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Roman identity in Byzantium: a critical approach

Abstract: Collective identity in the so-called Byzantine Empire is a much-debated issue that has drawn a lot of attention over the years. The current paper attempts a critical assessment of the hitherto main lines of thinking about Byzantine identity, focussing on the period between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries. By proposing an alternative view on source material based on a comprehensive theoretical framework, I argue that a conceptualization of the collective identity of this medieval imperial social order with its constantly fluctuating geopolitical and cultural boundaries needs to be disconnected from essentialist and reifying views on perennial ethnicity as well as from the modern phenomenon of the nation-state.

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One could plausibly argue that the problem of decoding Byzantine identity lies in the fact that the term 'Byzantine', commonly used in the present to define the state and the subjects of the Christian Roman Empire (either since the time of Constantine I or alternatively since the post-Justinianic period), is a *terminus technicus*, a retrospective construct of scholars of the Early Modernity in Western Europe.[1] This *terminus technicus* removes the spotlight from this society's normative self-designation, i.e. Roman, and thus imposes upon the modern historian a latent bias, namely the bias that this society's collective identity must be called and therefore understood differently from what its name denotes.

1 Cf., e.g., C. MANGO, Byzantium. The Empire of New Rome. New York 1980, 1, 4; I. KARAYANNOPOULOS, Το Βυζαντινό Κράτος, I: Κρατική οργάνωση και κοινωνική δομή. Athens 1985, 7.

The main lines of thinking in the research on medieval Eastern Roman identity could be roughly summarized as follows: The first, extensively influenced by the retrospective Modern Greek national discourse, approaches this identity as the medieval form of the perennial Greek national identity.[2] The second, which could be regarded as preponderant within the field, albeit by no means monolithically concordant in its various utterances, speaks of a multi-ethnic imperial state at least up to the twelfth century, the average subject of which was self-identified as Roman.[3] The third, and more recent, approach dismissed the supposition of a multi-ethnic empire and suggested that Byzantium should be regarded as a pre-modern Nation-State in which Romanness had the traits of national identity.[4]

In the pages that follow, I shall attempt a critical approach to these three lines of thinking, focusing on the period between the seventh and the thirteenth

2 On prominent utterances of this line of thinking, see A. VAKALOPOULOS, Byzantinism and Hellenism. Remarks on the racial origin and the intellectual continuity of the Greek Nation. *Balkan Studies* 9 (1968) 101–126; P. CHARANIS, The formation of the Greek people, in: S. Vryonis (ed.), The "past" in medieval and modern Greek culture. Malibu 1978, 87–102; S. VRYONIS, Recent scholarship on continuity and discontinuity of culture: classical Greeks, Byzantines, modern Greeks, ibid. 237–256; IDEM, The Greek identity in the Middle Ages, in: Byzance et l'hellénisme: L'identité grecque au Moyen-Âge. Actes du Congrès International tenu à Treste du 1er au 3 Octobre 1997. *Études Balkaniques* 6 (1999) 21–36; B. PAPOULIA, Das Ende der Antike und der Beginn des Mittelalters in Südosteuropa, in: Ελληνικές Ανακοινώσεις στο Ε΄ Διεθνές Συνέδριο Σπουδών Νοτιοανατολικής Ευρώπης. Athens 1985, 61–76.

3 On various versions of this approach, see indicatively: J. KODER, Byzanz, die Griechen und die Romaiosyne – eine "Ethnogenese" der "Römer"?, in H. Wolfram (ed.), Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern, Teil 1. Vienna 1990, 103–111; IDEM, Griechische Identitäten im Mittelalter – Aspekte einer Entwicklung, in A. Abramea/A. Laiou / E. Chrysos (eds.), Βυζάντιο – Κράτος και Κοινωνία. Μνήμη Νίκου Οικονομίδη. Athens 2003, 297–319; IDEM, Byzantium as seen by itself – images and mechanisms at work, in: Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies Sofia, 22–27 August 2011, I. Plenary Papers. Sofia 2011, 69–81; P. MAGDALINO, Hellenism and nationalism in Byzantium, in idem, Tradition and transformation in medieval Byzantium. Aldershot 1991, Variorum, XIV; E. CHRYSOS, The Roman political identity in late antiquity and early Byzantium, in K. Fledelius (ed.), Byzantium. Identity, image, influence. XIXth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Major Papers. Copenhagen 1996, 7–16; C. RAPP, Hellenic identity, *romanitas*, and Christianity in Byzantium, in K. Zacharia (ed.), Hellenisms. Culture, identity and ethnicity from antiquity to modernity. Aldershot 2008, 127–147.

4 A. KALDELLIS, Hellenism in Byzantium: the transformations of Greek identity and the reception of the classical tradition. Cambridge ²2009, *passim*; IDEM, From Rome to New Rome, from empire to nation-state: reopening the question of Byzantium's Roman identity, in L. Grig / G. Kelly (eds.), Two Romes. Rome and Constantinople in late antiquity. Oxford/New York 2012, 387–404.

centuries, and I shall propose an alternative view on source material based on a concrete theoretical framework. The arguments presented here are suggestive rather than conclusive, and aim primarily at a clarification of methodology.

1. Revisiting Byzantine Society's Roman Origins

The premise that "Byzantium around the year 1000 had become a medieval Greek Empire"[5] has been refuted with the plausible argument that the Byzantine élite did not identify itself as Greek, whereas Arabs, Armenians, Bulgars, Slavs and other ethno-cultural collectivities resided within the borders of the Empire in this period, the members of which were regarded as Roman subjects.[6] This plausible thesis has been complemented by a comprehensive statement on the self-identification of the Byzantines, according to which "the average Byzantine understood him/herself beyond any doubt as Roman, their language and litera-ture was Roman (i. e. Greek), their cultural and religious centre was also beyond doubt New Rome, namely Constantinople".[7]

This preponderant view on Byzantine society as a multi-ethnic society in which Roman self-identification was, nevertheless, predominant, raises some questions. First of all, did the average Byzantine who identified himself as Roman and correspondingly understood his political, religious and "education-al" culture as undeniably Roman also apply to the average member of all afore-mentioned ethno-cultural collectivities, at least some of which (e. g. Slavs) were further subdivided internally in sub-*ethnies*?[8] Or did it primarily refer to a Greek-speaking population in the territorial core that was almost continuously until 1204 under the Roman imperial rule of Constantinople?

In the first case, a reconsideration of the empire's multi-ethnic character seems necessary. If the average inhabitant of the medieval Eastern Roman Em-pire identified himself as Roman in a politico-cultural sense, what space was left for ethnic diversity? In the second case, the fact that ethno-cultural collectiv-ities such as Bulgars, Armenians, and Slavs were in the *longue durée* perspective not permanently under Roman imperial rule as a result of territorial and demo-graphic changes the empire had to undergo over the centuries, points to a dis-

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5 Papoulia, Das Ende der Antike (as footnote 2 above) 66.
6 Koder, Ethnogenese (as footnote 3 above) 111.
7 Ibid. 103.
8 About the Slavs as a non-monolithic group, see F. Curta, Still waiting for the Barbarians? The making of the Slavs in 'Dark Age' Greece, in idem (ed.), Neglected Barbarians. Turnhout 2011, 415 – 416.

tinction between a (Greco-)Roman ethnic identity of a core population and a Roman political label of the rest of the populations that found themselves for longer stretches of time under the rule of Constantinople through the centuries. In either case, the view on the politico-cultural identity of the average Byzantine as undeniably Roman implies, deliberately or not, a homogenizing discourse of identity similar to the one of nationhood. This could be regarded as reason enough to open the discussion on Byzantine Romanness as a pre-modern national identity; especially, if we take into account the revisionist views in the field of sociology of identity, which have argued for the potential existence of nations under certain pre-conditions even before the watershed of modernity.[9]

Anthony Kaldellis opened this discussion a few years ago in his monograph "Hellenism in Byzantium". There he argued for the transformation of the so-called Byzantine Empire into a Nation-State up from the seventh century onwards, in which the Roman political culture had assimilated the masses and abrogated ethno-cultural diversity within the state-frame to create a Roman nation.[10] Although many may probably feel *a priori* inclined to reject the latter argument, on the grounds of the still valid and preponderant sociological axiom about the modernity of nations and national identities,[11] this should not be dismissed without discussion. Not least because it raises some important issues about the theoretical background of identity research in pre-modern times and in Byzantium in particular. These issues can help us to re-think generalizing and sometimes oversimplifying approaches to post-seventh century Eastern Roman social order and its collective identity.

From a theoretical perspective, the argument about the abrogation of ethnic diversity through the gradual configuration of Roman nation-ness falls under the concept of the state-framed nation or *Staatsnation*,[12] since it points to the Roman imperial state and its political culture as the main factors that configured mass Roman nationhood.[13] The latter is presented as the outcome of a *longue durée*

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9 See the extensive discussion of all relevant theories in A. D. Smith, Nationalism and modernism. A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism. London/New York 1998, 145–198.

10 Kaldellis, Hellenism (as footnote 4 above) 42–119.

11 A. Ichijo/G. Uzelac (eds.), When is the nation? Towards an understanding of theories of nationalism. London/New York 2005, 9; D. Conversi, Mapping the field: theories of nationalism and the ethnosymbolic approach, in A. S. Leoussi / S. Grosby (eds.), Nationalism and ethnosymbolism. History, culture and ethnicity in the formation of nations. Edinburgh 2007, 18; Smith, Nationalism and modernism (as footnote 9 above) xii.

12 On the state-framed nation as an alternative term to Meinecke's *Staatsnation*, see R. Brubaker, Ethnicity without groups. Cambridge, Mass. 2004, 144–146.

13 Kaldellis, Hellenism (as footnote 4 above) 46–47.

process which began in the second century CE, but was completed only in the end of Late Antiquity (seventh century).[14] Thus, the argument focuses predominately on the collective identity of the subject populations of the post-seventh century de-Latinized Eastern Roman imperial power of Constantinople.

The premise about gradual nation building in the Roman Empire capitalized on an innovative approach to the most-debated concept of *Romanization* as a process of ideological assimilation of provincial populations to the rational-legal aspects of the Roman political order.[15] This approach attributes the longevity of the Roman Empire to provincial loyalty as the result of universal consensus and self-identification of provincial masses with the Roman system of government, instead of power relations between centre and periphery. The theoretical background of this argument has been subject to criticism, the arguments of which cannot be simply overlooked if we mean to use it as a starting-point to assert the gradual configuration of mass Roman nation-ness.

The major critical argument pertains to Ando's understanding of ideology as a homogenizing discourse functioning on a purely individual basis and having no relation whatsoever to social stratification and power relations.[16] This theoretical approach favours an interpretation of source evidence, which extensively downplays or even ignores the role of social position, level of literacy and political power in differentiating the potential of the members of regionally and ethno-culturally *de facto* diverse communities to self-identify with the political and cultural discourse of the Roman ruling élite. As a result, images of an *ideal* Roman imperial order in historiographical sources and panegyrics are taken to also reflect the perceptions of the masses. Such a methodological approach needs to be considered with caution. These sources were mainly written by and circulated among the members of an empire-wide politico-intellectual upper stratum, thus reflecting in the first place this stratum's assimilation to the normative political discourse of the Roman imperial power.

From a sociological point of view, the role of social stratification in the construction of collective identity in a pre-modern imperial order cannot be simply ignored. As it has been stressed, the political system of territorial empire was founded on the configuration of an empire-wide extended Roman ruling class

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14 Ibid. 49.

15 C. ANDO, Imperial ideology and provincial loyalty in the Roman empire. Berkley / Los Angeles / London 2000, *passim*; cf. KALDELLIS, Hellenism (as footnote 4 above) 48, note 12.

16 On a thorough review of Ando's theoretical construct (cf. ANDO, Imperial ideology, as before, 19 – 48), see P.W. ROSE, Divorcing ideology from Marxism and Marx from ideology. *Arethusa* 39 (2006) 111 f. On a comprehensive approach to ideology critique, see T. EAGLETON, Ideology: an introduction. London / New York 1991, *passim*.

that incorporated local élites in the conquered provinces.[17] This class was able to develop a common identity due to vested economic and political interests in the Roman imperial system as well as to high level of literacy that made access to a quasi-uniform education based on a shared language possible (predominately Latin for the West and Greek for the East).[18] Instead, the largest part of the common people in the provinces, in particular the illiterate masses of the countryside,[19] were fully excluded from this process of cultural assimilation, i.e. from the uniform 'Greco-Roman' culture growing within the social élite. Moreover, they were fully excluded from the structures of 'civil society' as the political system's powerless actors. This exclusion was circumscribed by the increasing economic pressure that both the state and the landlords exercised upon the peasantry through the parasitic dependence of the urban core, as the place of residence of local élites, upon the broader countryside.[20] Within this socio-economic framework, widespread economic or political/ideological interaction on a supra-local level among provincial peasantry masses was practically impossible.

Given the centripetal and hierarchical structures of territorial empire, personal dependence and allegiances on a local level in conjunction with coercive policing by governors on a provincial level, i.e. the imperial administration's om-

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17 See M. MANN, The sources of social power, I: A history of power from the beginning to A.D. 1760. New York 1986, 267–272; cf. K. HOPKINS, The political economy of the Roman empire, in I. Morris / W. Scheidel (eds.), The dynamics of ancient Empires. State power from Assyria to Byzantium. Oxford 2009, 185–186. By focusing on the political and ideological assimilation of local élites in the Roman system of government, MANN's account provides a balanced theoretical approach to the roles of coercion and ideology in the Roman empire's longevity. The choice to ignore the role of local power élites in the system of empire has been a central point of critique to Ando's approach; see, T.D. BARNES' review on Ando's Book, in *The International History Review* 23/4 (2001) 883–884; cf. C. ANDO / T. D. BARNES, 'Correspondence'. *The International History Review* 24/1 (2002) 247–250.
18 MANN, Sources (as footnote 17 above) 267–270. On the 'Greco-Roman' culture of the empire's élites cf. R. MELLOR, *Graecia Capta*: the confrontation between Greek and Roman identity, in Zacharia, Hellenisms (as footnote 3 above) 113–125.
19 Only around 20 % of the empire's population (of an around 60 million total) is estimated to have resided in urban centers, cf. HOPKINS, The political economy of the Roman empire (as footnote 17 above) 196 and 204, note 71.
20 A.M.H. JONES, The Later Roman Empire, 284–602, II. Oxford 1964, 713–714; G.E.M. DE STE. CROIX, The class struggle in the ancient world. Ithaca 1981, 13–16; C. WELSS, The Roman empire. Stanford 1984, 269–270. On the increasing dependence of peasants upon the magnates during the late Roman (or early Byzantine) period, cf. P. SARRIS, Social relations and the land: the early period, in J.F. Haldon (ed.), A social history of Byzantium. Oxford 2009, 94–103.

nipresent ability to employ physical violence,[21] exerted the necessary symbolic power/violence that could tacitly and arbitrarily legitimize regional and supra-regional relations of domination.[22] It follows that the absence of systematic rebellion by provincial/ethnic populations against Roman imperial rule in a *longue durée* perspective need not have been the result of a universal ideological identification of the masses with the Roman political culture,[23] whereas it can hardly be highlighted as evidence of it. The political and ideological assimilation of the intellectually and politically powerful agents of provincial populations established the relations of domination between centre and periphery, and secured their reproduction, i.e. the longevity of Roman territorial empire.

