not fully voluntarily)⁴⁹, even so continuing to lead an active court life, among other things also as a personal confidante to whom Alexios will entrust the raising of his purple-born daughter, Constantine's fiancée Anna⁵⁰.

attachment of her husband to the ex-empress Maria". See HILL, *Alexios Komnenos*, 44; EADEM, *Anna Komnene*, 55 ("certainly betrayed wife").

47. Having the patriarch Kosmas on his side, *kaisar* John Doukas, the genuine *spiritus movens* of the entire undertaking, managed to break the resistance of Anna Dalassene, rather reluctant to see her Doukas daughter-in-law elevated to the throne. Under the pressure of the *kaisar*, the ancient architect of her fortune, Maria of Alania was induced to give up the hope of a possible third imperial wedding. See GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 64; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 2, 3, p. 90-91; Zonaras, XVIII 21, p. 733. Cf. B. HILL, *Imperial Women and the Ideology of Womanhood in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, in: L. JAMES (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, London-New York 1997, 88-89 [hereafter: HILL, *Imperial Women*]; GARLAND, *Empresses*, 184-185.

48. Having previously obtained a written confirmation providing not only safety for her son and herself, but also a co-emperorship for Constantine, see Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 2, 3, p. 90; III 4, 6-7, p. 97; Zonaras, XVIII 21, p. 733.14-16. See GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 56, 64-65; MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 204. It was by Botaneiates that Mangana as well as Hebdomon monasteries were granted to Maria as their *charisticary*, see Zonaras, XVIII 21, p. 733.11-13. According to MULLETT (*ibidem*, 205), "Maria may have held a rather subdued alternative court" in the Mangana Palace (cf. EADEM, *Aristocracy and Patronage in the literary circles of Comnenian Constantinople*, in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*, Oxford 1984, 177-178 [hereafter: MULLETT, *Aristocracy*]; EADEM, *Imperial Vocabulary*, 364). In keeping with her chief thesis on the disgrace of the ex-basilissa as a "gradual" (multiyear) process, MULLETT (*Disgrace*, 205, 207, 211) has reservations about the full-status monachisation that would ensue immediately after Maria's departure to Mangana.

49. Zonaras, XVIII 21, p. 733.16-19: *μετὰ δὲ τινα χρόνον καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ μετημφιάσθη, μέλαν ἐνδύσα χρώμα κατὰ τοὺς μοναχοὺς, τὸ μὲν ἐκοῦσα, τὸ δὲ τι τυραννομένη* ("After a while, his [Constantine's] mother changed her clothes and dressed in black, after the way of the monks, and this partly voluntarily, partly indeed under duress" [lit. "forced by the tyrant"]); cf. Skylitzes *Continuatus*, 182.12-13. According to Zonaras (XVIII 21, p. 733.19-21), Constantine would have fallen into disgrace at the same time his mother took the veil; but a 12th-century historian surely telescopes two distinct events separated in time –Constantine's demotion could only have taken place after 1087 (see below).

50. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 1, 4 (46-48), p. 88. According to her own testimony, Anna was put in Maria's care before she was eight (but see MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 206 n. 30). So she probably moved to the ex-empress' household in Mangana, where she spent no more than four or so years, see L. GARLAND – S. RAPP, *Mary "of Alania": Woman and Empress Between Two Worlds*, in: L. GARLAND (ed.), *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience, AD 800-1200* [Publications for the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London 8], Aldershot 2006, 110-111; L. NEVILLE, *Introduction*, in: EADEM (ed.), *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*, Oxford 2016, 2-3, 181 n. 6.

Royal tutor and double panegyrist

Almost all our knowledge of Theophylact's public activity during the 1080s rests ultimately on two rhetorical speeches delivered before the elite audience of the new court. Being composed at different times and on different occasions, two mutually incoherent *λόγοι* typically illuminate the present circumstances of the author's life in the prosperous years of social ascension under the aegis of the new court. Both discourses belong to the popular sub-genre of the laudatory speech, the imperial encomium (*βασιλικὸς λόγος*). Since they address the representatives of both Doukas and Komnenos houses respectively, they well illustrate the double client position of Theophylact himself as well as the overall circumstances at the contemporaneous Komnenian court, where both families have long enjoyed an equal reputation and equal factual influence.

The first is the praise of the young Constantine Doukas⁵¹, whilst a good portion of the speech deals with the personal and public merits of his royal mother, Maria of Alania. For a long time mistakenly labelled as "princely mirror", this slightly atypical *βασιλικὸς λόγος*⁵², whose panegyric half makes an approximate counterweight to the paraenetic one, features the author in a double role of an exuberant encomiast and, at the same time, a restrained mentor of his royal pupil.

The other one, addressed to Alexios Komnenos, which was most likely delivered on 6 January, 1088, on the feast of the Epiphany⁵³, in a symptomatic manner reflects some of the major changes that had occurred in the meantime, heralding a dramatic shift in the interfamilial relationships at the Komnenos court. On 13 September, 1087, Alexios received a male successor, John Komnenos (1118-1143),

51. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 177-211 (review of the earlier releases on p. 48-49). See the standard report in B. LEIB, *La Παιδεία βασιλική* de Théophylacte, archevêque de Bulgarie, et sa contribution à l'histoire de la fin du XIe siècle, *REB* 11 (1953) 197-204.

52. For the arbitrary interventions carried out by Pierre Poussines (1609-1686), the first modern editor and translator of the discourse, who, among others, fabricated its quasi-original title *Παιδεία βασιλική*, or *Institutio regia* in Latin (Paris 1651), see GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 48-49. According to the latter (*ibidem*, 48), "[o]n l'a, en effet, depuis lors, considéré comme un traité d'éducation à l'usage d'un prince, alors qu'il s'agit d'un simple *logos basilikos* adressé par Théophylacte à son élève". Yet G. PRINZING, in his review of Gautier's edition (*BSI* 45 [1984] 66), takes a slightly more moderate position ("... Kaiserrede mit Tendenz zum Fürstenspiegel ... ein Beispiel mehr für die Interferenz der Gattungen"). Cf. also MULLETT, *Imperial Vocabulary*, 380 ("panegyric which includes *parainesis*").

53. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 5, p. 213-243. The *Address to Alexios Komnenos* was previously published separately in P. GAUTIER's *Le discours de Théophylacte de Bulgarie à l'autocrator Alexios Ier Comnène* (6 janvier 1088), *REB* 20 (1961) 93-130 (the arguments in favour of the proposed date of the speech's delivery are considered in the commentary on p. 93-108). See R. ANASTASI, *Sul logos basilikos di Teofilatto per Alessio Comneno*, *Orpheus* 3 (1982) 358-362.

an event that utterly changed the position of the Doukas pretender to the crown⁵⁴. The latter will soon be deprived of all his hereditary prerogatives, which are not unexpectedly transmitted to Alexios' natural son and now legal heir to the throne. Addressing a different auditorium, under the roof of another court, Theophylact opens his speech by celebrating the recent military and diplomatic exploits of the victorious peacemaker, only to suddenly invite him to crown his infant son as co-emperor –and indeed as soon as possible⁵⁵. The final part of the speech is devoted to the eulogy of Anna Dalassene⁵⁶, a smart rhetorical stratagem designed to emphasise the natural continuity between the three generations of the dominant house, thereby somehow legitimising its ancient dynastic aspirations. In actuality, the rhetor gave an open expression to the most intimate and “unuttered” intentions of the Komnenian policy at the decisive point that marked the ultimate power shift in favour of one side –the first clear articulation of an exclusive dynastic claim of the Komnenian *genos*, as it has long been designed in the mind of the mother of the Komnenoi⁵⁷. As for Theophylact's personal circumstances and possible changes of his position in the court, about all this we can only conjecture on the basis of indirect indications, mainly indeed from the overall character of the two βασιλικοὶ λόγοι themselves. Firstly, his engagement in both cases shows that his position as an appreciated and sought-after court orator was largely established and indisputable at least from the mid-1080s, but surely also sometime before that date. On the other hand, a man whom the Doukai charged with a significant paedagogical task in the mid-1080s (at the time when their youngest representative still counted as a prospective successor to the crown), Theophylact will be able to promptly adapt to a new trend in the dynastic policy of the Komnenos court, moving reasonably towards the “winning” side, which in turn will know how to effectively absorb his talents in the years to come.

54. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VI 8, 4-5, p. 185-186; Zonaras, XVIII 22, p. 739.3-6. In any case, Constantine remained a fiancé of Anna Komnene until his death (c. 1095-96); see Zonaras, XVIII 22, p. 738.15.

55. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 5, p. 235.10-11: *Τί μὴ τὸν βασιλέα υἱὸν καὶ βασιλέα γνωρίζεις, ἀλλ' ἀναδύη τὴν ποθουμένην ἀνάρρησιν;* (“Why dost thou not recognise thy emperor son as an emperor, but delayst the desired proclamation?”). See below, n. 121.

56. Theophylact likens Alexios and his mother to “two great lights fixed in the firmament of the empire” (GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 5, p. 241.3-4), developing a highly contrived image of a “second and new Creation” (with a verbatim allusion to Gen 1:16-17). See HILL, *Alexios Komnenos*, 50-51; EADEM, *Imperial Women*, 90.

57. Empress Eirene, Doukas mother of the would-be heir, is referenced only once in the entire discourse, and this only incidentally, with the sole emphasis on her conjugal and paternal capacities, see GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 5, p. 235.5-7: *τὴν καλὴν ἐν γυναιξί, τὴν βασιλείας ἀξίαν σύζυγον· ὅθεν αὐτοῖς προσήκοντα τῇ τοῦ γάμου ῥίζῃ καὶ τὰ βλαστήματα* (“the beautiful amongst women, a spouse worthy of royalty; wherefore their [Alexios' and Eirene's] offspring too correspond to the root of their marriage”). Note the formula *καλλίστη πασῶν γυναικῶν* in Bryennios, III 6, p. 221.20 –a sort of unofficial honorific?

Although Maria of Alania and her son are expectedly not mentioned anywhere in the Alexios panegyric (their official presence at delivery should, however, not be excluded), the relationship between the ex-empress and Theophylact remained essentially unchanged and, as previously, marked by deep affection and intimacy. It seems that Maria, to whom the reversals of fortune were too well known by her own personal experience, had sufficient understanding of her protégé's delicate position and the new obligations he had to face in the altered constellation of power. Their subsequent contacts, those already belonging to the time of Theophylact's archiepiscopate, bear clear witness to the profound and uninterrupted ties of mutual attachment. This is actually documented by at least one most cordial letter addressed to ex-basilissa⁵⁸. Theophylact's Commentaries on Gospels and the Minor Prophets are due to the personal request of Maria of Alania, although it is impossible to arrive at a firm date of their commission, which could have ensued both before and after Theophylact's appointment⁵⁹.

Archbishop

It is difficult to make a final decision as to the reasons that might have led Alexios Komnenos to entrust the administration of the important ecclesiastical province to a renowned professor of rhetoric, a man who, although an excellent theologian, was neither a prominent figure in the church, nor had ever before been in a position to showcase his administrative capacity on any large scale. Anyway, it seems that the emperor's motives should not be judged in a simplified and unambiguous manner.

58. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 4. From there, we are informed of Maria's stay in the Princes' Islands, where (according to a statement in the *Address to Constantine*, GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 4, p. 191.4f.) she had an estate –Theophylact tried to visit her on his return to Constantinople from Nicomedia (where he had travelled on an unknown occasion and at an unknown date), but the agitated sea prevented the ship from landing (see below, n. 74). In another letter (GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 107), Theophylact expresses his warm gratitude to the *despoina* –presumably Maria of Alania (although Eirene Doukaina and Anna Dalassene are likewise counted, see MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 202 n. 7, 207; also EADEM, *Theophylact*, 188; GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, 66)– because of the visit she paid him while he was suffering from a serious illness (in Ohrid 1094?). MULLETT (*Disgrace*, 210) reasonably warns that a certain pragmatic facet of these links should not be neglected either (“Yet in maintaining links with Maria, he was no less politic”).

59. The Commentaries on Mark and Luke from the *Vindobonensis theol. gr.* 90 (ff. 1r-502r, 2nd half of the 13th century) are preceded by the four-line iambic lemma (not necessarily by Theophylact): *Τῆς βασιλίσσης ἐννόημα Μαρίας // ψυχῆς ἀληθῶς ἔργον εὐγενεστάτης // ὁ δὲ τρυγῆσας τοὺς μελιρῦτους λόγους // Θεοφύλακτος ποιμενάρχης Βουλγάρων* (“The invention is one of the empress Maria, // a design of the truly noblest spirit; // whilst he who has collected these honey-flowing discourses // is Theophylact, the archpastor of the Bulgarians”). Cf. H. HUNGER – O. KRESTEN, *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, Teil 3/1: Codices theologici 1-100*, Vienna 1976, 165.

Since the birth of John Komnenos eliminated the need for the *παιδεία βασιλική* of the little Constantine, the tutor was released from the service –the one that surely fuelled his hopes of a more serious court career, presumably even of a role similar to that of Psellos⁶⁰. One ancore Psellos, though –no matter how much more benign or restrained, less enterprising and less venturesome than his prototype– certainly was not what Alexios would have wanted on the reformed Komnenian court. The ancient Doukas connections were indeed not the best recommendation under conditions of a new distribution of power, so the emergence of Alexios panegyric, only three and a half months after John Komnenos' birth, could as well be understood in light of the author's intention to explicitly remove any doubts about his loyalty to the Komnenos house. The reward arrived not long afterwards –a rather “backhanded” one indeed. Worthy of the diplomatic cunning of Alexios Komnenos, it amounted to a well-proportioned mixture of tacit reproach and appraisal –a royal offer which, in any case, was impossible to decline. The administration of the Bulgarian archdiocese, due to its huge historical and strategic importance, entailed a great responsibility, greater than the management of any other ecclesiastical province of the Eastern Empire at that time⁶¹. Only the sees of Bulgaria and Cyprus enjoyed autocephalous status, being under the immediate jurisdiction of the emperor, a fact that made their position an exceptional and privileged one⁶². Met by a dubious honour –an honourable exile, as he actually felt it– Theophylact turns to his influential friends, prominent addressees of his first “ex Ponto” letters, full of deepest grief and disappointment with a “barbaric” environment that welcomed him, soliciting them –“with a singular naivety”, as Gautier put it⁶³– to howsoever advocate his return to the Queen of Cities⁶⁴. But, hardly surprisingly, all the requests went unheard.

