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Vienna, May 2018

INTRODUCTION

The present study focuses on the marriage strategies of the Byzantine aristocracy in the early Palaiologan period. It aims at analysing the marriage policies of the aristocratic families in the entourage of the early Palaiologan emperors, as well as the reasons the marriages among aristocrats were either finalised or not and the degree of the imperial interference in them.

The Historical Frame

Social developments cannot be analysed outside their historical frame. The early Palaiologan period follows the Laskarid Dynasty (1204-1259), which ruled in Nicaea, and ends with the reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328). The choice of this specific period is not coincidental, since many changes took place not only on the political but also on a social level. A part of the aristocracy followed Theodore I Laskaris (1204-1221), the founder of the empire of Nicaea in Asia Minor. In Nicaea, a new court was established¹. The blinding of John IV Laskaris (1258-1261) signalled the rise of a new ruling dynasty, the Palaiologan (1261-1453). Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282), the first emperor after the recapture of Constantinople in 1261-the New Constantine-, faced enormous difficulties in keeping the recently re-established empire under Byzantine control, since the Latin titular emperors never accepted the loss of the Latin empire. The latter, along with their powerful allies, the family of the king Louis' IX of France brother, Charles d'Anjou, who had the suzerainty of the majority of the Frankish hegemonies in the Aegean were a constant threat, which was eliminated only in 1282 after the Sicilian Vespers². The State (later Despotate) of Epirus, the other Byzantine hegemony, established by members of the Komnenos and Doukas family, was an extremely antagonistic power on the political scene of the time³.

These dangers lead Michael VIII to follow the path of diplomacy. The most controversial diplomatic move was the Union of the Churches in the Second Council

¹ M. ANGOLD, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Lascarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)*. Oxford 1975, 62.

² D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, *The Emperor Michael Palaiologos and the West 1258-1282. A Study in Byzantine – Latin Relation*. Cambridge 1959, 247-268.

³ D. NICOL, *The Despotate of Epirus II: 1267-1479. A contribution to the history of Greece in the middle ages*. Cambridge 1984.

of Lyon in 1274. The matter of the Union caused a social reaction even from the majority of the aristocracy, who had supported Michael in 1259 and had followed him in Constantinople after 1261⁴.

After the death of Michael VIII in 1282, the first act of his heir, Andronikos II Palaiologos was to renounce the Union of the Churches. His reigning years were also characterized by intensive diplomatic activity, in which the intermarriages between the imperial house and foreign rulers, as well as to the aristocracy, played an equally important role as during the reign of his father⁵. The expansion of the kingdom of Serbia, along with the new threat of the Catalan Company had also caused new diplomatic challenges for Byzantium, which despite the short-term successes of Alexios Philanthropenos and John Tarchaneiotes, was already facing the collapse of the Byzantine frontier in Asia Minor to the Turks. Michael VIII and his heir Andronikos II, were two quite different personalities; however, they were both interested in the intermarriage policies; during their reign the aristocracy followed a specific way of conducting them, which lasted with some changes until the fall of Constantinople (1453).

Finally, the first phase of the civil war between Andronikos II and his grandson Andronikos III had catastrophic results for the already burdened Empire⁶. The present study has as chronological limit the first phase of the civil wars between the two Andronikoi (1321-1328); after that date the structure of the aristocracy changes significantly in comparison to the early Palaiologan period. Amidst the civil war the aristocracy was divided into two groups which supported the one or the other Andronikos, who on their part used the aristocracy in order to prevail upon the other.

This study aims at analysing the aristocratic intermarriages and their importance for the Palaiologan society. Prior to such an investigation, it is also necessary to explain the notion of the aristocracy in the early Palaiologan period.

⁴ D. NICOL, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium (1261-1453)*. Cambridge 1993, 41-57.

⁵ NICOL, *Last Centuries*, 93-106.

⁶ A. LAIOU, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1281-1328*. Cambridge 1972; NICOL, *Last Centuries* 122-140.

Late Byzantine Aristocracy: Definition and State of Research

Several studies (monographs, volumes and articles) have as main subject the aristocracy and its function in the Byzantine society. The studies included in the volume 'The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries', along with those of Jean-Claude Cheynet, Alexander Kazhdan and George Ostrogorsky for the Byzantine aristocracy and society of the same period are of great importance also for the present study⁷. Of paramount significance is also the book edited by John Haldon on the social history of Byzantium⁸. The PhD of Demetrios Kyritses is dedicated to the aristocracy until the early fourteenth century, whereas Angeliki Laiou has written on the aristocracy in the early and later Palaiologan period. Finally, the monograph by Klaus-Peter Matschke and Franz Tinnefeld is dedicated to the Byzantine society of Late Byzantium, including also the aristocracy⁹.