The key role of ideology and consensus in the function of the imperial order should rather be sought in the transition of charismatic power from the person to the office of the emperor during the time of the Principate.[24] The fact that this office was gradually opened to persons of all provincial/ethnic backgrounds cemented the allegiance of the extended ruling class, i.e. of the integrated provincial/ethnic élites, to the system of empire, since it made imperial power accessible to them as well. However, even on the level of politically-assimilated provincial élites it was not mere ideological belief that kept the system together. Insofar as the imperial office was accessible to any member of the upper class who could work his way up to positions of power through the senate or the army, the risk of rebellion made politically/practically much more sense if it took place within the system of empire, using the resources of Roman power to aim at the imperial throne, rather than against it. Movements of regional separatism that would rely on provincial allegiances and resources were doomed to

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21 On public violence to the body as aimed to instil fear and impose subjectivity, see M.W. Gleason, Truth contests and talking corpses, in J.I. Porter (ed.), Constructions of the classical body. Michigan 1999, 300; cf. J.E. Lendon, Empire of honour. The art of government in the Roman world. Oxford / New York 1997, 201–202.

22 On the ideological and symbolic connotations of public slaughter in the amphitheatre of the Roman town, see Wells, Roman empire (as footnote 20 above) 273–277. On symbolic violence as a means for the maintenance and reproduction of relations of domination in pre-modern societies, see P. Bourdieu, An outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge 1977, 183–197.

23 This is the main point of departure in Ando, Imperial ideology (as footnote 15 above) 66.

24 On this, see Ando, Imperial ideology (as footnote 15 above) 27 f. Apart from Ando's tendency to overstate the role of ideology in the longevity of the Roman imperial order, his research provides significant insights into the various means of propaganda, by which Roman imperial power claimed legitimacy; Ando, ibid., esp. 73–130.

face the concentrated military power of the imperial legions and, therefore, to fail.[25]

Within this framework, the integration of ethnic élites into the Roman ruling class represents the crucial factor that prevented them from instrumentalizing ethnic ideologies and regional allegiances to promote policies of political separatism.[26] Nevertheless, this hardly prevented ethno-cultural diversity from remaining a salient social discourse within the empire, as the systematic use of ethnonyms in the sources demonstrates. The ethno-cultural categorization of provincial populations through ethnonyms certainly does not represent evidence of common people's mass ethnic self-identification in a subjective manner.[27] As far as illiterate or semi-illiterate masses were concerned, self-identification must have referred primarily to regional micro-cultures, whereas notions of belonging to a broader collectivity of shared cultural markers may have defined, only secondarily, the identity of segments of the provincial populations. Nevertheless, the *de facto* existence of broader cultural cleavages provided people with the potential to distinguish who they were not in the empire's multicultural environment.

In light of this, the premise that seeks to casually relate the empire's longevity with a process of abrogation of ethno-cultural diversity in favour of a homogenizing Roman national discourse suggests a biased theoretical background. The latter tends to conflate the concepts of *ethnie* and nation by selectively attributing to the former features of modern nationalism and national identities.[28] Thus, discourses of ethno-cultural contradistinction are understood as *a priori* determined to lead to political/national autonomy, and therefore to be a cause of con-

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25 A characteristic example is the crushing of the Jewish so-called bar Kokhba revolt (134–136) by the emperor Hadrian's legions. On the revolt indicatively, see W. Eck, The Bar Kokhba revolt: the Roman point of view. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999) 76–89.
26 Cf. W. Pohl, Introduction: strategies of distinction, in W. Pohl/H. Reimitz (eds.), Strategies of distinction: the construction of ethnic communities, 300–800. Leiden 1998, 1: "Romanness, even for those who reached this goal, did not cancel regional and ethnic identities. But it swiftly imposed a political discourse in which asserting these particular identities could not become a basis for legitimate rule over a civilised res publica. Only Barbarians strove for power in the name of ethnic communities, and they did so as enemies of the Roman order."
27 On a comprehensive definition of ethnic groups as cultural collectivities, see A. D. Smith, National identity. London 1991, 19–25. Cf. also the comments in the third part of this paper.
28 On a critical approach to this theoretical bias, see W. Pohl, Archaeology of identity: Introduction, in W. Pohl / M. Mehofer (eds.), Archaeology of identity/Archäologie der Identität. Vienna 2010, 11–13.

flict and separation, when they exist.[29] On this theoretical basis, the fact that provincial masses did not seek for ethno-political autonomy through rebellion is taken as proof that common people appreciated the benefits of centralized taxation by a pacifying imperial power and, therefore, came gradually to self-identify with its *superior* political culture in a national manner.[30]

At this point, Benedict Anderson's theory is employed in a rather cursory manner to define the Roman nation as an imagined political community of deep horizontal comradeship.[31] The major objection to raise here is that a kingdom or an empire can be equally perceived and presented as an imagined community in the writings of a literate élite without, at the same time, being perceived by this élite, and even less so by its culturally- and politically-marginalized masses, as a national community or to constitute one.[32] Anderson is well aware of the inherent vagueness of his definition and seeks to overcome it by specifying the nation as a particular kind of imagined community which, as opposed to kingdoms or empires, is not conceived in a centripetal and hierarchical, but instead in a boundary-orientated and horizontal manner.[33] As the main precondition for the configuration of this new vision of community and for mass self-identification with it, Anderson emphasizes the emergence of mass vernacular literacy which created monoglot mass-reading publics on the basis of a national print-language.[34]

This aspect, burdensome for a pre-modern case, is tacitly left aside in the premise about the gradual configuration of the imagined community of the Roman nation, due to the evident absence of both political intention by the Roman ruling élite as well as relevant mechanisms for the creation and promotion of a common, broadly-shared vernacular culture within the empire. Thus, the focus is exclusively directed to the Roman imperial state and its political cul-

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29 See KALDELLIS, Hellenism (as footnote 4 above) 38–39, 45–46, whose whole account is pervaded by an obscuring attribution of nationalistic traits to ethnic identities.
30 Ibid. 50.
31 Ibid. 52; On the nation as a particular type of imagined community, see B. ANDERSON, Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. London / New York ³2006, 5–6.
32 SMITH, Nationalism (as footnote 9 above) 138, has focused his critique to Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined political community on the danger of the trivial application of such a definition to characterize as nations different kinds of communities, such as a city-state, a kingdom or even a colonial empire with a single lingua franca; cf. the critical remarks on vague definitions of the nation in E. GELNER, Nations and nationalism. New perspectives on the past. Oxford 1983, 53–58.
33 ANDERSON, Imagined communities (as footnote 31 above) 6–7, 15.
34 Ibid. 37–46.

ture as the main means that instilled all Roman subjects with a national vision. Here, we are dealing with an approach that, while it correctly rejects essentialist and reifying views on ethnicity, it is, at the same time, prone to adopt an essentialist and reifying view on political culture and political identity within a premodern, highly stratified imperial social order. Through a quasi "natural" process of universal internalization of the *superior* Roman political culture, political identity is regarded to have become predominant and to have abrogated the hitherto horizontal politico-cultural cleavage between the masses of common people and the Roman ruling class as well as the vertical cleavages between culturally diverse populations.

Even though the empire's economic system maintained large parts of the provincial masses above the margin of subsistence,[35] the evidence of the sources about the highly coercive manner of tax-collection and the relevant resentment that this caused among provincial populations cannot be tacitly skipped over,[36] when it comes to the lived experiences of regionally and ethno-culturally *de facto* diverse masses of common people. Similarly, even though a strict distinction of state-apparatuses between ideological and repressive does not even apply to modern-day states,[37] the function of the Roman imperial power's apparatuses (e.g. army, garrisons, tax-collectors) cannot be seen as predominantly ideological, i.e. assimilative. These mechanisms had a distinctively repressive function for the masses on behalf of a politically remote and culturally exclusive ruling élite. As a result, they could hardly promote by themselves mass Roman self-identification in a national manner.

In light of this, Caracalla's decision in 212 CE to give an end to the *de jure* exclusion of the largest part of the empire's population from an – at least nominally – equal political status in the imperial order cannot overshadow the lacking potential of politicization of provincial masses due to the complete abroga-

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35 MANN, Sources (as footnote 17 above) 265 – 267.

36 On the uneven and coercive manner of taxation, see HOPKINS, The political economy of the Roman empire (as footnote 17 above) 183 – 184; M. MAZZA, La fatica dell'uomo. Schiavi e liberi nel mondo romano. Catania 1986, 186 ff.; A. GIARDINA, The transition to late antiquity, in: W. Scheidel / I. Morris / R. Saller (eds.), The Cambridge economic history of the Greco-Roman world. New York 2008, 757 – 762; JONES, Later Roman Empire (as footnote 20 above) 810 – 811; CH. WICKHAM, Framing the early middle ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400 – 800. Oxford / New York 2005, 62 – 80; Cf. MANN, Sources (as footnote 17 above) 260 – 265, 289 – 291.

37 L. ALTHUSSER, Ideology and ideological state apparatuses, in: Lenin and Philosophy and other essays. New York/London 1971, 145 – 146; N. POULANTZAS, State, power, socialism. London / New York ³2000, 28 – 34; on a definition of the state in a pre-modern context, see J. F. HALDON, The state and the tributary mode of production. London / New York 1993, 32 – 34; cf. WICKHAM, Framing (as footnote 36 above) 56 – 62, esp. 57.

tion of the functions of the *res publica* within the centripetal and hierarchical structures of a vast territorial empire.[38] This lacking potential is reflected in the progressive substitution of the term citizen (*cives*) by the term subject (*subjectus*) in the late Roman period to legally define everyone under the rule of the Roman emperor.[39] Universal citizenship could neither underpin an, allegedly already before 212 CE evolving, national *Romanization* of provincial masses nor set in motion such a process thereafter.[40]

2. Multi-Ethnic Empire vs. Nation State

The fall of the western parts of the Roman Empire to the Germanic peoples in the fifth century set in motion certain political, social and cultural developments. These refer to the continuance of Roman imperial structures in the East, the gradual linguistic Hellenization of the imperial administration, and the apparently increased cultural homogeneity. The latter refers to the conclusion of the process of Christianization in the sixth century as well as to the survival of only one *lingua franca* (Greek) within the contracted Eastern Empire after the seventh century. These developments seem to represent a better starting point for the formation of a state-framed national identity, or alternatively of a (*Graiko*-)Roman ethnic identity among a core population,[41] within the post-seventh century Eastern Roman imperial order.

In this regard, one needs to scrutinize the premise that Constantinople's realm after the seventh century represented a Nation-State rather than the domain of an imperial city-state, and that the political ideology of Roman ecumenism played no significant role in the Eastern Roman vision of community.[42] The dismissal of Roman ecumenism as a main trait of Eastern Roman identity is here obviously preconditioned by the need to adapt the Byzantine vision of community to the traits of the nation. The nation as an inherently limited and boundary-

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38 MANN, Sources (as footnote 17 above) 262 – 264, 282.

39 Cf. CHRYSOS, Roman political identity (as footnote 3 above) 9 – 11.

40 On the lack of broadly shared notions of Roman patriotism among the empire's masses, cf. W. LIEBESCHUETZ, Citizen status and law in the Roman empire and the Visigothic kingdom, in Pohl/Reimitz, Strategies of distinction (as footnote 26 above), 136. On an approach to Roman identity as dynamically developing from legal to geopolitical and then to religious notions, see H. INGLEBERT, Citoyenneté romaine, romanités et identites romaines sous l'Empire, in idem (ed.), Idéologies et valeurs civiques dans le monde romain. Hommage à Claude Lepelley. Paris 2002, 241 – 260.

41 On this approach see KODER, Ethnogenese (as footnote 3 above) 106 f.

42 KALDELLIS, Hellenism (as footnote 4 above) 100 – 111.

orientated imagined political community is closely related with the notion of a territorially-limited 'fatherland', i.e. a fairly stable territory, to which the community of the people is notionally attached and within which it develops a solid geographically bound politico-cultural identity.[43] This notion of the nation's 'fatherland' proves, however, extremely problematic in the case of the alleged Eastern Roman nation. The information of the sources demonstrates that the post-seventh century Eastern Roman ruling élite, the main bearer of Roman identity, was neither politically nor ideologically committed to the notion of limited Roman 'fatherland'.

The period of radical contraction of the empire's borders from the late sixth to the early eighth century was followed by a period between roughly the mid-eighth to the early eleventh century, during which the imperial power incrementally expanded its territories and almost doubled the number of its subjects.[44] Large parts of the Greek peninsula that had been occupied by Slavic tribes since the late sixth century came slowly under imperial authority after the mid-eighth century. This re-assertion of territorial rule meant the integration of a new subject population that built a distinct ethno-cultural category within the Eastern Roman order.[45] During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the borders of empire were rearranged through the occupation of parts of Mesopotamia, northern Syria, and the annexation of parts of Armenia and Iberia in the East[46] as well as through the subjugation of the Bulgar Kingdom and the extension of imperial authority over the Slavic political entities in the northern Balkan Peninsula.[47] The populations of these territories were integrated into the imperial state's homogenizing Roman political discourse.

These practises of territorial expansionism and subjugation of ethno-culturally diverse populations by the Roman élite of Constantinople resulted from the

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43 This notional binding of the nation to a limited 'fatherland' is interrelated with the fact that the potential stretch of the nation as an imagined political community, as opposed to other kinds of imagined communities (e.g. empires or religious systems), is inherently limited; cf. ANDERSON, Imagined communities (as footnote 31 above) 7, who observes that "no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation".

44 W. TREADGOLD, A history of the Byzantine state and society. Stanford 1997, 570; IDEM, A concise history of Byzantium. Basingstoke 2000, 236; J. F. HALDON, The Palgrave Atlas of Byzantine history. New York 2005, 58–63.

45 F. CURTA, The Edinburgh history of the Greeks, c. 500 to 1050. The early middle ages. Edinburgh 2011, 276–295.

46 Cf. C. HOLMES, Basil II and the governance of empire (976–1025). Oxford 2005, 360–367.

47 Cf. P. STEPHENSON, Byzantium's Balkan frontier. A political study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204. Cambridge 2000, 47f., 117f.

latter's ideological and political commitment to the vision of territorial empire, the limits of which could be extended any time that the Constantinopolitan imperial city-state was in a position to impose its political authority through military means. The ideology of expansion was founded on the Roman power's prerogative to claim former parts of the ecumenical Roman Empire. This prerogative was, in turn, informed by the Roman imperial office's historical myth. The latter, as presented by Byzantine chroniclers, focused on two major political events: First, the emergence of territorial empire under the Roman emperor Augustus that had pacified the Oecumene through the subjugation of the different *ethne* (peoples); second, the reunification of the ecumenical empire under the imperial monocracy of Constantine I, founder of New Rome (i.e. Constantinople) and first Christian emperor.[48]

Within this ideological framework, the representation of the Eastern Roman notion of 'homeland' in the writings of the élite had very little to do with the land of origin of the Roman people as a community of common culture. Instead, it consistently referred, at least up to the late twelfth century, to the extensive and vague territorial boundaries of the Roman Oecumene, the traditional *orbis romanum*, as the historical 'homeland' of the Roman imperial power's political culture of imperial monocracy.[49] For instance, in the mid-tenth century Constantine VII juxtaposed the contracted territorial borders of the Roman power's rule

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48 Cf. E. M. JEFFREYS, The attitudes of Byzantine chroniclers towards ancient history. *Byzantion* 49 (1979) 206, 233–234, 238; R. MACRIDES / P. MAGDALINO, The fourth kingdom and the rhetoric of Hellenism, in P. Magdalino (ed.), The perception of the past in twelfth-century Europe. London / Rio Grande 1992, 127–128; RAPP, Hellenic identity (as footnote 3 above) 145; J. KODER, Die räumlichen Vorstellungen der Byzantiner von der Ökumene (4. bis 12. Jahrhundert). *Anzeiger der phil.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 137/2 (2002) 25–31; I. STOURAITIS, Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.–11. Jahrhundert). *Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber, Ergänzungsband* 5. Vienna 2009, 201–207.