60. According to the mentorial advice of the *Address to Constantine Doukas*, a good emperor “will invite everyone more sharp-witted than himself to his palace, and will pull from the corner many of those muttering to the striplings” (πάντα τὸν ἑαυτοῦ συνετώτερον εἰσκαλέσει πρὸς τὰ βασιλεία καὶ πολλοὺς ἐκ τῆς γωνίας ἀνασπάσει πρὸς τὰ μειράκια ψιθυρίζοντας: GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 4, p. 203.27-29; one of these extraordinary men would indeed be the speaker himself, whose talents –all the way until appropriately used in the imperial court– lay buried in a shady corner of the classroom; see the like expression in Plato, *Gorgias*, 485d-e, and Themistius, or. 22, 265b [ed. W. DINDORF, Leipzig 1832], p. 324.7; cf. K. PRAECHTER, *Antike Quellen des Theophylaktos von Bulgarien*, BZ 1 [1892] 409 [hereafter: PRAECHTER, *Antike Quellen*]). “These are the friends to whom he will entrust the administration of the cities, after having made sure that they would manage them well” (Τούτους μέντοι τοὺς φίλους ἐπιστήσει ταῖς τῶν πόλεων διοικήσεσι, πάντως πειρᾶν [sic] λαβὼν αὐτῶν ὅτι καλῶς ἐπιστήσονται: GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 203.30-32). Almost ironically, Alexios will have enough understanding for the latter advice.

61. ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, 160.

62. ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, 158, 168, 174, 519. See also GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 82, p. 437.33-34.

63. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, 28: “par une singulière naïveté”.

64. See GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, nos. 5, 6 and 7. Mullett rightly warns that the overall tone

In spite of everything, the following years will gradually transform the refined Constantinople's intellectual and courtier into a devoted fieldworker prepared to readily subordinate his talents to the largely practical needs of pastoral administration, not avoiding even the regular protection of his parishioners against abusive tax collectors, or countless other real-world problems encountered on a day-to-day basis⁶⁵. Epistolary correspondence, sometimes praised as *Θεοῦ φιλοτίμημα*, “a gift from God”⁶⁶, will thereby not cease to exercise its most valuable as well as multiple role, taking on itself various different genre guises, depending on the occasion and the intended recipient⁶⁷. The list of the latter will otherwise reflect the approximately equal reference to both ruling families, making it impossible to distinguish –behind the usual formulas of allegiance and the innumerably varied topos of *φιλία*– any greater affinity to one side to the detriment of the other⁶⁸.

Informer

Among the letters of the early 1090s, the much debated “letter of denunciation” occupies a peculiar position (though reasonably not preserved in the correspondence)⁶⁹. It is the well-known “letter of the Bulgarian archbishop”, which Anna Komnene mentions as a main trigger for the great family row between the Komnenos brothers Alexios, Isaac and Adrian (c. 1060-1105), an event that coincided with the beginning of the campaign against the Serbian prince Bolkanos/Vlkan (1093/94). Although Anna does not reveal the archbishop's name, the chronology of contemporaneous events points out the authorship of Theophylact, whose archbishopric began a few years before the Dalmatian war.

of the three arrival-in-the-see-letters is determined by as much genre and stylistic considerations as sincere feelings of their author, a common trait that should always be kept in mind in analysing highly styled products of the epistolographic genre and its sub-genres in Byzantine literature. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 146: “Nothing can be learned from them about actual conditions in Ochrid or Theophylact's actual reactions to what he found; his reactions were determined before he reached Ochrid, and the need to establish his credentials as unchanged is clear”.

65. For a full account of the issue, see ANGOLD, *Church and Society*, 160ff.

66. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 10, p. 161.1-2.

67. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 21, 135ff.

68. Although it was some members of the Doukas house, above all Maria of Alania and the *sebastos* John Doukas, who counted among the most affectionate “public familiars” of the Bulgarian archbishop.

69. GAUTIER, *Épiscopat*, 160-162; IDEM, *Théophylacte* I, 35-36; MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 7, 75, 86 n. 37; P. FRANKOPAN, The Imperial Governors of Dyrrakhion in the Reign of Alexios I Komnenos, *BMGS* 26 (2002) 92ff. [hereafter: FRANKOPAN, *Imperial Governors*]; IDEM, Kinship and the Distribution of Power in Komnenian Byzantium, *EHR* 122/495 (2007) 15 [hereafter: FRANKOPAN, *Kinship*].

The letter⁷⁰ contained a piece of confidential information about a plot against Alexios, pointing to his nephew John, a son of *sebastokrator* Isaac, at that time occupying the high post of the *doux* of Dyrrachium. Alerted by the serious allegations against his son, Isaac rushed from the capital right to Alexios' camp in Philippopolis, where, according to the testimony of the *Alexiad*, a dramatic confrontation was to take place between Isaac and *protosebastos* Adrian, the latter accused as a real plotter –probably a kind of a perfidious abuser of the young and inexperienced (about 19-year-old) John (1073-?)⁷¹, himself likewise summoned to quickly appear at the family council⁷². The deliberate incompleteness of Anna's narration leaves no room for a final understanding of the true background of the Komnenian feud, although it may indicate a somewhat specific position of the youngest sibling, and perhaps a long-smouldering antagonism between Isaac and Adrian. So we cannot make any final conclusion as to whether and to what extent did the son of Isaac really succumb to the influence of his younger uncle, and what ultimately was the true meaning and objective of Adrian's plotting, if there really was any worthy of the name⁷³.

The role of the “Bulgarian archbishop” remains equally obscure, and even more contentious as the future relations with John Komnenos, as well as with other

70. Hardly “a series of letters”, as stated in FRANKOPAN, *Imperial Governors*, 92. The word *γράμματα*, when taken to mean “an epistle”, is always a *plurale tantum*; besides, the aorist participle *γράμματα δεξάμενος* (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VIII 7, 3 [15], p. 252) suggests a one-time action.

71. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VIII 7, 3 (20-21), p. 252: *μειράκιον ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης*. See VARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, 134.