49 On the ideal of ecumenism in Byzantine political thought, see TH. M. FÖGEN, Das politische Denken der Byzantiner, in: Pipers Handbuch der politischen Ideen, Bd. 2: Mittelalter. Munich 1993, 49–50; KODER, Ökumene (as footnote 48 above) 29–30; G. DAGRON, L'œcuménicité politique: Droit sur l'espace, droit sur le temps, in E. Chrysos (ed.), Το Βυζάντιο ως Οικουμένη. *National Hellenic Research Foundation/Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposia*, 16. Athens 2005, 47–57; G. SCHMALZBAUER, Überlegungen zur Idee der Ökumene in Byzanz, in W. Hörandner / J. Koder / M. Stassinopoulou (eds.), Wiener Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik: Beiträge zum Symposion Vierzig Jahre Institut Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien im Gedenken an Herbert Hunger (Wien, 4.–7. Dezember 2002). *Byzantina Neograeca Vidonbonensia*, 24. Vienna 2004, 408–419. On an alternative view about a 'limited Oecumene', see T. LOUNGHIS, Die byzantinische Ideologie der "begrenzten Ökumene" und die römische Frage im ausgehenden 10. Jahrhundert. *BSl* 56 (1995) 117–128.

in his times to the broader borders of the past, as these had been achieved through the wars of Julius Caesar, Augustus, Trajan, Constantine I and Theodosius I.[50] In a similar manner, Anna Komnene stated around the mid-twelfth century that the Roman power was by nature the ruler of the *ethne* (peoples)[51] and that, had her father Alexios I not been hindered by unfavourable circumstances, he would have rightfully restored Roman rule (i. e. extended the Roman political community) over the whole former *orbis romanum* up to the limits of the Atlantic Ocean in the West and India in the East.[52]

Kekaumenos, a member of the empire's provincial élite in Eastern Asia Minor in the second half of the eleventh century, testifies to those mechanisms of political dependence upon the imperial office and assimilation to its political culture that configured the solid Roman identity of the empire-wide extended ruling class, as primarily an identity of status within a centripetal and hierarchical imperial order. His text is pervaded by the image of a faithful servant (*doulos*) of the divinely-ordained emperor who stood above the law.[53] Apart from his knowledge of and active participation in the hierarchical political system of empire, his Roman identity was characterized by ideological assimilation to the imperial power's political vision of territorial empire. This is indicated by his knowledge of the imperial office's historical myth, i. e. the unification and pacification of the former *orbis romanus* through the military activities of the emperors of Rome and Constantinople.[54]

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50 Costantino Porfirogenito. De thematibus, (ed.) A. Pᴇʀᴛᴜsɪ. *Studi e Testi*, 160. Vatican City 1952, I 8 – 21: Ὅτε οἱ βασιλεῖς μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπεστράτευον καὶ τοῖς ἀνταίρουσι τὸν τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς δουλείας ζυγὸν ἐπετίθεσαν καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐπολιόρκουν ἀτακτοῦσαν καὶ ἀντιλέγουσαν, ὡς ὁ Καῖσαρ Ἰούλιος, ὡς ὁ θαυμαστὸς Αὔγουστος, ὡς ὁ Τραϊανὸς ἐκεῖνος ὁ περιβόητος, ὡς ὁ μέγας ἐν βασιλεῦσι Κωνσταντῖνος καὶ Θεοδόσιος...Καὶ εἰς τοῦτο κατέληξεν ἡ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον. Νυνὶ δὲ στενωθείσης κατά τε ἀνατολὰς καὶ δυσμὰς τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς βασιλείας καὶ ἀκρωτηριασθείσης ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς Ἡρακλείου τοῦ Λίβυος.
51 Anna Komnene (Anna Comnenae Alexias, ed. D. R. Rᴇɪɴsᴄʜ/A. Kᴀᴍʙʏʟɪs. *CFHB*, 40. Berlin 2001) XIV 7, 2: φύσει γὰρ οὖσα δεσπότις τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν ἡ βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων ἐχθρωδῶς διακείμενον ἔχει τὸ δοῦλον, καὶ ἐπειδὰν ἐπιδράξαιτο καιροῦ.
52 Ibid. VI 11, 3: ἦν μὲν γὰρ ὅτε οἱ ὅροι τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας αἱ ἀμφότεραι στῆλαι ἦσαν ἀνατολὴν καὶ δύσιν περιορίζουσαι, ἐξ ἑσπέρας μὲν αἱ τοῦ Ἡρακλέος ὀνομαζόμεναι, ἐξ ἕω δὲ αἱ ἀγχοῦ που ἱστάμεναι τοῦ ἰνδικοῦ πέρατος αἱ τοῦ Διονύσου (κατὰ γὰρ πλάτος οὐκ ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ὅσον ἦν τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας τὸ κράτος), ... καὶ ἂν εἰς τὴν προτέραν εὐδαιμονίαν τὴν βασιλείαν ἀνενεώσατο, εἰ μή γε οἱ ἐπάλληλοι ἀγῶνες καὶ οἱ πυκνοὶ πόνοι καὶ κίνδυνοι (ἦν γὰρ καὶ ἀμφότερα ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ μεγαλοκίνδυνός τε καὶ πυκνοκίνδυνος) τοῦτον ἀπέστησαν τοῦ ὁρμήματος.
53 Strategikon I 3 – 4, IV 72 – 74, V 77 (Sovety i Raaskazy Kekavmena, ed. G. Lɪᴛᴀᴠʀɪɴ socinenie vizantijskogo polcovodca XI veka. Moscow 1972, 138 – 142, 264 – 268, 290).
54 Ibid. V 88, 4 – 14 (298 Lɪᴛᴀᴠʀɪɴ).

In light of this, it is evident that the post-seventh century Eastern Roman élite did not and could not imagine or, for that matter, propagate a limited 'national' territory. The geographical term *Romania* that was contingently employed to designate the emperor's realm did not refer to a notionally circumscribed 'fatherland', but to the fluctuating boundaries of the Roman imperial power's territorial authority. The notion of Roman ecumenical rule, a common topos in the writings of the post-seventh century Eastern Roman ruling class, was, of course, not intended to promote, and by no means reflects, the strategic aims of Eastern Roman imperial policies.[55] It simply demonstrates those mentality patterns that conditioned the form and the content of the Byzantine élite's Roman identity for several centuries after Rome's fall. Knowledge of the history of the empire and allegiance to the vision of Constantinople's imperial rule over territories and peoples was not meaningless rhetorical fiction, but rather represented one of the main features that, at least up to the twelfth century, informed the Romanness of the political and literate élite, the main bearer of Eastern Roman identity. This identity was founded on a vision of centripetal and hierarchical imperial community to which any people or group could potentially be included as Roman subjects.

The absence of a notion of Roman 'fatherland' represents a useful point of departure to address the question as to whether a core population of the post-seventh century Eastern Roman imperial state could have developed a Roman national identity. This question concerns primarily the indigenous Greek-speaking masses of the territorial core, and it is interrelated with the post-sixth century linguistic Hellenization of the Roman imperial administration. The issues to pose pertain to: 1) whether the Eastern Roman political system favoured some kind of politicization of the masses of the empire's territorial core after the end of Late Antiquity; and 2) whether the Eastern Roman ruling élite sought to attach its Roman identity discourse to the Greek ethno-linguistic group within the empire.

Beginning with the first question, it is particularly important to bear in mind that, as opposed to the West, in the East the geopolitical structures of empire did not experience a radical break after the end of Late Antiquity. The political system of the contracted Eastern Empire was marked by the complete deterioration of the superficial political role of the senate, the fading-away of the senatorial

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55 On the role of the ecumenical ideal in justifying pragmatic war policies after the seventh century, see I. Stouraitis, 'Just war' and 'holy war' in the middle ages: rethinking theory through the Byzantine case-study. *JÖB* 62 (2012) 250–256.

aristocracy, and the gradual extinction of large civic centres.[56] The new Eastern Roman ruling class that incrementally emerged after the seventh century was extensively dependent upon the emperor for titles and revenues.[57] This fact made its self-identification with the Roman order a matter of close relationship with and allegiance to the political culture of the imperial office, as the aforementioned case of Kekaumenos demonstrates. These relations of dependence and subservience secured the maintenance of Constantinople's firm control over most of its provinces, even in times of great crisis such as the period from the mid-seventh to the mid-eighth century, but also strengthened the autocratic tendency of the political system.[58] Within this framework, nothing indicates that any change occurred in regard to the *de facto* political exclusion of provincial masses from the structures of 'civil society'.

A counter-argument to this latter view seems to be posed by H.-G. Beck's theory on the Byzantine political system. According to his argument, the predominant political ideal within Byzantine society was not the ideal of imperial autocracy as propagandized by the imperial office, but the ideal of the *res publica* as represented in latently outlived, quasi-constitutional norms.[59] These norms promoted a preponderant image of the emperor among his subjects as a simple administrator of the Roman *res publica*, a *primus inter pares*, elected and controlled by the Roman people with regard to the normative fulfilment of his administrative duties.[60] Within this framework, Beck suggested that the political phenomenon of tyranny (usurpation) was related with and in part resulted from the preponderant ideal of 'quasi-constitutional' monarchy (Wahlmo-

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56 On senatorial aristocracy cf. T. K. LOUNGHIS, Δοκίμιο για την κοινωνική εξέλιξη στη διάρκεια των λεγόμενων "σκοτεινών αιώνων" (602 – 867). Athens 1985, 11 – 15; on urban centers, see W. BRANDES, Die Städte Kleinasiens im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert. *BBA*, 56. Berlin 1989, 44 – 141.
57 On the structure and character of the Roman ruling class in post-seventh century Byzantium, see F. WINKELMANN, Quellenstudien zur herrschenden Klasse von Byzanz im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert. *BBA*, 54. Berlin 1987, *passim*; J. F. HALDON, Social élites, wealth, and power, in idem (ed.), A social history of Byzantium. Oxford 2009, 169 f. (with detailed bibliography); on the issue of dependence upon the imperial office for social status and revenues cf. idem, Tributary mode (as footnote 37 above) 110 f.
58 WINKELMANN, Quellenstudien (as footnote 57 above) 99 f.
59 H. G. BECK, Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel. Probleme der byzantinischen Verfassungsgeschichte. *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-hist. Klasse, Heft* 6. Munich 1966, *passim*; IDEM, Res publica Romana. Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner. Munich 1970, *passim*; IDEM, Das byzantinische Jahrtausend. Munich ²1994, 33 – 86; cf. I. KARAYANNOPOULOS, Η πολιτικη θεωρία των Βυζαντινών. Thessaloniki 1988, 13 – 24.
60 Cf. KALDELLIS, Hellenism (as footnote 4 above) 49.

narchie) that induced the Roman people to depose an emperor who did not stand up to the norms of the *res publica*.[61]

Certainly, it cannot be denied that the Roman *res publica* is contingently referenced as a political model in some writings of – admittedly – few members of the Byzantine literate élite; a fact that testifies to a rival theoretical stance to the imperial ideal of divinely-ordained autocracy.[62] However, an interpretation of this rival line of thinking not as a theoretical discourse of some intellectual authors, but as a dominant operative ideology within the Eastern Roman social order seems to me to celebrate the utopian element in the political thought of certain well-educated individuals against the abundant source evidence that testifies to the actual socio-political role of the predominant idea of imperial autocracy within the framework of the élite, the main holder of political power.[63]

In pre-1204 Byzantium tyranny, expressed through a coup or a 'civil war', ended with the political extinction, and often also the physical death, either of the usurper (in most cases) or of the reigning emperor (in the fewest cases). Either way, the political assertion of the usurper or the emperor as the (new) legitimate ruler was exclusively dependent upon the outcome of the power struggle. The effort to dethrone an emperor was normally initiated, by a faction or factions of the ruling class or the army.[64] Usurpers could only rarely, and under certain preconditions, also rely on the support of the people of Constantinople to take over power. The side that won the conflict could celebrate and propagandize its leader as the divinely-ordained (new) legitimate ruler, whereas the leader of the defeated side was condemned to public defamation as either a tyrannical usurper or a "bad administrator" of the state, analogous to the initial position of the contenders. The predominant ideal of divine selection, which equally legitimized the re-assertion of power by a reigning emperor or the enthronement of a usurper after the end of a coup or a 'civil war', amplified

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61 Beck, Jahrtausend (as footnote 59 above) 59; Karayannopoulos, Πολιτικη θεωρία (as footnote 59 above) 35–37.

62 Cf. D. Angelov, Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330. New York 2007, 8–15.

63 On critique to Beck's approach, see Fögen, Das politische Denken (as footnote 49) 52–55. above

64 On the preponderant role of the ruling class and the insignificant role of the common people respectively in the struggles over the imperial throne, see Winkelmann, Quellenstudien (as footnote 57 above) 34–97; J.-C. Cheynet, Pouvoir et contestation à Byzance (963–1210). *Byzantina Sorbonensia*, 9. Paris 1990, 13–14; A. E. Laiou, Peasant rebellion: Notes on its vocabulary and typology, in M.Th. Fögen (ed.), Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter. Historische und Juristische Studien zur Rebellion. *Studien zur Europäischen Rechtsgeschichte*, 70. Frankfurt 1995, 99, 116.

the inherent arbitrariness of the Byzantine political system. The recurrence of usurpation neither resulted from, nor was legitimized by, an active quasi-institutional role of the Roman people in the dethronement of a bad administrator of an alleged *res publica*. It was rather the product of a political system which made imperial power accessible to anyone with the means to organize a coup or a rebellion and which allowed for the ideological legitimization of the outcome of power struggles, i.e. the assertion of autocratic power, as God's inscrutable judgement.[65]

This becomes evident if we take a closer look at both a successful and a failed usurpation example. The emperor John I Tzimiskes (969–976) needed only a handful of loyal associates to murder his predecessor Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969) and usurp power. The documented reactions to his coup demonstrate that he had managed to secure in advance the support of important army officers and units under their command. This enabled him to immediately put the most significant members of the Phokas clan under arrest.[66] After the successful outcome of his coup, Tzimiskes' primary concern was to achieve his coronation by the Patriarch in order to legitimize his accession to the throne as divine will.[67] This was the main ideological means through which he could entrench his control over the army and legitimize his position in the eyes of the other members of the ruling class as well as, secondarily, of the Constantinopolitan mob. The provincial masses were fully excluded from any active role in this act of tyranny that deposed the emperor. It follows that the dethronement of Phokas could hardly be interpreted as reflecting the collective political will and action of the Roman subjects, especially of the provincial masses, within the socio-ideological framework of a medieval *res publica*.

In the 'civil wars' between 987 and 989, the dynastically legitimate emperor Basil II was able to defeat the usurper Bardas Phokas by relying on a large foreign force of Varangians,[68] while the usurper had the larger part of the Roman

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65 Cheynet, Pouvoir (as footnote 64 above) 178–184; I. Stouraitis, Bürgerkrieg in ideologischer Wahrnehmung durch die Byzantiner: Die Frage der Legitimierung und Rechtfertigung. *JÖB* 60 (2010) 153f., esp. 171–172.

66 B. Blysidu, Αριστοκρατικές οικογένειες και εξουσία (9ος–10ος αι.). Athens 2001, 152–155, 165, 172–173; Cheynet, Pouvoir (as footnote 64 above) 327.

67 Leonis diaconi Caloensis Historiae libri X., ed. C. B. Hase. *CSHB*. Bonn 1828, 98–99; cf. A.-M. Talbot / D. F. Sullivan (transl.), The History of Leo the Deacon. Byzantine military expansion in the tenth century. Washington, D.C. 2005, 147–148; Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum, ed. I. Thurn. *CFHB*, 5. Berlin 1973, 285–286; cf. J. Wortley (transl.), John Skylitzes, A synopsis of Byzantine history 811–1057. Cambridge 2010, 272–273.

68 A. Poppe, The political background to the baptism of Rus. *DOP* 30 (1976) 197–244, here 229–230.

military forces on his side.[69] If we were to suppose that the support of the largest part of the "Roman people's" army for the usurper reflects the provincial masses' political stance and implies their active participation in a movement that sought to dethrone a bad administrator of the *res publica*, then the outcome of the power struggle provides solid evidence of the common people's powerless status in the political system. Basil II not only managed to defeat the allegedly 'chosen one' of the provincial masses, but also to reign for another thirty-six years as the 'chosen one' of God over those masses that had supposedly sought for his dethronement.

In fact, this 'civil war' demonstrates that tyranny had nothing to do with the political stance of the empire's masses and any collective action that might have resulted from that. Phokas rebelled because he was in a position of power that secured him the support of various factions of the ruling class that he used to take control over the largest part of the field armies of the *tagmata*. Basil II, on the other hand, relied on his diplomatic skills that provided him with an equally competitive foreign mercenary force. The internal armed conflict was purposefully sacralised by the emperor who employed religious symbolism to justify his military actions against the rebellious Christian-Roman army. This practice facilitated the retrospective justification of his triumph over the usurper as divine will.[70]

The aforementioned examples underline the need for a cautious approach to the premise that the phenomenon of tyranny indicates a mass ideological assimilation of Roman subjects to notions of quasi-participatory *res public*a. Insofar as the outcome of the power-struggle was primarily, if not exclusively, a matter of support by powerful factions of the élite and/or field army units (mainly indigenous, but potentially also foreign), tyranny was there neither to end the common people's exclusion from the political system nor to threaten the autocratic tenet of the imperial system. It only determined the faction of the ruling class and its representative that would perpetuate it.[71] Public propaganda of divine legitimization sought to arbitrarily circumscribe and, thus, to compel the euphemistic consensus of the politically excluded masses. The ceremonial participation of at least one of the three institutions (army, senate, *demoi*) in the emperor's acclamation reflects the imperial office's strategies of symbolic

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69 Michael Psellos, Chronographia I 1, 16 (Michele Psello, Imperatori di Bisanzio [Cronografia], ed. S. Impellizzeri. Milano 1984, 26).

70 Cf. Stouraitis, Bürgerkrieg (as footnote 65 above) 159.

71 Cf. J. Haldon, Byzantine praetorians: an administrative, institutional, and social survey of the Opsikion and tagmata, c. 580–900. *Poikila Byzantina*, 3. Bonn 1984, 86; Winkelmann, Quellenstudien (as footnote 57 above) 96.

power, through which the politically and ideologically preponderant autocratic tenet of the imperial system was euphemized and thus perpetuated.

The argument about the exclusion of the provincial masses from the structures of 'civil society' is further supported by the revisionist approaches to older views on the Byzantine imperial state as a 'bureaucratic state' that extensively intervened and organized provincial social order.[72] As it has been argued, the organization and maintenance of order in the provinces was, to a great extent, conceded to the arbitrary will of local lords, whereas the imperial power was primarily interested in maintaining firm control over the territory in military terms as well as in collecting taxes.[73] This provincial reality can hardly have promoted images of a well-organized centralized *res publica* that would induce common people to identify themselves with the political interests of the Roman imperial power of Constantinople. The Life of Saint Antony the Younger, written in the second half of the ninth century, provides an interesting insight into the view of the Roman imperial order from the provinces.

The saint was a deputy-governor (*ek prosopou*) in Attaleia, a coastal city of south-western Asia Minor, in the 820s when it is reported that an Arab naval force attacked the city. According to the author of the Life, Antony succeeded in preventing the attack through negotiations with the Arab commander.[74] The reported incident took place in the empire's territorial core, the population of which is often premised to have had a solid (even national) Roman identity, and not on some vague periphery. In view of this, it is interesting that the narrative of the Life fully deviates from the norms of Constantinopolitan discourse, which projected an image of the empire's population as a solid Roman community in both a religious ('Chosen People') and a political sense (Romanness). In the negotiations between the Roman official and the Arab commander the latter is said to have justified the attack against the city as a measure of retaliation prompted by the Byzantine army's raids in Syria. In his response, Antony is presented to draw a clear line between the population of his town and the actions of the emperor's army on the Eastern frontier. He points out that the local population could not be made responsible for the imperial army's activity, since "the

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72 R.-J. Lilie, Die Zentralbürokratie und die Provinzen zwischen dem 10. und dem 12. Jahrhundert. Anspruch und Realität. *BF* 19 (1993) 100–123; J.-C .Cheynet, Point de vue sur l'efficacité administrative entre les xe et xie siècles. *BF* 19 (1993) 7–16.

73 L. Neville, Authority in Byzantine provincial society, 950–1100. Cambridge 2004, 99–135; cf. Haldon, Social Élites (as footnote 57 above) 179–180; on provincial order in medieval Greece, cf. Curta, History (as footnote 45 above) 232–234.

74 A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Βίος και πολιτεία τοῦ ὁσίου Ἀντωνίου τοῦ Νέου, in: Συλλογή παλαιστινιακῆς και συριακῆς αγιολογίας, I. St. Petersburg 1907, 186–216.

emperor of the Romans commands whatever he wants to his officers and this must be done. He sends fleets and arms his forces to fight against those who resist his own power irrespective of whether we want that or not".[75]

The narrative testifies to the absence of a strong garrison that would effectively defend this provincial town and its inhabitants. For this reason, civilians, among them also young women, were mingled with the soldiers on the city-walls to mislead the enemy about the strength of the defending force.[76] The author had no interest in presenting these provincials as the "Chosen People" fighting against the *infidel* or as the defenders of the superior Roman political order fighting against *barbarians* to protect a broader *patria communis*. Instead, he testifies to their pragmatic need for local defence in the absence of effective protection from the political center. The image of the Roman state of Constantinople and, in particular, of the Roman emperor has nothing to do with the image of a well-organized *res publica* and its administrator respectively. It rather refers to a remote, absolute power which managed its power-political affairs according to its own interests that did not identify with the interests of the common people. In the discourse of the Life, the soldiers of the Arab army are not the barbarians that threatened the divinely-ordained Roman political order, but rather outsiders that had come to threaten the lives of the local population and the peace of their local community. The author clearly presents the 'Romans' of this provincial town as engaged in a war that was not really theirs; it was rather imposed upon them by the power-political interests of the imperial city-state of Constantinople.[77]

This discrepant identity between political center and provincial periphery provides the ground on which to approach the potential role of evident vertical social mobility in the construction of collective identity in Byzantium.[78] In the

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75 Ibid. 199: ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς τῶν Ῥωμαίων τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ἄρχουσιν ὅτι θέλει κελεύει καὶ γίνεται, καὶ στόλους ἐκπέμπει, καὶ στρατὸν ἐξοπλίζει πρὸς πόλεμον τῶν ἀντιτασσομένων τῇ αὐτοῦ βασιλείᾳ, κἂν θέλωμεν ἡμεῖς, κἂν μὴ θέλωμεν.

76 Ibid. 199: ἐκέλευσεν οὖν πάντας ἀνελθεῖν ἀσπιδοφόρους ἐπὶ τοῦ τείχους, οὐ μόνον ἄνδρας, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναικῶν τὰς νεάνιδας, μεταμφιασαμένας εἰς ἀνδρικὸν σχῆμα πρὸς τὸ πολυοχλίαν φανῆναι τοῖς πολεμίοις.

77 Cf. the insightful comment in R.-J. LILIE, The Byzantine-Arab borderland from the seventh to the ninth century, in: F. Curta (ed.), Borders, barriers and ethnogenesis. Frontiers in late antiquity and the middle ages. *Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, 12. Tournhout 2005, 19.

78 On vertical social mobility, see BECK, Jahrtausend (as footnote 59 above) 249 f.; A. KAZHDAN / G. CONSTABLE, People andp ower in Byzantium: an introduction to modern Byzantine studies. Washington, D.C. 1982, 23 – 25. On the potential role of vertical social mobility in configuring a relatively common identity between upper stratum and lower strata, see J. KODER,

medieval Eastern Roman social order, access to the social élite was open to people of common origin either through acquisition of higher education that facilitated a career in the imperial administration or the church, or alternatively through a high-ranking post in the army (usually restricted to sons of upper-class families). Nevertheless, for any single person that was able to make the social breakthrough from the masses into the upper stratum there were many tens of thousands that remained excluded from this stratum's politico-cultural mentality. The fact that social stratification was not a matter of birth does not mean that the post-seventh century Eastern Roman social order was not marked by a horizontal cleavage between a small upper stratum of common literate culture and participatory political identity, and the politically excluded masses of illiterate or semi-illiterate common people.[79] This aspect is often either downplayed or tacitly skipped over in present-day debates about Eastern Roman collective identity,[80] even though it is of central significance for the evident lack of interest on the side of the Byzantine élite to share its higher culture with the masses and to promote some kind of political participation in order to create a broadly shared vision of the Eastern Roman community as a political community of common culture.

The Eastern Roman provincial masses' high degree of illiteracy was complemented by both regional and ethnic linguistic diversity.[81] The latter was crucial in maintaining vertical cultural cleavages in the absence of an established mass public culture. Indicatively, it has been postulated that during the tenth century the persons intellectually capable of producing and reading literary and historiographical texts can be estimated at around three hundred.[82] Even if we revise the estimated number of such persons to have been ten times as much, it still demonstrates the vast cultural gap between the literate upper stratum and the mass-

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Byzantinische Identität – einleitende Bemerkungen, in Fledelius, Byzantium (as footnote 3 above) 3.

79 On the role of this cleavage in the collective identity of pre-modern social orders, see GELNER, Nations (as footnote 32 above) 8 – 14.

80 Cf. the critical remarks in C. D. SMYTHE, Byzantine Identity and Labelling Theory, in Fledelius, Byzantium (as footnote 3 above), 34 – 36.

81 G. DAGRON, Formes et fonctions du pluralism linguistique à Byzance (IXᵉ–XIIᵉ siècle). *TM* 12 (1994) 219 – 240; MANGO, Byzantium (as footnote 1 above) 1 – 31, esp. 26 – 29; cf. IDEM, The availability of books in the Byzantine empire, A.D. 750 – 850, in: Byzantine books and bookmen. A Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium. Washington, D.C. 1975, 43 – 45; J. KODER, Sprache als Identitätsmerkmal bei den Byzantinern (Auf -isti endende sprachenbezogene Adverbien in den griechischen Quellen). *Anzeiger der philos.-hist. Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 147/2 (2012) 5 – 37.

82 RAPP, Hellenic Identity (as footnote 3 above) 129.

es within an empire, the demographic peak of which at the end of this century is estimated at roughly eighteen million inhabitants.[83] This argument is complemented by the information of the Tactica of Leo VI about illiteracy in the Eastern Roman army of the early tenth century. The author of the book refers to the *tourmarch*, the second high-ranking officer of a field army unit (*thema*) under the *strategos* (general), and observes that, if possible, these officers should be able to read and write.[84] If we take this information to represent an approximate indication regarding the level of literacy within society, then by the most optimistic approach the empire's population with some degree of literacy cannot be estimated at more than 15–20 %.

In addition to that, the author of the Tactica advises his generals that the heralds of each *bandon* (sub-unit) who were responsible to encourage the soldiers with oral messages before battle should preferably speak many languages.[85] This is an indication that a good knowledge of the Greek *koine* as a *lingua franca* should not be taken *a priori* for granted even for segments of the peasant masses of the territorial core that made up the largest part of the army of the Tactica. These were mostly illiterate people that may have spoken only a regional dialect. Moreover, knowledge of the Greek *koine* cannot be *a priori* considered as highly pervasive by the illiterate Armenian, Slavic, Syriac (by that time Arabic-speaking[86]), and Bulgar peasant masses that represented the largest ethno-linguistic groups on the empire's provincial periphery in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The identity gap between the social élite and the masses in Byzantium is made salient if we look behind the homogenizing Roman identity discourse in the writings of the literate élite. Anna Komnene, a distinguished representative of the ruling élite of the twelfth century, regarded anyone outside the emperor's realm as barbarian (foreigner), i.e. not Roman, from a political point of view. From a cultural point of view, however, the barbarian could be both inside and outside the limits of imperial rule. In her report on the orphanage established by her father Alexios I in Constantinople, she mentions that "one can see a

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83 Cf. the estimations in D. Stathakopoulos, Population, Demography, and Disease, in E. Jeffreys / J. F. Haldon / R. Cormack, The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies. Oxford/New York 2008, 309–316.

84 Leonis VI Tactica (The Tactica of Leo VI, ed. G.T. Dennis. *CFHB*, 49. Waschington, D. C. 2010) IV 45: νῦν δὲ τῇ συνηθείᾳ καλούμενοι τουρμάρχαι· καὶ τούτους φρονίμους καὶ εὐτάκτους εἶναι καὶ ἐναρέτους καὶ ἐμπείρους, εἰ δυνατόν, εἰδότας καὶ γράμματα, καὶ μάλιστα τὸν τοῦ μέσου μέρους, τὸν λεγόμενον ὑποστράτηγον.

85 Ibid. IV 52; cf. Dagron, Formes (as footnote 81 above) 230–234.

86 Koder, Byzantium (as footnote 3 above) 79.

Latin being educated and a Scythian learning the Hellenic language and a Roman studying the literature of the Hellenes and the illiterate Hellene learning to speak correct the Hellenic language".[87] As it has been insightfully suggested, Anna presents here the Greek, the Scythian and the Latin as equally barbarian in culture, since none of them knew or spoke the Greek language correctly.[88]

The most striking, and fairly puzzling, point in the statement is the juxtaposition of the term Roman to the term Hellene in a contemporary sense. The latter term can hardly be taken to have the function of a toponym here, meaning the inhabitant of the province of Hellas.[89] Apart from the fact that no notion of a region Hellas is documented in Anna's text, the context of the phrase indicates the use of the term as a classicizing ethnonym analogously to the other ethnonyms.[90] This is further supported by the paratactic employment of the terms *hellenes*, *hellenezein*, *hellenon syngrammata*. By using the classicizing term Hellenes in a contemporary manner next to the term *hellenon syngrammata*, obviously meaning the writings of the Ancient Hellenes, the author actually alludes to an ethno-cultural link between the Ancient Hellenes and the Greek-speaking Roman subjects of her times that made up the largest part of the imperial state's masses.[91] At the same time though, she also points to those common illiterate Greeks' total lack of cultural potential that would enable them to make such an ideological link and to self-identify ethno-culturally as members of a historical Hellenic *ethnie*.