72. The assembly also included the *kaisar* Nikephoros Melissenos, Isaac's brother-in-law (VARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, 80-84), as well as a few other relatives. FRANKOPAN (*Kinship*, 20) makes Adrian “responsible for seeking to alienate John within the family, and of spreading gossip about and against him” (the interpretation is obviously influenced by the equivocal formula *κατατρέχοντες ἐσχηματισμένως*, “slandering him in a perfidious manner”, Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VIII 8, 3 [95], p. 254). Given the involvement of the Bulgarian archbishop as well as a certain amount of undeniable guilt on the part of the young man, Adrian's strategy appears to have been more refined and circuitous –manipulative rather than overtly offensive. However, the additional assumption (though in fact contrary to the above) seems to be closer to the truth: “John's two uncles [Adrian and Melissenos] had been encouraging him, stoking his ambitions and playing on the coronation of Alexios' son around this time” (FRANKOPAN, *ibidem*; see the following note). John's “plotting with the Normans”, propounded by ANGOLD (*Church and Society*, 164), seems scarcely acceptable, especially since it would automatically entail *protosebastos*' embroilment in no less than a high treason.

73. It is sometimes interpreted as the first symptom of the wider crisis in the Komnenian family, caused by the coronation of Alexios' son. The openly dynastic promotion of the Alexios' lineage seems not to be received with equal enthusiasm by all Komnenoi. John might have thought that his father, as senior to Alexios, suffered damage from the latter's ascent, by which he himself would also be unfairly kicked out from the race for the throne (see FRANKOPAN, *Kinship*, 17). Adrian's and Melissenos' aspirations are even more blurry.

Komnenoi, do not appear to have suffered the least from the disagreeable episode⁷⁴. Nonetheless, Alexios tried to largely neutralise its possible consequences, as he used to act in other similar situations, so that John was immediately sent back to Dyrrachium, where he would stay at least an additional decade⁷⁵, continuing the habitual, if not cordial, correspondence with the head of the nearby archdiocese⁷⁶. The truth is that the incident with the controversial letter (unless it is understood as mere clumsiness) would be hard to explain by, say, the eagerness of a newly gazetted official to showcase –albeit in a pretty adventurous manner– an unqualified allegiance and devotion to his lord (in somewhat naive expectation of return?). The commotion that ensued, and could easily be envisaged, is hard to reconcile with the pacific and wary nature of Theophylact, whose actions are on the whole characterised by restraint and a certain lack of personal initiative⁷⁷.

74. ANGOLD'S assertion (*Church and Society*, 164) that "Theophylact was summoned to Constantinople to explain himself" –whereby the latter "seems to have got away with the reprimand"– is barely supported by any textual evidence. The famous letter to Maria of Alania (GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 4; see above, n. 58), to which Angold refers in this context, indicates neither date nor reason for Theophylact's departure to the City (which actually took place on his way back from Nicomedia; GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 137.19-20). Similarly, we know nothing of the reasons, which led the "sebastos and praitor of Dyrrachium" to prevent the archbishop from visiting the ex-empress (GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 139.34-36); what is more, we cannot be sure of the personal identity of the *sebastos* either (since even three bearers of the title took their turns as *doukes* of Dyrrachium during the archiepiscopate of Theophylact; see GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 83). After all, what balked Theophylact's second attempt to visit his former patroness could just as well be an urgent call without any ulterior motive on the part of the *sebastos* (in fact, no ill will is necessarily entailed by the wording of the letter). So it seems too bold to assume that the hindrance was prompted by an alleged vindictiveness of John Komnenos, a motive over-readily implied by ANGOLD (*loc. cit.*).

75. VARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, 141.

76. The correspondence with John Komnenos includes nine extant letters by Theophylact. If judged solely by the number of letters sent to him, John is one of the most frequent addressees of the archbishop (second only to Theophylact's former student and intimate friend Michael Pantechnes, a chief physician to the emperor). ANGOLD'S narrative (*Church and Society*, 163-164), centred round the motif of a gradually increasing hatred between the two men, appears slightly far-fetched.

77. Attention should be drawn to Vasil'evskiy's assumption that the "Bulgarian archbishop" from the report of Anna Komnene was actually Theophylact's predecessor John Aoinos, who –due to the very letter at issue– would be ousted from the post of head of the Bulgarian episcopate and replaced precisely by Theophylact, see VASIL'EVSKIY, Feofilakt, 308; IDEM, *Kriticheskiya zametki*, 157-158. The hypothesis, as brilliant as it is, encounters some insoluble chronological problems, cf. H. GELZER, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida. Geschichte und Urkunden*, Leipzig 1902 (repr. Aalen 1980), 6; GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, 36; Anna Komnina, *Aleksiada* [Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*], ed. Ya. N. LYUBARSKIY, St Petersburg 21996, 544 n. 852. K. ROTH (*Studie zu den Briefen des Theophylaktos Bulgarus*, Ludwigshafen a. Rh. 1900, 10-11) believed he could trace a vague reference to the unfortunate event in one of the existing letters addressed to John Komnenos (the respective passage actually reads: *Εἰ μὲν ἡγροικίσμεθά τι πρὸς τὴν σὴν δόξαν ἡμεῖς ...* ["If we acted somewhat rude in regards to your reputation ..."]. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 12, p. 167.9-11).

Kaiserkritiker

If the “letter of the Bulgarian archbishop” somehow opposes the image of Theophylact as a silent vassal deprived of his own initiative, certain passages of his Doukas-friendly *Address to Constantine Porphyrogenitus* seem to betray an author who would not hesitate to imply even a kind of thinly veiled criticism of the rival party, personified in its chief representative. The pointedness and careful distribution of these finely disguised innuendos appear to indicate their deliberate, if not “programmatically”, character. Be that as it may, Alexios Komnenos proved to be shrewd enough to read them between the lines –and unforgiving enough to remember them at the right moment.

The *Address to Constantine* originated in the years that preceded the great turnaround in the court policy caused by the birth of the Komnenian heir. This surely can explain the unusual circumstance –a slightly “scandalous” one– that in this *royal panegyric*, the effectively ruling emperor was not mentioned by a single word, while his junior, merely nominal, imperial colleague was exalted as almost the only bearer of royal authority, both that of the present, and that which has been secured to him in the future⁷⁸. In all likelihood, Alexios and his entourage did not witness the performance, probably organised in a purely Doukas ambience of the Mangana Palace⁷⁹, in the presence of the nearest kinsfolk of the addressee, his mother, and seemingly also his father, Michael VII, who, since his demotion under Botaneiates, was tonsured as a monk and ordained metropolitan of Ephesus⁸⁰. So what would be the immediate cause for this semiofficial family gathering? The end of a teaching cycle –perhaps completion of the first year of Constantine’s instruction under Theophylact’s mentorship⁸¹? According to certain passages of the speech, it is clear that the pupil already had the opportunity to confirm his high intellectual abilities, which would indicate that

But the whole context of the letter does not appear to provide sufficient support for the conjecture (cf. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 86). F. BARIŠIĆ (Dva grčka natpisa iz Manastira i Struge [Two Greek inscriptions from Manastir and Struga], *ZRVI* 8/2 [1964] 26 n. 30) thought the phrase *δοῦλος καὶ ἀποστάτης* [“slave and rebel”] from Theophylact’s letter to John Pantechnes (GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* II, no. 120, p. 555.30) alluded to John Komnenos (whereas the most likely referent is Bohemond, see GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 106, 554 n. 5).