Moreover, this ethno-cultural categorization of the Greek-speaking masses by Anna, as a member of the Roman élite, was hardly intended to imply an historical identification of this élite with the Ancient Hellenes. The purposeful juxtaposition of Roman to Hellene in her statement demonstrates that her intention was, in fact, the opposite. Through this juxtaposition, she explicitly sought to distinguish the Roman élite from the contemporary illiterate Greek masses and thus to maintain it free of any ethnic self-classification as Greek. In Anna's view, knowledge of the Greek *koine* as well as of Attic Greek was an integral part of Roman identity and the main means to achieve a higher education

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87 Anna Komnene (as footnote 51 above) XV 7,9: καὶ ἔστιν ἰδεῖν καὶ Λατῖνον ἐνταῦθα παιδοτριβούμενον καὶ Σκύθην ἑλληνίζοντα καὶ Ῥωμαῖον τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων συγγράμματα μεταχειριζόμενον καὶ τὸν ἀγράμματον Ἕλληνα ὀρθῶς ἑλληνίζοντα.

88 R. BEATON, Antique nation? 'Hellenes' on the eve of Greek independence and in twelfth century Byzantium. *BMGS* 31 (2007) 89–90.

89 For this interpretation, see D. R. REINSCH (transl.), Anna Komnene. Cologne 1996, 538.

90 See G. DE BOEL, L'identité "romaine" dans le roman Digénis Akritis, in H. Hokwerda (ed.) Constructions of Greek past. Identity and historical consciousness from antiquity to the present. Groningen 2003, 173; BEATON, Antique nation (as footnote 88 above) 89.

91 Anna uses the term Hellene as an ethnonym also in other parts of her text, cf. Anna Komnene (as footnote 51 above) XIII 10,4.

that could lead to a higher social status within the Roman order. The fact that, as opposed to the illiterate Greek, she presents the Roman in her statement as already having a good knowledge of the Greek language that enabled him to study the writings of the Ancient Hellenes implies the latter's higher status. Through the contradistinction between Roman and Greek, Anna subtly points to politico-cultural Romanness as an identity of higher status that stood above the ethno-cultural identities of semi-barbarian Roman subjects, in particular those belonging to the predominant Greek ethno-linguistic collectivity. This discourse of distinction fully corresponds with and complements Anna's view that the Roman ruling élite was determined to rule over *ethne* (peoples) and that the Roman emperor had the right to reconquer the whole former *orbis romanus* and, thus, to make all peoples living in those areas Roman subjects again.[92]

Anna's approach to Romanness as an identity of status that was free of ethnic connotations and therefore could not be reduced to Greek ethnicity, reflects the Eastern Roman ruling élite's response not only to its hetero-classification as Greek by the Latins, but also to an ongoing process of internal change in regard to the Eastern Roman identity's form and content during the long twelfth century, to which I shall refer in detail in the third part of this paper. Anna's identity discourse did nothing more than to adhere to the genuine features of imperial Roman identity. This had always been an identity of political culture, which encompassed ethno-cultural diversity at the bottom and subjugated it to a homogenizing Roman discourse on the level of the élite, which was based on political participation and shared literate culture. As a result, the Latin, the Scythian and the Greek could equally become Romans despite their ethno-cultural background. For this reason, they enjoyed the Roman emperor's benevolence and had the potential to acquire a proper Hellenic education in his orphanage. Anna's discourse pinpoints those social mechanisms that for centuries constructed a relatively homogenous Roman politico-cultural identity on the level of the social élite and distinguished it from the various identities of the masses of common subjects.

A similar discourse of distinction is documented in the writings of other members of the literate social élite. Theophylaktos of Ochrid refers to his Bulgar flock as semi-barbarian in the twelfth century.[93] The Bulgars were by that time already for almost a century Roman subjects. This means they were Romans

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92 Cf. footnotes 51 and 52 above.
93 M. MULLETT, Theophylact of Ochrid. Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop. *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs*, 2. Aldershot 1997, 274–276; cf. P. STEPHENSON, Byzantine conceptions of otherness after the annexation of Bulgaria (1018), in D.C. Smythe (ed.), Strangers to themselves: the Byzantine outsider. Aldershot 2001, 249f.

and not barbarians, in the sense of foreigners, in regard to their position in the Roman political order, the so-called *politeia*. Moreover, their Christian identity meant that they were not considered as barbarians in a religious-cultural sense as well. The discrepancy between their culturally semi-barbarian identity and the author's Roman identity was primarily a matter of higher political and cultural status that *de facto* differentiated his and their potential of self-identification with the Roman political order. Michael Psellos points to a similar discrepancy with regard to the common Greek-speaking Romans of his time (labelled Hellenes) whom he describes as semi-barbarian in culture.[94] The same attitude is attested by Michael Choniates'[95] and George Tornikes'[96] in regard to the Athenian provincials, whom both intellectuals viewed as culturally inferior.

This discourse of distinction was by no means confined to the intellectuals of the eleventh and twelfth century, as the case of the early seventh-century emperor Phokas (602–610) makes evident. Phokas came to power as a humble Roman centurion through a revolt of the field army against Maurikios that found support in Constantinople. His humble social status and the relevant lack of education made him a *mixobarbaros* (semi-barbarian) in the eyes of élite authors like Theophylaktos Simokattes.[97] Even though Phokas reigned as a divinely-ordained Roman emperor for eight years, Heraclius' revolt against him was not depicted as an illegitimate act of tyranny against the legitimate ruler, as it was usually the case in Byzantine sources. This was due to the fact that the usurper was a member of the provincial Roman élite that sought to restore the proper order of things after the interval of an illegitimate semi-barbarian on the imperial throne.[98]

A look behind the homogenizing normative Roman discourse of Constantinopolitan historiography points to the social effects of the discrepancy between the Roman identity of the élite and the identities of provincial masses with no strong sense of belonging to the Roman political order. John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates, writing during the transitional period of the late twelfth century,

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94 Michaelis Pselli oratoria minora, ed. A. R. LITTLEWOOD. Leipzig 1985, 19, 37–43. Cf. the detailed analysis of this passage in the third part of this paper.

95 Μιχαήλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα, ed. S. LAMPROS. Athens 1879–80, II 44; cf. STEPHENSON, Conceptions of otherness (as footnote 93 above) 251.

96 Georges et Dèmètrios Tornikès, Lettres et discours, ed. J. DARROUZÈS. Paris 1970, 205–207.

97 Theophylacti Simocattae historiae, ed. C. DE BOOR/P. WIRTH. Stuttgart 1972, VIII 10, 4.

98 On reign and image of Phokas, see D. M. OLSTER, The Politics of usurpation in the seventh century: rhetoric and revolution in Byzantium. Amsterdam 1993, 1–21; cf. LOUNGHIS, Δοκίμιο (as footnote 56 above) 11–12. M. MEIER, Kaiser Phokas (602–610) als Erinnerungsproblem, *BZ* 107 (2014) 141–176.

report on an incident at Lake Pousgouse (Beyşehir Gölü) in central Asia Minor during John II Komnenos' reign (1118–1143). During a campaign against the Seljuk-Turks of nearby Ikonion (Konya), the emperor sought to win over the support of the population of the lake islets. The latter not only were unwilling to support the Roman army in the fight against the *barbarian* and *infidel* enemies of the Roman order, but also resisted fiercely.

Kinnamos categorizes the people of the lake as Romans in an ethnic manner against the normative Roman political discourse that traditionally confined Romanness within the territorial boundaries of the Roman imperial rule.[99] His stance testifies to a process of gradual emergence of ethnic notions of Romanness during the twelfth century on the level of the literate élite.[100] Choniates, instead, seeks to remain faithful to the imperial office's normative approach to Romanness and names the people of the lake Christians (*sic*) who looked upon the Romans (*sic*) as enemies.[101] Nevertheless, his discourse also implies an ethnic perspective, if we take into account his statement that "custom strengthened by time is stronger than peoplehood (*genos*) and religion".[102]

The fact that the indigenous (probably Greek-speaking) Christians of the lake had become accustomed to living harmoniously with the enemies of the Roman order due to long-term co-existence and interaction was hard to realize for Choniates as a member of the Constantinopolitan upper stratum with a solid political and cultural Roman consciousness. Until few decades ago, the inhabitants of the lake were Christians by religion and Romans by political culture from a Constantinopolitan point of view. The fact that they were not anymore subjects of the Roman emperor and that they had no interest in being reintegrated into the Roman political order could not deprive them of their religious identity. It did deprive them, though, of their Roman label, since Romanness was primarily understood and propagated by the Constantinopolitan ruling élite as an identity of allegiance/submission to the Roman political order.

Certainly, both reports of Kinnamos and Choniates can tell us very little about the actual identity of the lake community's members, which at the time probably did not go beyond local or regional self-identification. However, the au-

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99 Ioannae Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum, ed. A. Meineke. *CSHB*. Bonn 1836, 22.

100 There are two further reports in Kinnamos' text on Romans outside the emperor's realm, see ibid., 63, 296.

101 Nicetae Choniatae historia, ed. J. van Dieten. *CFHB*, 11. Berlin 1975, 37, 14–38.

102 Ibid. 37, 21–22: οὕτω χρόνῳ κρατυνθὲν ἔθος γένους καὶ θρησκείας ἐστὶν ἰσχυρότερον. Cf. the analysis in G. Page, Being Byzantine. Greek identity before the Ottomans. Cambridge 2008, 83.

thors' quasi ethno-political stance demonstrates, obviously beyond their own in-
tensions, the discrepancy between the solid Roman politico-cultural conscious-
ness of the Constantinopolitan élite, which the normative identity discourse of
Constantinople attributed in a homogenizing manner to all provincial masses,
and the latter's identities. Any effort to decode the content of this formerly
Roman population's identity cannot overlook its reaction against the Roman
army. As opposed to the ideals of Constantinopolitan authors, these people
did not seek for their liberation from the *infidel* and *barbarian* Seljuk-Turks by
the representatives of the *superior* Roman order, the emperor and his soldiers.

Here we are dealing with a provincial community that resided in the em-
pire's former territorial core and had been for several centuries a part of the
Roman polity. Since the 1170's, it was not any more under Roman rule, but
was under the overlordship of the Seljuk-Turks of nearby Ikonion. The commun-
ity' members had not been islamicized, whereas the imperial state of Constanti-
nople was still standing as an active, resonant center of Roman-Christian polit-
ical and religious culture. Nevertheless, their reaction demonstrates that they
hardly shared a notion of belonging to the Roman political community or main-
tained strong collective memories of cultural/religious allegiance to the Constan-
tinopolitan city-state that would mobilize ethno-political reflects and motivate
them to seek their *liberation*, even when this was offered to them by the re-con-
quering activity of the Roman order's army. This incident demonstrates that,
even though the long twelfth century was admittedly a period of gradual transi-
tion from imperial to ethnic notions of Romanness on the level of the social élite,
one should still be very cautious before attributing Roman ethnic solidarity to
broader segments of the provincial masses.

In light of the evidence presented so far, one could plausibly argue that up to
the twelfth century the Eastern Roman ruling élite neither promoted a vision of
national community nor sought to attach Roman identity discourse (politically or
culturally) to the Greek ethno-linguistic group within the empire. The eastern Ro-
mans may have officially spoken only *graikisti* or *ellenisti*, i.e. Greek, after the
seventh century,[103] but within the non-stable territorial frame of the imperial
city-state, a Roman subject was not only the native Greek-speaker, whereas on
a politico-cultural level being Roman was much more than, and fairly different
from, being a *semi-barbarian* native or non-native peasant that could speak
Greek.

The role of the Church in promoting the allegiance of Christian subjects to
the divinely-ordained rule of the Roman emperor of Constantinople can certainly

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103 Koder, Sprache als Identitätsmerkmal (as footnote 81 above) 11–16.

not be overlooked.[104] The significance of religious identity in underpinning Constantinople's hegemony, i.e. the supra-regional relations of allegiance/submission within the fluctuating territorial boundaries of the imperial state, is reflected in the imperial power's systematic effort to intensify the religious aspect of its ideological discourse from the early seventh century onwards. This refinement becomes evident in the imperial office's effort to assimilate all those sources of ideological power (e.g. the cult of the Virgin, cults of local saints) that could direct attention, and consequently social power, away from the imperial power.[105]

Nevertheless, the normative conflation of *Romanitas* with *Christianitas* in an ethno-political manner in the Constantinopolitan imperial propaganda does not *a priori* testify to an ethno-political self-identification of subject Christian masses with the Roman political order. The aforementioned source examples from the Life of Antony the Younger and the histories of John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates[106] demonstrate that, as opposed to the normative hegemonic discourse of the imperial office, the Christian identity of provincial populations in the empire's (from a cultural point of view allegedly homogenous) territorial core hardly predetermined their ideological allegiance to the Roman imperial state of Constantinople and its ruling élite's vision of community.

The historiographical narratives about the imperial state's military expansion in the tenth and the early eleventh centuries, in which expansionary warfare is justified as liberation of former Roman lands but not of enslaved Romans,[107] point to the limits of the normative ideological conflation of Roman and Christian identity on a social level. Due to its inherent imperial–ecumenical trait, Romanness as an ideological discourse was designed to align with the boundaries of the Roman emperor's realm, which were by no means stable,

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104 On the Church as the main ideological apparatus of the medieval *state*, cf. ALTHUSSER, Ideology (as footnote 38 above) 150–151.

105 J. F. HALDON, Ideology and social change in the seventh century: military discontent as a barometer. *Klio* 68 (1986) 161 f.; A. CAMERON, Images of authority: élites and icons in late sixth-century Byzantium. *Past and Present* 84 (1979) 21–22; P. J. ALEXANDER, The strength of empire and capital as seen through Byzantine eyes. *Speculum* 37 (1962) 339 f.

106 See footnotes 74, 99 and 101 above. Cf. also the indicative incident of voluntary migration of Roman subjects to cities under Turkish rule in Asia Minor during the reign of Alexios III (1195–1203): Niketas Choniates (as footnote 101 above) 495, 30–496, 4.

107 On Byzantine legitimizing discourse of expansionary warfare, see STOURAITIS, 'Just war' (as footnote 55 above) 253 f.; IDEM, Krieg und Frieden (as footnote 48 above) 197–208; IDEM, Conceptions of war and peace in Anna Comnena's Alexiad, in J. Koder/I. Stouraitis (eds.), Byzantine war ideology between Roman imperial concept and Christian religion. *Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung*, 30. Vienna 2012, 69–80.

and to function in a centripetal manner as an identity of allegiance/submission to the imperial office. Instead, Christian identity travelled well beyond the territorial limits of the imperial state and aligned with regional and ethnic identities.

The absence of a national ideological perspective by the Roman ruling élite functioned against an identification of *Christianitas* and *Romanitas* beyond the state-frame in an ethno-religious sense. From the élite's point of view, the Christian populations in former Roman territories, whether native or new, were brothers in faith that would be designated as Roman (subjects) in a homogenizing manner only after the re-occupation of their territory and their integration in the imperial order.[108] This practice fully reflects the *top-down* ideological mechanisms of identity building within the empire's hegemonic discourse, that is, the way in which the élite perceived its own identity and, at the same time, sought to normatively circumscribe the collective identity of subject masses within a *de facto* multi-cultural socio-political context.

In this regard, one could plausibly argue that up to the twelfth century Romanness as a politico-cultural discourse of self-identification concerned mainly the members of a social upper stratum, whose social status and literacy enabled their active participation in the political system as well as access to a literate culture that was produced and circulated on the level of the élite,[109] the two main means that configured a solid Roman identity/ideology. This is certainly not to say that provincial populations in the emperor's realm did not have any sense of normative collective identity, as this was promoted by the Constantinopolitan hegemonic discourse. The term *regnal* identity, coined by Susan Reynolds to conceptualize the collective identity of the subjects of western medieval *regna*,[110] could be considered as a potential conceptual alternative. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind the evident differences between Byzantium and the western

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108 The fact that the members of the local élites in those areas where often willing to declare allegiance to the Roman imperial power and represent themselves as Romans after their subjugation hardly testifies to a similar self-identification of the masses in those territories. Cf. KODER, Byzantium (as footnote 3 above) 79, on the case of the Syriac Melkite élite in the late tenth century.

109 Cf. the comments on Byzantine historiography as a product of a literate élite addressed to the members of a literate upper stratum in B. CROKE, Uncovering Byzantium's historiographical audience, in R. Macrides (ed.), History as literature in Byzantium. Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007. *Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, Publications*, 15. Farnham 2010, 25–53.

110 S. REYNOLDS, Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300. Oxford ²1997, 250–256, esp. 254; on the differences between medieval *regnal* identity and national identity, see A. D. SMITH, The Genealogy of Nations: An Ethno-Symbolic Approach, in Ichijo/Uzelac, When is the Nation? (as footnote 11 above), 106.

medieval *regna* as communities of common law, custom and descent up to the twelfth century.

The post-seventh century Eastern Roman ruling élite maintained the ideological and socio-political structures of territorial empire, in which the ethno-cultural and regional diversity of subject populations remained a social reality supplanted by the hegemonic Roman political discourse. This diversity was underpinned by the consistent (re-)integration of large cultural collectivities into the state-frame that were included in the homogenizing discourse of *regnal* Romanness. In relation to this, the Roman élite did not subscribe to and propagate a vision of the Eastern Roman community as a community of (notional) common descent, either with historical reference to the Latin Romans or to the Ancient Hellenes.[111] It follows that for the largest part of the empire's provincial masses, especially those of the countryside, Roman *regnal* identity can hardly have pertained to much more than a notion of submission, which was, to a certain extent, voluntary but by no means participatory in political terms.

One could plausibly argue that before the late eleventh century the geopolitical and ideological structures of territorial empire in Byzantium neither favoured the existence of full-blown ethnic communities nor the crystallization of a Roman ethnic or, for that matter, national discourse. The ideological hegemony of the political discourse of the imperial city-state Constantinople[112] promoted the acculturation of provincial élites and the nominal transculturation of illiterate and semi-illiterate masses within the imperial realm where regional and ethno-cultural diversity remained a matter of lived experience and cognition for the largest part of provincial populations rather than of ideological discourses. If we were to attempt a classification of the multiple identities of common people in the provinces according to their degree of importance, local and regional identity should, beyond doubt and by far, be considered as the most significant for the self-identification of the majority of the masses,[113] whereas religious identity should rather be seen as the more solid collective identity within the empire.

In light of this, the source information on ideals of patriotic loyalty, focused upon the imperial city-state of Constantinople, can hardly be taken to testify to the notions of the largest part of provincial populations and to have defined their political self-identification. These ideals, as presented in historiographical and

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111 Cf. MAGDALINO, Hellenism (as footnote 3 above) 6.

112 On the mentality of imperial city-state in Byzantium, see MAGDALINO, Hellenism (as footnote 3 above) 7; cf. J. WICKHAM, From the ancient world to feudalism. *Past and Present* 104 (1984) 35; KODER, Griechische Identitäten (as footnote 3 above) 299.

113 On local–regional identity, cf. KODER, Byzantium (as footnote 3 above) 72 – 75.

other narratives informed by the mentality of the ruling élite, are evidence of the distinct Roman identity of the upper class. The latter was not defined by a notion of belonging to a horizontal and boundary-oriented political community of Roman people, but by a notion of allegiance to the hierarchical order of the Constantinopolitan city-state and the political culture of its imperial office. It follows that present-day arguments about a kind of pre-modern 'nationalism' in Byzantium[114] deprive the modern term of its literal meaning[115] in order to conceptualize quasi-patriotic practices of a social élite of service, which reflect the latter's loyalty to the centripetal territorial rule of the Constantinopolitan city-state.

3. Rethinking the Greek "Riddle"

In view of the previous analysis, any effort to overcome the polarization of attitudes as to the issue of Greek identity in the Eastern Roman imperial order after late antiquity cannot ignore two facts: First, the Eastern Roman ruling élite did not employ Greek ethnic discourse to circumscribe its self-identification up to the thirteenth century; second, the ruling élite's *top-down* identity discourse encompassed ethno-cultural diversity and promoted mass *regnal* Romanness as an identity of allegiance/submission to the political order of Constantinople.

Based on this, I shall use as a point of theoretical departure Anthony Smith's comprehensive definition of ethnic groups as cultural collectivities which are distinguished by attributes such as a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, a historic 'homeland' and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.[116] This ethno-cultural perspective relates ethnic self- and hetero-classification primarily to differentiating elements of common cul-

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114 On notions of Byzantine nationalism, see H. Ahrweiler, L'ideologie politique de l'Empire byzantin. Paris 1975, 29–36; cf. Magdalino, Hellenism (as footnote 3 above) 6.

115 A. D. Smith, Chosen peoples: sacred sources of national identity. Oxford 2003, 25: "Nationalism: An ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population, some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'."; cf. J. Breuilly, Dating the nation. How old is an old nation?, in Ichijo/ Uzelac, When is the Nation? (as footnote 11 above) 17, who prefers the term 'political' instead of 'ideological' movement.

116 Smith, National Identity (as footnote 27 above) 20–21; cf. idem, The cultural foundations of nations. Hierarchy, covenant, and republic. Malden, MA. 2008, 30. According to Smith, "the more a population possesses or shares these attributes (and the more of these attributes that it possesses or shares), the more closely does it approximate the ideal type of an ethnic community or *ethnie*".

ture, which in part have an objective and historical character (language, religion, customs, and pigmentation).[117] The difference between pre-modern *ethnies* as non- stable and non-coherent named groups of population from modern nations is better reflected in the former's typology[118]: 1) *ethnic category* (the group is het-ero-designated as such and its members may have a sense of who they are not, but not of who they are); 2) *ethnic network* or *association* (a shared consciousness of collective identity is evident among the members of the élite); 3) *ethnic com-munity* or *ethnie* (the sense of belonging to the group is also shared by segments of the population beyond the limits of the élite).[119]

This theoretical framework pays due heed to the fact that populations are systematically classified as cultural collectivities through ethnonyms in the his-toriographical narratives, but also that these narratives mainly represent the views of literate social élites and do not, therefore, *a priori* reflect the identities of broader segments of the named populations. This anticipates the dangers of groupism and reification of ethnicity.[120] Moreover, as opposed to primordialism, ethnicity is here seen as a social construct that comes and goes.[121] The historical persistence of some ethnic identities, as opposed to others, over time refers not to an essentialist approach of linear continuity of the group, but to the recur-rence of notions of historical ethnic culture (usually among the members of lit-

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117 ibid., 21–23. On the apolitical characteristics of pre-modern ethnic identities that diffe-rentiate them from national identities, see J. BREUILLY, Approaches to nationalism, in G. Bala-krishnan (ed.), Mapping the Nation. London / New York 151–154.

118 Regarding SMITH's elaborated ethno-symbolist approach to the concept of the 'nation' as predating the ideological movement of nationalism and modernity, the stance adopted here is that pre-modern ethnic groups and ethnic identities are distinguishable from nations and na-tionhood as mass phenomena, the emergence and configuration of which was conditioned by the watershed of modernity; cf. BREUILLY, Dating the nation (as footnote 115 above) 15; ICHIJO/ UZELAC, When is the Nation? (as footnote 11 above) 90–91; S. MALEŠEVIC, The chimera of national identity. *Nations and Nationalism* 17/2 (2011) 282. On criticism to SMITH's definitions of the nation, see M. GUIBERNAU, Anthony D. Smith on nations and national identity: a critical assessment. *Nations and Nationalism* 10 (1/2) (2004) 125–141; cf. the response in A. D. SMITH, Ethnosymbolism and nationalism: a cultural approach. London / New York 2009, 109–110.

119 SMITH, Cultural foundations (as footnote 116 above) 30–31. IDEM, When is a nation. *Geopolitics* 7/2 (2002) 24–25; IDEM, National identity (as footnote 27 above) 20–21.

120 On critique to Smith's definitions of ethnicity as prone to reification, see S. MALEŠEVIC, Identity as ideology: understanding ethnicity and nationalism. New York 2006, 25–28; cf. the response in SMITH, Ethnosymbolism and nationalism (as footnote 118 above) 124–126. On critique to reified ethnicity as 'groupism' cf. BRUBAKER, Ethnicity without groups (as footnote 12 above) 7–27, 64–87.

121 SMITH, National identity (as footnote 27 above) 23; IDEM, Nationalism and modernism (as footnote 9 above) 192.

erate élites) which can be marked, nonetheless, by deep changes and ruptures with regard to ethnic symbols, values and customs.[122]

In light of this, there are certain facts that need to be borne in mind when it comes to the most debated issue of Greekness in the post-seventh century Eastern Roman social order. After the Christianization of the empire the ethnonym Hellene was gradually substituted by the semantic equivalent *Graikos* in denoting the member of the ethno-cultural collectivity due to the religious discourse that identified Hellenism with paganism.[123] The fact that *Graikos* is translated as Hellene in the lexica of the Byzantine period leaves little doubt that the literate Eastern Roman élite was well aware of the historic-cultural signification of the employed ethnonym.[124] Moreover, the post-seventh century evidence demonstrates that the ethnonyms *Graikos* or Hellene, the second being a classicizing recurrence in the writings of the intellectual élite in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, were employed by Byzantine authors equally to other ethnonyms when these authors contradistinguished Roman subjects in an ethno-linguistic/ethno-cultural manner.

For instance, Constantine VII reports in *De administrando imperio* that "in the reign of the emperor Nikephoros I (802–811) the Slavs in the theme of Peloponnese decided to revolt and first begun to sack the houses of their Greek (*Graikoi*) neighbours".[125] This statement refers to the use of ethnonyms for an ethno-cultural categorization of Roman subjects from within, from the Roman élite. In this respect, it reflects the function of normative Roman political discourse in the post-seventh century imperial order. The fact that the Slavs are presented as a part of the local population of the administrative unit of Peloponnese, i.e. as insiders that revolted, demonstrates that these were considered as bearers of

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122 Smith, National identity (as footnote 27 above) 23–25; idem, Nationalism and modernism (as footnote 9 above) 196; idem, Ethnosymbolism and nationalism (as footnote 118 above) 38.
123 Cf. J. Koder, Anmerkungen zu Γραικοω, in: Gedenkschrift I. E. Karayannopoulos. *Byzantina* 21 (2000), 199–202; idem, Griechische Identitäten (as footnote 3 above) 305; Magdalino, Hellenism (as footnote 3 above) 9.
124 On the universal interpretation of the ethnonym *Graikos* as Hellene in the Byzantine lexica, see Hesychii Alexandrini lexicon I, ed. K. Latte. Copenhagen 1966, 882; Stephani Byzantii Ethnica, vol. I: A–Γ, ed. M. Billerbeck. *CFHB*, 43/1. Berlin 2006, 434–435, 107; Suidae lexicon I, ed. A. Adler. *Lexicographi Graeci* 1, 1. Leipzig 1928, gamma 447.
125 Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando imperio, ed. G. Moravcsik. *CFHB*, I. Washington, D.C. 1967, 49, 4–9: Νικηφόρος τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων σκῆπτρα ἐκράτει, καὶ οὗτοι ἐν τῷ θέματι ὄντες Πελοποννήσου ἀπόστασιν ἐννοήσαντες, πρῶτον μὲν τὰς τῶν γειτόνων οἰκίας τῶν Γραικῶν ἐξεπόρθουν.

Roman *regnal* identity by the ninth century.[126] From the point of view of the Roman ruling élite both the Slavs and the Greeks were Roman subjects and their ethno-cultural categorization was not intended to distinguish the Romans (Greeks) from the non-Romans (Slavs), but rather two collectivities with certain cultural differences within the imperial power's realm, as seen by the political and historiographical discourse of Constantinople.

If we follow Bourdieu in arguing that the best way to bring something into existence in a socio-political context is to name it,[127] the Greeks remained a named population in contradistinction to other named populations (e.g. Armenians, Bulgars) within the *top-down* homogenizing Roman discourse of the post-seventh century Greek-speaking Roman ruling élite. After the radical demographic rupture caused by the Slavic infiltration of the Greek continental core, this population was maintained in parts of its historic 'homeland' (which consisted of all territories around the Aegean basin) and also beyond that. The illiterate and semi-illiterate masses of Greek-speakers formed a non-stable and non-coherent collectivity, the boundaries of which were horizontally delineated through the social élite with its ethnically neutral Roman identity discourse and vertically through those cultural markers that defined notions of otherness among the empire's masses (the most important of which for common people should have been native language or regional dialect).[128]

Within the framework of the dominant Roman *regnal* discourse, the social function of the ethnonym referred to the contradistinction between members of the Greek ethno-linguistic collectivity and members of other ethno-linguistic collectivities in the empire.[129] On a conceptual level, the post-seventh century Greeks can hardly be regarded as anything more than an *ethnic category*. The complete integration of the Hellenic intellectual and power élites into the Roman ruling class had already for several centuries suppressed an ethnocentric ideology that would promote a myth of common ancestry and shared notions of historical affinity with the Ancient Hellenes. In this regard, the role of Christian-

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126 On the Slavs as a non-coherent broader collectivity that was internally sub-divided in various groups, CURTA, History of the Greeks (as footnote 45 above) 278f.

127 P. BOURDIEU, Language and symbolic power. Cambridge, MA 1991, 236.

128 Cf. the Barthian axiom about ethnic boundaries as socially constructed through self-classification as well as classification of and by others: E. BARTH, Introduction, in idem (ed.), Ethnic groups and boundaries. The social organization of cultural difference. Boston 1969, 11.

129 In this regard, it is notable that members of the Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical élite employed the ethnonym *Graikos* as self-identification in their writings; see, e.g., Theodoros Stoudites Epist. 419, 29–30, in: G. FATOUROS (ed.), Theodori Studitae Epistulae. *CFHB*, 31. Berlin 1991, 587; cf. MAGDALINO, Hellenism (as footnote 3 above) 10.

ization after the fourth century CE must be regarded as determinant in the progressive abrogation of notional links with the pagan Hellenic culture.