78. The fact of Constantine’s betrothal with the emperor’s daughter Anna Komnene is likewise surprisingly passed over in downright silence, although the affinity with the true ruler was indeed the strongest, if not the only real, guarantee of the intended one-man rule of Constantine (cf. MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 205 n. 26: “Perhaps she was simply not present” –which does not appear to be a convincing enough reason).

79. See above, n. 48.

80. Attaleiates, 208.9-12; Skylitzes Continuatus, 182.7-8; Bryennios, III 24, p. 253.6-7; Zonaras, XVIII 19, p. 722.16-723.1; Manasses, p. 355-356, vv. 6567, 6572-6573; Ephraem, p. 128, vv. 3452-3453.

81. Cf. MULLETT, *Imperial Vocabulary*, 364.

Constantine's schooling probably commenced at least a year earlier⁸². At the beginning of the speech, the professor enthusiastically welcomes his own happiest fortune, the one that allows him to boast of being a teacher of an emperor⁸³ – indeed barely concealing the allusion to his celebrated predecessor Psellos, once a tutor of Constantine's father. The likely presence of Michael VII in the audience would therefore be a sort of a lively token of a tradition that had already been introduced by the previous imperial generation, taking firm root in the Doukas court – a tradition of educating “philosopher kings”, in line with the classic recipe of Plato⁸⁴. The mention of Constantine's eponymous grandfather, founder of the dynasty, once inaugurated by Psellos in person, as well as of his philosophical son, the disciple of the latter⁸⁵, “to whom the reign was nothing but books and conversations with scholarly men”⁸⁶, appears not to be without a shade of a true Psellian irony. Clearly insinuating the famous Psellos' tongue-in-cheek portrait of this feeble and dull sovereign⁸⁷, notoriously vulnerable to the influences of his infamous favourites⁸⁸ and completely disinterested in his royal duties⁸⁹,

82. See e.g. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 183.19ff. The information on Constantine's participation in hunting with hounds (GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 183.7-9) allows us to conclude that the boy (b. 1074) could not be less than ten-year-old at the time of speech's delivery, which amounts to around 1085-86 as its most probable date (GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 67, 182 n. 6).

83. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 179.11-12: *Κἀγὼ τοίνυν ὁ σὸς διδάσκαλος –περοῦμαι γὰρ τῷ ὀνόματι καὶ δεκάπηχυς γίνομαι, βασιλέως καθηγητῆς προσκαλούμενος– ...* (“I, your teacher –this name gives me wings, and I seem to grow ten cubits high to be called professor of an emperor– ...”). The passage probably conceals a double allusion, both classical, to Herodotos IX 81, 1, and biblical, to 1 Kings 6:26.

84. About a similar tradition on the Komnenian side, see Bryennios, I 1, p. 75.14ff.

85. See POLEMIS, *Doukai*, 44-45.

86. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 185.18-19: *ὧ γε καὶ ἡ βασιλεία οὐδὲν ἦν ἕτερον ἢ βίβλοι καὶ λογίων ἀνδρῶν ὁμιλία*. Cf. Psellos, *Chronographia*, VII 168 (c 4), p. 286-287; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, V 8, 4, p. 163; Zonaras, XVIII 16, p. 708; Manasses, p. 354, vv. 6532-6534; Ephraem, p. 127, v. 3417.

87. “Slow mentally” is perhaps too harsh a characterisation stated in *ODB* 1366 (s.v. “Michael VII Doukas”). Psellos' ridiculously over-laudatory portrait of Michael is in *Chronographia*, VII 165-175 (c 1-11), p. 285-290.

88. See Attaleiates, 142, 154-155; Zonaras, XVIII 16, p. 707-708.

89. See Zonaras, XVIII 17, p. 714; Manasses, p. 353-354, vv. 6528ff.; Ephraem, p. 127, vv. 3415ff. Michael will show the same indolence in administering his see, which he deigned to visit only once in his life (Skylitzes Continuatus, 182.9; Zonaras, XVIII 19, p. 723). It was Leo Allatius (c. 1586-1669), a Greek-born polymath and keeper of the Vatican library, who once proposed the original identification of the royal-blooded metropolitan of Ephesus with the renowned Aristotelian commentator Michael of Ephesus (early mid-12th century), long mistakenly believed to be Psellos' pupil. Allatius presents a pretty idealised image of Michael's monastic *otium litteratum*: *In eo otio, si gregem Christi pascere otium est, multa in varias disciplinas, nec dubito, conscripsit, quae nomine Michaelis Ephesii, ... voluit, ut hominibus innotescerent* (“In such a leisure, if tending the flock of Christ is a leisure, he no doubt wrote a great deal about various disciplines, an oeuvre he ... desired to become noted amongst men under the name of Michael of Ephesus”, *De Psellis, et eorum scriptis diatriba*, Rome 1634, 42 = PG 122, col. 498A-B).

Theophylact prepared an implicit rhetoric background for the antithetical portrayal of the protagonist's mother, the energetic empress Maria of Alania, a true parental guide of the young prince.

The praise of the empress dominates the first part of the speech, transforming it into a double panegyric, an original composition that will once again be varied in the *Address to Alexios Komnenos*, itself expanded by the separate eulogy of Anna Dalassene. The similarity between the two additional encomia is not only superficial. It is precisely the figure of the *royal mother* that constitutes the main character of both inserted praises: her role as the representative protectress of the young ruler (as well as the reigning lineage) is on both occasions associated with exemplary piousness, this most privileged and favoured virtue of the Komnenian court. Hence the bulk of the panegyric of Maria occupies the glorification of the typical Christian virtues of the empress nun, who voluntarily rejected the splendour and comfort of the imperial court solely for the sake of serving Christ⁹⁰, by helping and cherishing those in need⁹¹, engaging in extensive endowment building, as well as in diligent studies of theological literature, even the toughest one⁹². The catalogue of the empress' virtues⁹³ eventually culminates in mothering, i.e. *τεκνογονία* ("child-bearing") and the subsequent care of the proper education of progeny, which, according to Theophylact, focuses mainly on the conscientious choice of child's preceptors (*σωφρονισταί*)⁹⁴.

90. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 187.15-16: *μηδενὶ διωκομένη δεινῶ, μηδένα τὸν ἐκβιαζόμενον ἔχουσα ὅτι μόνον τὸν Χριστοῦ ἔρωτα* ("driven by no danger, without anything that would force her except for love to Christ"). Zonaras gives a less ideal picture of the reasons which led the ex-empress to embrace the monastic vow (see above, n. 49). All the same, Maria enjoyed complete freedom of movement, including the usual attendance of the Alexian court and visits to her numerous estates and foundations (see above, n. 58; MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 206). Even the fact of public delivery of the *Address to Constantine* may serve as a sign of this virtually unrestrained liberty.

91. At this point, the orator resorts to an unexpected apostrophe, moving to the more intimate second person singular (which is after all undeniable evidence of the empress' presence at the delivery).