It is in this light that we have to attempt to decode in historic-contextual terms the evidence of the sources regarding the gradual recurrence of notions of Hellenic ethnic identity within the literate upper stratum from the mid-eleventh century onwards. Michael Psellos is probably the first and most distinguished member of the Byzantine intellectual élite that testifies to notions of ethno-cultural Hellenism in his writings during the second half of the eleventh century. In his *Chronographia*, he reports on a revolt in the court of empress Theodora and states about the court attendant (*therapon*) Constantine Kabasilas that "by birth (*genos*) he was not Hellene, by character (*ethos*) though he belonged to the most distinguished kind (*genos*), a man of heroic nature who was respected due to his noble origin".[130] Here, the meaning of the classicizing ethnonym Hellene is certainly not religious (i. e. pagan). Consequently, it can only have been employed by the author to either denote higher level of literacy or ethnic descent.

The first option is, however, hardly supported by the context of the statement. Psellos reports, in a praising manner, on the court attendant's action to lead the city mob in order to defend the empresses Theodora and Zoe during a coup. Why should the philosopher consider it important and relevant in this context to underline that this person was lacking a Hellenic (that is higher) education? As opposed to that, in the first part of the phrase the author employs the term *genos* in a standardized form, through which Byzantine authors usually denoted a person's origin from an ethnic group.[131] In the second part of the phrase, the term is disconnected from the ethnonym and obviously acquires a more abstract meaning denoting a category of men of noble character.

Psellos' understanding of the term Hellene as an ethnonym that was employed to denote ethno-cultural categorization is further documented in two other passages from his writings. The first refers to an uprising of a group of people in Constantinople supported by the patriarch Michael Keroularios during the

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130 Michael Psellos, Chronographia (as footnote 69 above) I 5, 36, 1–10: Ὁ τοίνυν δῆμος, ὥς μοι λέλεκται, κατὰ τοῦ τυραννεύσαντος στασιάσας … ἀλλ' ἕνα τῶν πατρῴων αὐτῇ θεραπόντων ὥσπερ τινὰ στρατηγὸν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ προστήσας τάξεως, ἄνδρα τὸ μὲν γένος οὐχ Ἕλληνα, τὸ δὲ ἦθος τοῦ καλλίστου γένους, ἡρωϊκὸν δὲ τὸ εἶδος, καὶ τὸ σεβάσμιον ἐξ ἀρχαίας εὐτυχίας κεκτημένον. Cf. Koder, Griechische Identitäten (see footnote 3 above) 307.
131 The standardized form is *genos* plus ethnonym in the singular or plural; e. g., see Scylitzes, Synopsis (as footnote 67 above) 438, 62–65: ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ Νικολάου στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ Κωνσταντῖνος ὁ τῆς μεγάλης ἑταιρείας ἄρχων, εὐνοῦχος ἄνθρωπος, ἐκ Σαρακηνῶν ἕλκων τὸ γένος καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ ὑπηρετήσας πρὸ τῆς βασιλείας καὶ πίστιν τηρῶν ἐς αὐτόν.

reign of Michael VI. Among the classicizing references to the various identities of the participants, the philosopher employs the term Hellenic *phylon*, which hardly denotes literacy or religion here.[132] It is rather meant to ethno-culturally categorize common Greek-speaking Romans. In his praise of John Italos, Psellos refers to the latter's effort to defend his Hellenic *paideia* through the argument that the wisdom of the Hellenes had been neglected by its rightful heirs in its own 'homeland', the whole of Hellas and the colonized Ionia, and had been left to slip away in the hands of the Muslims in the East.[133]

Italos' response to his critics reproduced a view that was a commonplace among Muslim intellectuals since the tenth century, but the whole statement as presented by Psellos points to an ethno-cultural understanding of Hellenism in a contemporary context. The philosopher testifies to a full-blown notion of 'homeland' of the historical Hellenic culture among the intellectuals of his time, which included the whole of Hellas and the colonized Ionia, i. e. the lands around the Aegean basin. Furthermore, he testifies to the use of the term Hellene as an ethnonym to denote the Ancient Hellenes (*τὴν δὲ τῶν Ἑλλή-νων σοφίαν*) and, at the same time, to categorize ethno-culturally, always in a classicizing manner, contemporary native Greek-speakers (*ὡς βαρβαρίζειν μὲν τοὺς Ἕλληνας*), those inhabitants of *Hellas and the whole land on our side*, the

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132 Michaelis Pselli orationes forenses et acta, ed. G.T. DENNIS. Stuttgart 1994, I 1432 – 1439:διὰ τί δὲ τὰς πύλας τοῦ νεὼ τοῖς συνομωμοκόσιν ἠνέῳξε; συνδεδραμηκότας δὲ διὰ τί μὴ βραχύ τι διαπειλησάμενος ἐκεῖθεν ἀπήλασεν; οὐ γὰρ κατὰ πλῆθος εὐθὺς εἰσῄεσαν, ἀλλὰ συνεκκαίδεκα ἢ βραχεῖ τινι πλείους. εἰ δὲ βούλεσθε, δῶμεν μηδένα τῶν πάντων ἀπολελεῖφθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσον ἐν Πέρσαις καὶ Βαβυλῶνι καὶ ὅσον Ἑλληνικὸν φῦλον Αἰθίοπάς τε καὶ Ἄραβας ἐκεῖσε συνεισδραμεῖν καὶ τῶν βασιλέων καταβοᾶν.

133 Michaelis Pselli oratoria minora, 19, 30 – 43 (as footnote 94 above): τὴν δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφίαν προθέμενος (scil. John Italos) ἐπαινεῖν ἀπολοφύρεται ὡς εἰκὸς ὅτι, δέον τοὺς γνησίους τοῦ λόγου κληρονομεῖν, τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ ἀλλότριον τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς σοφίας οὐδὲν προσήκοντα διεδέξατο καὶ ἡ μὲν Ἑλλὰς σχεδὸν ἅπασα καὶ ἡ ἄποικος Ἰωνία τῶν πατρῴων ἀκριβῶς ἐξε-κόπησαν, ἐς Ἀσσυρίους δὲ καὶ Μήδους καὶ Αἰγυπτίους ὁ κλῆρος μετωχετεύθη καὶ τοσοῦτον ἡ τάξις ἀντέστραπται, ὡς βαρβαρίζειν μὲν τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἑλληνίζειν δὲ τοὺς βαρβάρους. καὶ Ἕλλην μὲν ἀνήρ, οὕτω συμβάν, ἐς Σοῦσαν ἢ Ἐκβάτανα ἀφικόμενος, τὰ πάλαι τοῦ Δαρείου ἄνακτρα, καὶ Βαβυλωνίοις συγγενόμενος ἀκούσεται περὶ ὧν ἑλληνίζων οὐκ ἤκουσε, καὶ θαυ-μάσεται τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἕκαστον καὶ τότε πρῶτον ἴσως γνώσεται ὅτι σοφία τοῦ παντὸς καθηγήσατο· ἀλαζὼν δέ τις εἰς ἡμᾶς παραγενόμενος βάρβαρος καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι καὶ τῇ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἁπάσῃ ἠπείρῳ εἰς ὁμιλίαν ἐληλυθὼς οὐδ' ὡς ἡμιόνοις τοῖς πολλοῖς συγχωρήσειεν, ἀλλ' ὄνοις ἄντικρυς. On a systematic investigation of Psellos' writings regarding the issue of Greek identity, see Τη. PAPADOPOULOU, Συλλογική ταυτότητα και αυτογνωσία στο Βυζάντιο. Συμβολή στον προσδιορισμό της αυτοαντίληψης των Βυζαντινῶν μέσα από τὴν λόγια γραμματεία τους (11ος αιώνας – αρχές 13ου αιώνα). Ionian University Corfu 2008, unpublished dissertation. I would like to thank her for providing me with a copy of her text.

majority of whom had a knowledge of Greek language and culture, which equalled that of donkeys!

In view of this evidence, it can hardly be doubted that an intellectual faction of the Eastern Roman élite of this period shared a notion of Hellenic *ethnie*, i.e. of a named population that resided in its historic 'homeland' and was linked through cultural markers to its ancestors, i.e. the Ancient Hellenes. Nevertheless, Psellos' utterances also demonstrate that the ethnic labelling of contemporary common Greek-speaking Roman subjects as Hellenes by members of the literate élite hardly provides evidence that these shared similar notions of affinity to and self-identification with the historical Hellenic culture. The downgrading of the majority of the contemporary (mostly illiterate) Greeks to barbarians due to their ignorance of their own culture actually provides further evidence of the given identity gap between literate social élites and the masses of common people within Byzantine society.[134]

In this light, Psellos' notion of a Hellenic *ethnie* within the framework of Roman political discourse can hardly be taken to either document the existence of a full-blown Greek ethnic community or, for that matter, of an intellectual movement of proto-nationalism that envisaged a substitution of Roman political discourse through Greek ethno-political discourse in late eleventh-century Byzantium. His statements point, instead, to a process of gradual recurrence of notions of belonging to a historical community of common culture within a circle of intellectuals. This process was well under way among members of the literate élite during the twelfth century, as Ioannis Tzetzes' statement about his Hellenic descent on his father's side indicates.[135] The latter was a native of Constantinople which was territorially included in the aforementioned 'homeland' of the historical Hellenic culture, i.e. of the historical Hellenic *ethnie.*[136]

The cultural capital of individuals of the likes of Psellos and Tzetzes provided them with the potential to make the ideological link between their cultural identity and the identity of the Ancient Hellenes, and to utter an ethno-cultural self-classification in their writings. Moreover, they disposed of the necessary knowledge of history that made them aware of the distinct historical starting-

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134 Cf. the similar stance of Anna Komnene regarding the ignorance of the illiterate Greeks, as footnote 87 above.

135 Ioannis Tzetzae epistulae, ed. P.L.M. Leone. Leipzig 1972, VI 10, 5–6; Ioannis Tzetzae historiae, ed. P.L. M. Leone. Naples 1968: *Chiliades* V 17, 585–630.

136 On some other utterances of Greek ethno-cultural identity during the twelfth century, see Pseudo-Luciano, Timarione, ed. R. Romano. *Byzantina et Neo-Hellenica Neapolitana*, 2. Naples 1972, 5, 116–120; Georges et Dèmètrios Tornikès, 129, 1–7 (as footnote 96 above); Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα (as footnote 95 above) I 4, 98, I 4, 100, I 11, 183.

points of the Roman political culture and the historical Hellenic culture. For instance, Tzetzes juxtaposed in a letter to Isaakios Komnenos around the mid-twelfth century his culturally superior Greek identity to the barbarian identity of the Ausonians, i.e. the Latin Romans of the past, within the framework of a reference to their war customs, with which he considered the members of the Comnenian élite to be well familiar.[137]

This gradual recurrence of Greek ethno-cultural identity within a circle of well-educated individuals after the late eleventh century was facilitated by the inherent openness of Roman political discourse to ethno-cultural diversity. Such individuals could distance themselves from an ethno-cultural self-identification with the Latin Romans of the past while, at the same time, they hardly considered this distancing to make them less Roman in regard to their political culture. Psellos, for instance, could reproduce notions of a Hellenic *ethnie* and, at the same time, declare his allegiance to the Roman imperial order. In a speech addressed to Constantine IX, he praised the expansionary policies of Basil II, through which New Rome, i.e. the imperial city-state of Constantinople, was able to rule over many *ethne* (peoples) and cities in his own time.[138] Psellos was perfectly capable of imagining the empire, i.e. the territorial extension of imperial authority over cities, regions and ethno-culturally diverse populations, in a centripetal and hierarchical manner. He hardly imagined, though, a Roman or, for that matter, a Greek nation as a political community of horizontal comradeship.

The resurgent Greek ethno-cultural discourse in the writings of well-educated individuals during the long twelfth century had nothing to do with the imperial office as the principal ideological source that normatively circumscribed the form and content of Roman identity. The Komnenian ruling élite's ideological disposition in regard to Romanness is reflected in the aforementioned identity discourse of Anna Komnene.[139] This ruling élite remained the main bearer of im-

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137 Ibid. VI 9, 12 – 10, 6. On the emergence of a militarized aristocracy of birth under the Komnenian emperors, which was extensively inspired by the warlike ideals of Roman culture and less by the intellectual ideals of Hellenism, see P. Magdalino, The empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143 – 1180. Cambridge 1993, 180 f.; A. Kazhdan / A.W. Epstein, Change in Byzantine culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Berkeley 1990, 104 – 110; A. Kazhdan, The aristocracy and the imperial ideal, in M. Angold (ed.), The Byzantine aristocracy IX to XIII centuries. Oxford 1984, 50 f.

138 Michaelis Pselli orationes panegyricae, ed. G. T. Dennis. Stuttgart 1994, 2, 133 – 137: Ἐντεῦθέν σοι, ὦ νέα Ῥώμη, τὸ πολλῶν μὲν ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, πολλῶν δ' ἐπικρατεῖν πόλεων καὶ τῶν θρυλλουμένων ὑπερκεῖσθαι ἐπαρχιῶν. ἐντεῦθέν σοι τὰ Ἀβασγῶν κατεδουλώθη φρονήματα, καὶ ἡ Σκυθῶν ὑποπέπτωκε, καὶ τἆλλα, ἵνα μὴ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγω.

139 Cf. footnote 87 and the relevant arguments above.

perial Romanness as an identity of political culture and status, which was constructed to serve the imperial system by encompassing ethnic diversity at the bottom and absorbing it into a fairly homogenous political discourse at the top. Thus, it continued to facilitate the integration of newcomers into the Constantinopolitan system of empire from the ethnic élites on the empire's geopolitical periphery along with the populations controlled by those élites. This is reflected in the policies of John II and particularly Manuel I Komnenos. These were marked by the practice of granting Roman offices and access to the Roman ruling class to non-natives[140] as well as by systematic efforts to expand the imperial rule over non-Greek-speaking populations in the East and over parts of the Italian peninsula.

In light of this, one could discern a latent ideological tension within the framework of the Byzantine social élite in regard to the form and the content of Eastern Roman identity during the long twelfth century. The ruling élite adhered to the imperial-ecumenical trait of Romanness as an identity that was primarily conditioned by allegiance or submission to the political authority of the imperial office of Constantinople. This diachronically predominant, normative stance was confronted with gradually emerging notions of ethnic Romanness as an identity of shared cultural markers. This development was circumscribed by the aforementioned recurrent notion of historical Greek ethnicity among the literati.

The undergoing change of identity discourse during this period cannot be interpreted separately from geopolitical and social changes.[141] The imperial state's territorial contraction in the last quarter of the eleventh century approximately to the limits of the 'homeland' of the historical Hellenic culture (as presented in the aforementioned text of Psellos) set in motion a process of transition from the geopolitical structures of territorial empire to those of medieval *regnum*. The Roman imperial rule was thereafter (apart from the period under John II and Manuel I Komnenos) confined to a much smaller number of subjects, the majority of whom belonged to the Greek ethno-linguistic group. The close encounter with Seljuk-Turks, Normans and Latins re-arranged the political and cultural interface of the contracted Eastern Roman community. The conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders sealed these developments and consolidated the vision of a Roman ethno-cultural collectivity.

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140 Niketas Choniates (as footnote 101 above) 205, 4–26, 209, 1–14.
141 Cf. MACRIDES/MAGDALINO, The Fourth Kingdom and the rhetoric of Hellenism (as footnote 48 above) 155–156.