92. As such, Maria of Alania fits perfectly into the contemporaneous ideal of a feminine savant, otherwise nicely represented in other prominent royal women of the Komnenos court (notably Eirene Doukaina, Anna Dalassene and Anna Komnene). On ex-empress' theological commissions from Theophylact, see above, n. 59. The philosopher and theologian Eustratios of Nicaea (c. 1050/60-c. 1120/30), a former student of Italos, dedicated to her a treatise on meteorology, bearing the following lemma: *Εὐστρατίου Νικαίας τῆ δεσποίνῃ κυρίᾳ Μαρίᾳ τῆ Ἀλανήσῃ* (ed. P. POLESSO SCHIAVON, *Un trattato inedito di meteorologia di Eustrazio di Nicea*, *RSBN* 2-3 [1965-1966] 290-304). See GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 66. Maria was also a patroness of the Georgian philosopher John of Petritzos (Ioane Petric'i, d. after 1125), a pupil of Psellos and Italos. For the literary sponsorship of Maria of Alania, see MULLETT, *Aristocracy*, 177-178; EADEM, *Disgrace*, 205-206; GARLAND, *Empresses*, 185.

93. Cf. MULLETT, *Imperial Vocabulary*, 365; HILL, *Imperial Women*, 84.

94. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 191.27-29: *Τίς δὲ πλείονας σωφρονιστὰς ἐφιστᾶ τῷ παιδί, τοὺς μὲν γλῶτταν ἐξευγενίζοντας, τοὺς δὲ τὸν νοῦν καταρτίζοντας, τοὺς δ' ἱστορίαν ἐρανίζοντας,*

So it is up to the young ruler (at this point, the orator redirects his confidential “thou” to his main addressee) not to neglect such brilliant legacy that his fortunate destiny bestowed upon him so generously, but to further augment it by his own personal virtue. The latter, however, ought to be altogether worthy of his imperial majesty, confirmed by acts of military courage, by unreservedly exposing to strenuous efforts and by contempt of the “most horrible beast” (*δεινότατον θηρίον*), pleasure⁹⁵. In order to put his lesson on a yet sounder theoretical basis, Theophylact now provides a quick overview of the well-known Aristotelian typology of constitutions, comprising the three opposing pairs of government, one good and one deviant⁹⁶, that is *basileia*⁹⁷ – *tyranny*, *aristocracy* – *oligarchy* and *democracy* – *ochlocracy*⁹⁸. As a man of his time, Theophylact is not interested in the last two pairs, otherwise alien to the political experience of the Middle Ages. Consequently, he concentrates on the relationship between *basileia* and *tyranny*, showing, on the negative example of the latter, as the “lawless monarchy”, what is that a true monarch should shun in order to avoid the infamous reputation of a tyrant. At the beginning of this particularly pointed passage, occupying the central position in the speech, and carefully prepared by the previous theoretical introduction, Theophylact draws the first lines on his large portrait of an exemplary tyrant, an unscrupulous usurper whose very coming to power entails robbery and bloodshed of his fellow citizens⁹⁹:

... (“Who is she who brings more preceptors to her child” –such is the rhetorical question with which the speaker addresses his mistress– “some of them ennobling his eloquence, the other adjusting his mind, the third contributing the knowledge of history ...”). Here we learn that Constantine had distinct schoolmasters for each of the aforementioned subjects. Rhetoric, which appears to be the privileged one, was indeed entrusted to Theophylact, the “master of rhetoricians” (see above, n. 44). However, we know nothing about Constantine’s teachers of philosophy and history.

95. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte* I, or. 4, p. 195.2-3.

96. Aristotle’s theory of constitutions is comprehensively developed in the *Politics*, vols. III-V (see notably III 7, 1279a32ff.; IV 2, 1289a26-30). Cf. also Plato, *Resp.* I 338d; VIII 544c; *Polit.* 276e; 291d-e; Xenophon, *Memor.* IV 6, 12.

97. Theophylact recalls the traditional pareymology of the Greek word *βασίλεια*, interpreting it as *βάσις λαοῦ*, “support (or foundation) of the people”.

98. The term *ochlocracy* (*ὄχλοκρατία*, “rule by the mob”) is not part of the original technical nomenclature of Aristotle’s political philosophy (the coinage is actually first found with Polybios, VI 4, 6 and VI 57, 9). In fact, *democracy* (*δημοκρατία*) is the term Aristotle reserves for the *perverted* form of the “rule by the many” (see e.g. *Pol.* III 7, 1279b6; IV 2, 1289a29-30), whereas the positive variant of the populist constitution is termed *polity* by him (*πολιτεία*, “republic”, in the narrower sense of the term, see *Pol.* III 7, 1279a37-39; IV 2, 1289a28). The terminological inconsistencies encountered in Theophylact’s summary suggest that the Byzantine author did not draw directly from Aristotle’s *Politics*, but probably from some compilation. Cf. Psellos, *Historia Syntomos*, VIII (ed. W. J. AERTS [CFHB 30], Berlin-New York 1990), p. 6.77-86. See PRAECHTER, *Antike Quellen*, 101 n. 2.

99. For the Byzantines, “tyranny” is nearly a technical term for any forced acquisition of power, any which is not based on a peaceful and legal transfer of authority (notably through regu-

“First and foremost, the tyrant seizes power by violence: for he does not receive the reins of power from his citizens, but grabs them himself by carnage and bloodshed. Such is his prelude, and thus, from the outset, he is besprinkled with blood”¹⁰⁰.

It is hard to imagine that a set piece as striking as this one, composed of painstakingly selected keywords, and placed at the forefront of the very middle section of the speech, could simply slip the attention of Theophylact’s audience –still vividly recalling the not so distant events that stained the prelude of Alexios Komnenos’ own accession. As we know, the latter took place under the sign of barbaric plunder of the Byzantine capital, which for three days was left at the mercy of a rebel army composed of both foreign hirelings and fellow countrymen –the latter just as brutal in rape and theft¹⁰¹. The turmoil cast a dark shadow over the beginning of the reign of Alexios I Komnenos, heavily downplaying his initial success, and making the victor more vulnerable and ultimately more yielding to the pressures of the extra-Komnenian agents. Alexios’ prompt restoration of the imperial authority of Constantine Doukas, confirmed by a solemn chrysobull issued to that effect¹⁰², his quick entry into the nominal duumvirate with the legitimate successor of the previous dynasty –as well as his ready “consent” to the crowning of Eirene Doukaina– all this was really coerced to some extent by the need to legitimise the new emperor’s own coming to power, whose “tyrannical” (i.e. unlawful and violent) nature was only pointed up by the unfortunate sack of the capital¹⁰³.

lar dynastic inheritance, royal marriage, adoption or legacy). See J.-Cl. CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* [Byzantina Sorbonensia 9], Paris 1990, 184.

100. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 195.21-197.1: *Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ὁ τύραννος ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκβιάζεται· οὐ γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν πολιτῶν τὰ χαλινὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐκδέχεται, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς ἀρπάζει ταῦτα σφαγαῖς τε καὶ αἵμασι. Τοιαῦτα μὲν αὐτῷ τὰ προοίμια καὶ οὕτως ἐξ ἀρχῆς τοῖς αἵμασι περιοραίνεται.*

101. Constantinople fell into the hands of the rebels on 1 April 1081. As Anna Komnene (*Alexiad*, II 10, 4 [7], p. 81; also III 2, 2, p. 90 and III 5, 2, p. 98) relates, the raiders at least abstained from shedding blood (*τοῦ μέντοι ἀποκτένειν [sic] μόνον ἀφιστάμενοι*), while according to Zonaras (XVIII 20, p. 729.3-4), the evil advanced up to the bloodshed (*μέχρι γὰρ ἐκχύσεως αἱμάτων προὔχωρησε τὸ κακόν*). The information on a three-day duration of looting (*Depraedanda tribus datur Urbs invasa diebus*, “The conquered City is given over to pillaging for three days”) stems from William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, IV 150 (ed. and transl. M. MATHIEU, *Guillaume de Pouille. La Geste de Robert Guiscard* [Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici. Testi 4], Palermo 1961), p. 212.

102. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 4, 6, p. 97. See above, n. 48.

103. A whole decade later (1091), John the Oxite, titular patriarch of Antioch (c. 1089-1100, d. after 1100), will not scruple to remind the emperor once more of the problematic overture of his rule, see P. GAUTIER, *Diatribes de Jean l’Oxite contre Alexis Ier Comnène*, *REB* 28 (1970) 29.1-2: *Πρῶτα μὲν σοι, ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἔκθεσμος τῆς βασιλείας ἢ κρηπίς καταβέβληται καὶ τὰ ἐπιβατήρια δὲ γέγονε οἷα καὶ γέγονε* (“In the first place, o emperor, the foundation of your reign is laid on lawlessness,

Could Theophylact's passage be a result of a sheer imprudence, as suggested by the modern editor of the *Address to Constantine*¹⁰⁴? Yet the same imprudence will be almost literally repeated once again in the speech. So, would the author of a discourse whose every section evinces the most meticulous preoccupation with composition, inner symmetry of the parts, and tactful choice of the words –allow himself to repeat the same gross negligence once more in the same text? And in no other place, but *at the very conclusion* of such an important section –by actually *resuming the initial motif* of the bloody commencement of tyrant's rule one more time at the very end, the second most conspicuous point, of this central part of the speech:

“Firstly behold him¹⁰⁵ stepping into the forecourt of the palace¹⁰⁶ in a fashion completely opposite to the tyrant –**not gaining power by force, nor staining his robe with blood**, Such is the vestibule of his reign, as it is cheerful and accessible, not gloomy and repugnant”¹⁰⁷.

This negative example could easily be imagined by any attentive listener of Theophylact's delivery¹⁰⁸.

Even the paraenetic half of the discourse proves not to be without occasional hints which the pro-Doukas audience could naturally associate with the figure of the incumbent ruler.

Among the typical virtues of an ἀληθῆς βασιλεύς, the first place occupies piety, the soundest foundation of the state edifice. Whilst no one is weaker than a tyrant –hated by many, if guarded by many– nobody is stronger than a pi-

and your advent –passed as it passed”). The subsequent Norman war (1081-1085) is accordingly interpreted as the retribution of God (κίνησις Θεοῦ; GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 29.4). On Alexios' penance, imposed by the patriarch Kosmas, see Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, III 5, 5-6, p. 99-100.

104. GAUTIER, *Theophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 196 n. 18: “Ces propos frisaient l'imprudence. Le souverain du moment pouvait se sentir visé par ce portrait du tyran”.

105. I.e. an exemplary ruler.

106. I.e. commencing his reign.

107. GAUTIER, *Theophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 199.27-28 and 201.2-4: *Καὶ πρῶτον ὄρα τοῦτον εὐθὺς ἐναντία τῷ τυράννῳ ζωγροῦντα τὰ πρόθυρα καὶ οὐ βία τὴν ἀρχὴν κτώμενον, οὐδὲ τὸν πέπλον αἵματι βάπτοντα, Οὕτω μὲν αὐτῷ τὰ τῆς βασιλείας προαύλια, ὡς ἴλαρὰ καὶ εὐπρόσιτα, οὐ σκυθρωπὰ καὶ δυσέντευκτα* (my emphasis in the above translation).

108. The portrait of the tyrant appears to have some other allusive hints at the expense of the current sovereign. So, according to GAUTIER (*Theophylacte I*, or. 4, p. 196 n. 19), Theophylact's remark about the typical negligence of a tyrant with regard to the organisation of an army that should defend the state –accompanied by an excessive concern for the bodyguard, for reasons of personal safety (GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 197.13-15)– recalls the similar scathing criticism by John the Oxite, see IDEM, *Diatribes*, 41.15-17 (the justification by the pretended savings at the state level seems ridiculous in the face of the debilitating construction megalomania and the huge affluence by which the emperor has overwhelmed his closest relatives; see GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 41.17ff.; cf. also Zonaras, XVIII 29, p. 767; see ANGOLD, *Empire*, 136; FRANKOPAN, *Kinship*, 4).

ous monarch surrounded with faithful friends, neither flatterers nor onerous critics, but dedicated assistants and amiable advisers, worthy of being entrusted with the highest administration of cities¹⁰⁹. The court of such a sovereign teems with scholars, rhetoricians and philosophers, since he is not engaged in any idle concerns, nor is a greedy profiteer who turned his state into petty merchandise, serving only for his own benefit and pleasure. A true ruler despises any personal gain, for he subordinates everything to the service of the state, carefully watching over it –a vigilant helmsman steering the state ship¹¹⁰. A sagacious and gallant commander on the battlefield, he will pursue to train for war in peacetime as well, continually learning from older veterans, as military skills rest mainly on the wisdom of the old age:

“The old man is the mind, the young is the hand, one needing another; for nothing so much destroyed the Roman state as not being run by any stout old man, his shell wrinkled with age, his fruit ripened from the inside like walnut”¹¹¹.

Is it just another slip of a rhetorician seduced by his own vibrant metaphor? Alexios Komnenos, a military prodigy whose strategic genius was brilliantly confirmed even before his first beard began to grow¹¹², could in fact be around twenty-five years of age at the time of coming to power in 1081¹¹³, and therefore scarcely not feel offended by the hasty remark of the court orator –the one he definitely refuted by his own outstanding example¹¹⁴.

109. See above, n. 60. Cf. GAUTIER, *Diatribes*, 43.17-20.

110. For the ancient source of the image, see PRAECHTER, *Antike Quellen*, 405.

111. GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, of. 4, p. 207.23-26: ὁ μὲν ἔστι νοῦν ὁ γέρον, ὁ δὲ χεῖρ, θάτερον θατέρου δεόμενον, ὡς οὐδὲν οὕτω τὰ Ῥωμαίων διέφθειρεν ὡς τὸ μηδένα εἶναι ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων στιβαρὸν γέροντα, ῥυτιδωθέντα μὲν τῷ χρόνῳ τὸ ἔλυτρον, τὸν δὲ καρπὸν ἐνδοθεν στελειώσαντα καθάπερ τὸ κάρυον. See GAUTIER, *ibidem*, 206 n. 25; cf. PRAECHTER, *Antike Quellen*, 410 n. 2.

112. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, II 1, 3 (24), p. 55.

113. See GAUTIER, *Théophylacte I*, 63 n. 67.

114. In actual fact, it turned out that the reign of the old men (and the old women) did not bring anything good to 11th-century Byzantium, which experienced several short-term takeoffs precisely under the younger rulers (e.g. Michael IV and Romanos IV). One of the typical emperors of the declining period, Michael VI (1056-57), pointedly nicknamed both “the Military one” (ὁ στρατιωτικός, really due to his first service as minister of military finance) and “the Old Man” (ὁ γέρον / πρεσβύτης, due to his advanced years, see Psellos, *Chronographia*, VI 223 [a 20].9-11, p. 205; VII 1.tit, p. 207; VII 2.2, p. 207; VII 43.1, p. 228; VII 56.2, p. 234; VII 60.3, p. 236; VII [a 7].20, p. 254), led the country to a serious crisis, that brought Isaac Komnenos to power; while the political and military dullness of the old veteran Nikephoros Botaneiates cost him crown, which he handed over virtually without resistance. According to Attaleiates (p. 139.9-10), Michael VII resembled γέρον ἐν νέοις διὰ τὸ παρεμμένον καὶ ἀπαλὸν (“an old man amongst the young, because of his flabby and meek nature”; cf. Skylitzes Continuatus, 155.7-8; Zonaras, XVIII 15, p. 707.3; Ephraem, p. 127, vv. 3411-3412; all probably derived from Psellos, *Chronographia*, VII 169 [c 5].1, p. 287). See POLEMIS, *Doukai*, 42.

Finally, after warning his pupil to stay away from actors and jesters (*σκηνικοί*)¹¹⁵, the mentor will remind him of *φιλανθρωπία*, the virtue of benevolence¹¹⁶, by which a sovereign should be raised above his subjects as much as a shepherd is raised above his flock. But it is really the virtue and the blessing of his saintly mother¹¹⁷ (a true mediator of divine assistance), both of which, according to Theophylact, “sustain the imperial and spiritual home” of the young ruler.

Conclusion

The *Address to Constantine Doukas* indirectly reflects the circumstances at the Komnenian court in the mid-1080s. The still shaky position of Alexios Komnenos seems to have left enough room for the Doukai and their speaker to give wing to some muffled anti-Komnenian sentiments, unafraid of consequences after all¹¹⁸. However, it was too naive to assume that a promising ruler of Alexios’ ambition and dexterity would permanently adhere to a fictitious co-emperorship and broad dynastic concessions to the Doukas family, however once pledged under oath and further ratified by an imperial bull¹¹⁹. The first decade of Alexios’ reign confirmed the incomparable military and diplomatic skills of a strenuous ruler, entirely able to cope with both external and internal challenges facing empire and himself. With the birth of a natural heir, a decisive change took place in the position of the Komnenian sovereign as well as the royal family as a whole. The event found its appropriate echo in Theophylact’s *Address to Alexios Komnenos*, a lengthy panegyric to the emperor’s recent successes in war and peace, with an appended tribute to Anna Dalassene, the “blessed root” of the Komnenoi *genos*¹²⁰. A prudent monarch, conscious of the fact that his autocratic authority is not yet fully consolidated, Alexios will not “obey” the rhetor’s advice to instantly raise his purple-born son

115. Cf. similar criticism of the actors’ guild (*οἱ ἐκ τῆς σκηνῆς*) in the *Defence of Eunuchs* (GAUTIER, *Theophylacte* I, or. 7, 295.6-19, at 295.17).

116. MULLETT, *Theophylact*, 233: “The imperial virtue emphasised, because within the child’s capacity, is *philanthropia*”. Cf. EADEM, *Imperial Vocabulary*, 365.

117. The same term (*ὁσία μητήρ*; GAUTIER, *Theophylacte* I, or. 4, p. 211.10) is applied to Anna Dalassene in the *Address to Alexios Komnenos* (GAUTIER, *ibidem*, or. 5, p. 237.21).

118. Alexios’ diplomatic *clementia Caesaris* emerged on even more serious occasions as well, especially in the case of his nephew John Komnenos, or the discovery of the implication of Maria of Alania and Constantine Doukas in the conspiracy of Nikephoros Diogenes in 1094 (Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, IX 8, 2, p. 275). See CHALANDON, *Alexis Comnène*, 150; B. LEIB, Un basileus ignoré: Constantin Doukas (v. 1074-1094), *BSI* 17 (1956) 356-359; IDEM, Complots à Byzance contre Alexis Ier Comnène, *BSI* 23 (1962) 256; MULLETT, *Disgrace*, 205-206; P. FRANKOPAN, Challenges to Imperial Authority in the Reign of Alexios I Komnenos: the Conspiracy of Nikephoros Diogenes, *BSI* 64 (2006) 259.

119. See above, n. 32 and 48.

120. GAUTIER, *Theophylacte* I, or. 5, p. 237.21: *μακαρίαν ῥίζαν*.

to equal co-ruler –although generously “allowing” the panegyrist to publicly announce the crucial information, being the first to officially present it to the courtly audience as a kind of a new revised agenda of the Komnenos dynastic policy¹²¹. Now the emperor will know how to thank for the valuable intellectual service of his somewhat vacillating subject. Alexios Komnenos understood better than anyone that the considerable skills of his talented courtier deserve to be applied more effectively and for a more serious purpose than furnishing occasional declamations favourable to this or that courtly faction, or engaging in private lessons for disinherited princes. This was a huge cultural-historical mission that will occupy the second and more significant half of Theophylact’s career, enabling him to fully develop and mature into one of the most representative figures of late 11th and early 12th-century cultural history of Byzantium.

121. John Komnenos was crowned co-emperor sometime between 1 September and 15 November 1092 (perhaps on 1 or 13 September, his birthday), thus five whole years after coming into the world; *termini post* and *ante quem* are established on the basis of the documents from the archives of Naples, *Regii Neapolitani Archivi, Monumenta edita ac illustrate*, V, Naples 1857, specifically 146 no. 457 (15 Nov.) and 174 no. 467 (1 Sept.), see VASIL’EVSKIY, Feofilakt, 313; FRANKOPAN, Kinship, 17; cf. VARZOS, *Γενεαλογία*, 204 (opting for 1 September, the beginning of the official year). There is no doubt that John’s coronation was premised on a series of important military-political successes that ultimately reinforced Alexios Komnenos’ reputation as a god-given rescuer of the Roman state, especially his recent triumph over Pechenegs at Lebounion on 29 April 1091, as well as the recovery of the western coast of Asia Minor along with the great islands, completed in 1092-93 by John Doukas and Constantine Dalassenos, see P. GAUTIER, Défection et soumission de la Crète sous Alexis Ier Comnène, *REB* 35 (1977) 215-227; P. FRANKOPAN, Challenges to Imperial Authority in Byzantium: Revolts on Crete and Cyprus at the End of the 11th Century, *Byz.* 74 (2004) 400-401. However, the establishment of the Komnenian dynasty catalysed a series of conspiracies in the coming years (the most serious being that of Nikephoros Diogenes, particularly delicate for the tacit complicity of the ex-empress and her son, see above, n. 118).