Niketas Choniates' History offers an outline of the ongoing change of identity discourse during the transitional period of the twelfth century. In the early part of his narrative, in the report on John Komnenos' effort to restore imperial control over Lake Pousgouse in central Asia Minor,[142] the author contradistinguished the native Christian inhabitants with the Romans due to the fact that the former were currently not under Roman imperial authority and, also, not willing to be re-integrated into the Roman political order. In this case, the author subscribed to the traditional normative imperial discourse that defined Romanness not by certain cultural markers, but as a *regnal* identity of allegiance and submission to the Roman emperor's political order. Later in his narrative, he was keen to criticize Manuel I for promoting foreigners instead of native Romans in state offices or for privileging them regarding the acquisition of military land (*pronoia*).[143] In this case, he favoured an opposite discourse, according to which the Romans were not to be distinguished from the non-Romans by *regnal* identity, i.e. position within and allegiance to the Roman political order, but primarily by native cultural markers.

Choniates circumscribed this ethno-cultural aspect of Romanness through historical Greek ethnicity, as demonstrated by his use of the ethnonym Hellene (or *Graikos* when it came to strong religious connotations) to identify the Eastern Romans in his text.[144] It is notable that most of these statements of Greek ethno-cultural self-classification are documented in the last part of the 'Historia', which was written after 1204 when the author was free of the normative political discourse of the Roman imperial office.[145] Choniates finished his historiographical work in the State of Nicaea when the Eastern Roman ruling élite needed to distinguish itself from the Latins in Constantinople.

The integration of Hellenic ethnic discourse into the normative Roman political discourse of the Nicaean imperial office by the mid-thirteenth century testifies to the culmination of the process of change of the Eastern Roman identity's form. The outline of historical Hellenic ethnicity of the Eastern Romans in the writings of the emperors John III Doukas Batatzes and Theodore II Laskaris[146]

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142 Cf. footnote 101 above.

143 Cf. footnote 140 above.

144 Niketas Choniates (as footnote 101 above) 200, 24–201, 1, 301, 14–15, 575, 20, 580, 3–5, 580, 10–12, 600, 6–8, 602, 13–14, 610, 16–611, 18.

145 On the phases of composition of the 'Historia', see A. J. SIMPSON, Before and after 1204: the versions of Niketas Choniates' "Historia". *DOP* 60 (2006) 202–205.

146 V. GRUMEL, L'authenticité de la letter de Jean Vatatzès, empereur de Nicée au Pape Grégoire IX. *EO* 29 (1930) 452–454; Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII, ed. N. FESTA. Florence 1898, 107–108; cf. M. ANGOLD, Byzantine "nationalism" and the Nicaean empire. *BMGS* 1

points to the potential of ruling élites to reshape the normative form and the content of collective identities respectively. John Batatzes' utterance in his letter to the Pope Gregory IX about his own people, the Hellenes, being the rightful heir of the Roman political culture that had been inherited to them by Constantine I[147] represents an inversion of the ideological disposition that, after the linguistic Hellenization of the Roman imperial power during the late sixth century, had maintained Eastern Romanness free of Greek ethnic discourse.

In the mid-tenth century, Constantine VII claimed the Byzantine's exclusive right to Romanness by referring to the Latin language as the ancestral language of the Eastern Roman ruling élite.[148] This reference implicitly denounced a classification of the Eastern Romans as Greeks, as this was put forward by the Latin political discourse. In the mid-thirteenth century instead, John III Batatzes emphasized his Hellenic ethnic descent to serve exactly the same cause. The different socio-political conditions that configured the differentiated contents of the Eastern Roman élite's identity in each time are evident. What needs to be stressed, though, is that neither of the two emperors stated a false identity.[149]

(1975) 64–65; R. Browning, History, language and literacy in the Byzantine world. Northampton 1989, 124; Koder, Griechische Identitäten (as note 3 above) 310–313; D. Angelov, Byzantine ideological reactions to the Latin conquest of Constantinople, in A. Laiou (ed.), Urbs capta: the Fourth Crusade and its consequences. *Réalités Byzantines*, 10. Paris 2005, 301–303; idem, Imperial ideology (as note 62 above) 95–98.

147 John III Ducas Vatatzes, Epistula ad Gregorium papam, 17–37, in I. Sakellion, Ἀνέκδοτος ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Ἰωάννου Δούκα Βατάτζη πρὸς τὸν Πάπαν Γρηγόριον. *Πηγές τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ*. Thessaloniki 1965, 50–53: Ἐσήμαινε δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον γράμμα, ὅτι τε ἐν τῷ γένει τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἡμῶν ἡ σοφία βασιλεύει, καί, ὡς ἐκ πηγῆς, ἐκ ταύτης πανταχοῦ ῥανίδες ἀνέβλυσαν· ... Ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου γένους ἡ σοφία καὶ τὸ ταύτης ἤνθησεν ἀγαθόν, καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους διεδόθη, ὁπόσοι τὴν ἄσκησιν αὐτῆς καὶ κτῆσιν διὰ πολλῆς τίθενται φροντίδος, τοῦτο ἀληθῶς εἴρηται. Ἐκεῖνο δὲ πῶς ἡγνοήθη, ἢ καὶ μὴ ἀγνοηθέν, πῶς ἐσιγήθη, τό, σὺν τῇ βασιλευούσῃ παρ' ἡμῖν σοφίᾳ, καὶ τὴν κατὰ κόσμον ταύτην βασιλείαν τῷ ἡμῶν προσκεκληρῶσθαι γένει παρὰ τοῦ μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου, τοῦ τῇ χριστωνύμῳ κλήσει τῇ ἀρχῇ περιποιησαμένου τὸ σεμνόν τε καὶ τίμιον; Τίνι καὶ γὰρ ἠγνόηται τῶν πάντων, ὡς ὁ κλῆρος τῆς ἐκείνου διαδοχῆς ἐς τὸ ἡμέτερον διέβη γένος, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν οἱ τούτου κληρονόμοι τε καὶ διάδοχοι; cf. Grumel (as footnote 145 above) 452–453: "Cette lettre déclarait que dans notre nation grecque la sagesse règne, et de là, comme d'une source, répand partout... et nous ne réclamerons pas à notre tour que vous considériez et reconnaissiez le droit qui nous appartient au pouvoir et a l'empire de Constantinople, droit qui a pris naissance au temps de Constantin, a progressé ensuite par les nombreux princes ses successeurs qui sont de notre race...".

148 Costant. Porfirogenito, De thematibus I 24–25 (as footnote 50 above).

149 On the premise that Roman identity before 1204 should be considered as a false identity, see P. Gounaridis, Η εξέλιξη της ταυτότητας των Ελλήνων στη Βυζαντινή Αυτοκρατορία, in: Byzance et l'hellénisme: L'identité grecque au Moyen-Âge. Actes du Congrès International tenu à Trieste du 1er au 3 Octobre 1997. *Études Balkaniques* 6 (1999) 51–68, esp. 62.

For Constantine VII, as for all post-seventh century emperors up to 1204, Roman-ness was an identity of political culture that supplanted ethnic ideologies, i.e. the politicization of ethnicity. As a result, the emperor could adhere to the Latin cultural past of the Roman ruling élite that now spoke Greek and ruled over peoples that had no cultural potential to self-identify with a Latin-Roman cultural past.

The limits of this ideological discourse on a socio-political level had been made evident already since the early ninth century. On the occasion of the unsuccessful imperial intermarriage between the daughter of Charlemagne and Constantine VI, Theophanes the Confessor stated that the future bride "should be taught the letters and the language of the Greeks and should be educated in the customs of the Roman reign".[150] Theophanes' statement testifies to the socio-political effect of the break with the Latin cultural content of imperial Romanness after the seventh century. Constantine VII's statement sought to reserve this cultural past as a part of the Eastern Roman imperial power's political myth. Both statements represent the two faces of the same coin as products of a political discourse that aimed to circumscribe the exclusiveness of Eastern Romanness against Western claims.

Within this framework, the emperors of Nicaea were not seeking to distance themselves from the Roman identity of their Constantinopolitan predecessors. Their choice to redefine the normative Roman political discourse by binding it to a, for centuries suppressed, myth of Hellenic ethnic descent was not intended to invent or construct a new identity. The notion of Greek ethnicity was not instrumentalized to marginalize Romanness in favour of Greek nationhood, but to define the bearers of the historic Hellenic culture as the only worthy heirs of the Roman political culture, that is, the only 'true' Romans.[151] This change of normative discourse capitalized on two facts: 1) The Eastern Roman élite had for centuries maintained and carried forward important elements of Hellenic culture (language, script, writings), even though strictly deprived of any ideological connotations of ethnic self-identification; 2) Notions of Greek ethno-cultural consciousness had set in among members of the literate élite since the late-eleventh century. The politicization of ethnicity had been for several centuries irrelevant to the political discourse of the Roman imperial office and, therefore, downgraded to a barbarian practice. In the new post-1204 geopolitical condi-

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150 Theophanis chronographia, ed. C. DE BOOR. Leipzig 1883, 455, 24–25: τὸ διδάξαι αὐτὴν τά τε τῶν Γραικῶν γράμματα καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν, καὶ παιδεῦσαι αὐτὴν τὰ ἤθη τῆς Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας.

151 Cf. J. IRMSCHER, Nikäa als "Mittelpunkt des griechischen Patriotismus". *BF* 4 (1972) 114–137.

tions, the rehabilitation of the political role of ethnicity was the main means to distinguish the Eastern Romans from the Western *barbarians*. This made a myth of ethnic descent salient again. The fourth century *translatio imperii* within the Roman world was now presented not only as a matter of geographical spheres (West – Rome, East – New Rome), but of ethno-cultural content (Latin – Greek) as well.

In light of this, the politicized ethnic discourse of the Nicaean emperors had indeed very little to do with a movement of Greek proto-nationalism that intended to promote a vision of revival or establishment of the (ancient) Nation.[152] This was due to the fact that a vision of national community was absent from the worldview of the territorially- and politically-divided Eastern Roman élite.[153] This lack of national imagery is indicated by this élite's intensive controversy over exclusive rights to imperial Romanness and its military antagonism over the recapture of Constantinople.[154] For this reason, the Nicaean emperors purposefully confined the notion of ethnic Hellenism to their political realm in order to underpin their notion of imperial Romanness also against the claims of the despots of Epirus.[155] Roman identity remained traditionally bound to a vision of centripetal and hierarchical imperial community. This inherent political trait of Romanness continued to undercut the notion of ethnic community after 1204 and thus contained the Eastern Roman élite, the main bearer of Roman identity, from envisioning the political reunification of the Roman people as a community of common culture. This élite's political vision remained focused on the goal of revitalization of the Constantinopolitan imperial city-state and the Roman imperial tradition.[156]

This vision of community imposed the regression of Hellenic ethnic discourse by the normative political ideology of the imperial office after the recapture of the imperial city Constantinople in 1261.[157] The change of identity discourse between the writings of Choniates, the Nicaean emperors and the post-1261 historiographers pinpoints the ruling élite's potential to circumscribe nor-

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152 On a definition of 'nationalism' cf. footnote 115 above.

153 On the lack of ethno-political perspective by the Greek-speaking masses, cf. of the case of Frankish Morea in Page, Being Byzantine (as footnote 102 above) 241 – 242.

154 On this ideological controversy, see A. Stauridou-Zaphraka, Νίκαια και ήπειρος τον 13ο αιώνα. Ιδεολογική αντιπαράθεση στην προσπάθειά τους να ανακτήσουν την αυτοκρατορία. Thessaloniki 1990, *passim*.

155 Cf. Angold, Byzantine "nationalism" (as footnote 146 above) 64.

156 Angelov, Ideological reactions (as footnote 146 above) 296 – 297.

157 Ibid. 305 – 306; R. Macrides, The new Constantine and the new Constantinople. *BMGS* 6 (1980) 13 – 41.

mative perceptions of Eastern Romanness according to its political interests within a malleable geopolitical environment. The ethnic classification of the Eastern Romans as Greeks by Choniates mainly took place in the last part of his 'Historia', written in a period when imperial normativity had faded out along with the imperial city-state of Constantinople. His identity discourse capitalized on the recurrent notions of Greek ethnicity among the literati since the late eleventh century and was followed by the normatively politicized Greek ethnic discourse of the Nicaean emperors. The recapture of Constantinople marked the regression of the political discourse of historical ethnicity in favour of imperial Romanness.[158] The historiographical works of this period were informed by this latter change. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that no historiographical text was composed in the court of the Laskarids, since George Akropolites, who had lived there and dedicated his history to the State of Nicaea, composed his text in Constantinople after 1261.[159]

Nevertheless, the imperial office's normative discourse of *regnal* Romanness was now emphatically contradicted by the social reality of a politically fragmented ethno-cultural collectivity of Romans that existed beyond Constantinople's realm.[160] The effort of Constantinopolitan historiographers to maintain imperial normativity in the representation of Roman identity was marked by evident inconsistency.[161] In this light, the relationship between Romanness and Hellenism after 1204 needs to be soberly addressed in regard to the role of the Hellenic past: 1) in entrenching élite notions of historical ethnicity within and aside the normative Roman discourse of the imperial office[162]; and 2) in corroborating dis-

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158 A full-fledged notion of Greek ethnicity became salient again in the discourse of the imperial office only in the reign of Constantine XI shortly before the Ottoman capture of Constantinople, see: Anonyma Palaeologica, Panegyricus ad Manuelem et Joannem VIII Palaeologum, in S.P. Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά, Γ. Athens 1926, 152, 15–17; Joannes Argyropulus, Monodia in imperatorem Joannem Palaeologum, ibid. 315, 5–6 and 18–19, 317, 8–10; idem, Oratio consolatoria pro imperatore Constantino ad mortem matri suae, in S.P. Lampros, Ἀργυροπούλεια. Athens 1910, 67, 1–3; idem, Βασιλικὸς ἢ περὶ βασιλείας πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Κωνσταντῖνον τὸν Παλαιολόγον, ibid. 29, 11–12, 30, 15–17, 45, 12–13; idem, Oratio consolatoria ad Constantinum imperatorem Peloponneso venientem et accipientem sceptra Ioannis morientis, ibid. 10, 6–7, 26, 16–18.
159 On the time of the composition of the work, see R. Macrides (transl.), George Akropolites, *The History*. Oxford/New York 2007, 31.
160 On the argument about a consolidated Roman ethnic community after 1204, see Page, Being Byzantine (as footnote 102 above) *passim*, especially 79–85, 104–106, 121, 135–136, 157–158.
161 Ibid. 102–121, 146–158.
162 On utterances of Greek ethnicity in the writings of the late Byzantine élite, see A. Laiou, From Roman to Hellene, in N.M. Vaporis (ed.), The Byzantine Fellowship Lectures at Hellenic

crepancy between the Roman identity of the social élite and the popular Roman-
ness (ethno-religious/ethno-linguistic) of those segments of the illiterate and
semi-illiterate masses that shared notions of belonging to a Roman ethno-cultur-
al collectivity.

College, I. Brookline Mass. 1974, 22–24; Koder, Griechische Identitäten (as footnote 3 above)
313–316; Gounaridis (as footnote 149 above) 65–66; Vryonis, Greek Identity (as footnote 2
above) 34–35; Angelov, Ideological reactions (as footnote 146 above) 301–303, 306.