Prosopography plays also a significant role in the research of marriage strategies and the formation of clans. Therefore, the intensive use of prosopographical works is fundamental. The *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* (PLP) is extremely helpful and a 'key' in the prosopography of the Palaiologan period; it includes all individuals, who lived in this period and are mentioned in the Greek sources¹⁰. On the other hand, many aristocratic families of this period have been the subject of specific prosopographical research such as the works of Donald Nicol for the family of Kantakouzenos, Averkios Papadopoulos for the Palaiologoi, and of Demetrios Polemis for the Doukai¹¹. Abundant information is also offered in the prosopographical studies of Ioannes Leontiadis for the Tarchaneiotes family and the articles by Athenagoras, Gudrun Schmalzbauer, Erich Trapp as well as by Christian

⁷ M. ANGOLD, *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries*. Oxford 1984; J.C. CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*. Paris 1990; A. KAZHDAN (S. RONCHEY), *L'aristocrazia bizantina: Dal principio dell'XI alla fine del XII secolo*. Palermo 1997; G. OSTROGORSKY, *Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium*. *DOP* 25 (1971) 1-32.

⁸ J. HALDON (ed.), *A Social History of Byzantium*. Wiley -Blackwell 2009.

⁹ D. KYRITSES, *The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries*. Massachusetts 1997; A. LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy in the Palaiologan Period: a story of arrested development*. *Viator* IV (1973) 131-51; K.P. MATSCHE -F. TINNEFELD, *Die Gesellschaft im späten Byzanz. Gruppen, Strukturen und Lebensformen*. Wien 2001.

¹⁰ PLP: *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, ed. E. TRAPP et alii. Wien 1976–1996.

¹¹ D. NICOL, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos ca. 1100–1460. A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study*. Washington, DC 1968; A. PAPADOPULOS, *Versuch einer Genealogie der Palaiologen 1259–1453*. Amsterdam 1962; D. POLEMIS, *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*. London 1968.

Hannick and Gudrun Schmalzbauer for the families of Philanthropenoi, Asan and Synadenoi respectively¹².

Methodological Approach

The focus of the present master thesis lies on the marriage strategies of the aristocracy in the early Palaiologan period and does not examine other aspects of aristocratic conduct.

Modern scholarship dedicated numerous studies to the prosopography of the period, either in works about an entire family or by focusing on one or more prominent representatives of those families. Preliminary research, though, showed that despite the references to the marriages of those aristocrats included in the prosographical works, the strategies and patterns of marital action lacked an extensive analysis. Since a study about the interaction of aristocratic families through marriage is still missing, the present analysis aims at filling in this gap: after collecting the marriages and marriage proposals, emphasis will be given to the ways by which the families of high aristocracy engaged in a great social challenge, i.e. marriage.

This research focuses firstly on tracing the members of the aristocratic families that participated in the marriage strategies of the early Palaiologan period and secondly on the analysis of the reasons for the success or failure of those marriages, as well as the impact that they had on the families of the aristocracy. Whenever the sources are allowing it, the background stories of those marriages will be mentioned.

Since some members of the high aristocracy were also part of the entourage of the emperors and his immediate family, the emperors interfered in their marriage strategies. This interference should be also analysed since it reflects on the importance emperors laid on kinship ties with powerful aristocrats to the ruling dynasty as well as the degree of kinship proximity they allowed. Finally, the role of women in the marriage strategies of family members will be also analysed, as well as how the aristocratic family names demonstrate the understanding of the aristocrats of their own kin and their position in a dense web of ties between subgroups of the elite.

¹² ATHENAGORAS, Συμβολαί εις τήν ιστορίαν τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ οἴκου τῶν Φιλανθρωπηνῶν. *DIEEE* 10 (1929) 61-74; G. SCHMALZBAUER, Die Tornikioi in der Palaiologenzeit. *JÖB* 18 (1969) 115-135; E. TRAPP, Beiträge zur Genealogie der Asanen in Byzanz. *JÖB* 25 (1976) 163-177; C. HANNICK-G. SCHMALZBAUER, Die Synadenoi. *JÖB* 25 (1976) 125-61.

For composing the thesis, I started by studying the general historical background. Then, I continued with the creation of excel lists based on PLP and primary sources, selecting a number of individuals –more specifically 126 aristocrats– belonging to different aristocratic clans and families of the Early Palaiologan period. I also listed the marriage proposals and marriages that actually took place among those aristocrats. After recording all those information, I proceeded to the writing of the thesis, observing the marriage strategies that the families of high aristocracy and the emperor followed. Finally, the design of tables that show the intermarriages of the aristocratic families and their genealogy, based on the evidence selected, is also of great importance for the thesis for the remarks of the research to be now presented.

The Structure of the Thesis

At first, this study presents the historical frame and a detailed analysis of the sources. The first chapter offers a definition of the aristocracy and its function within the Byzantine social structures. The same chapter also includes a list of the families of the early Palaiologan aristocracy with a presentation of their backgrounds and history before the period under consideration.

The second and main chapter is divided in four subchapters. The first subchapter presents the marriage strategies of the aristocracy as a social group already from the tenth century with the appearance of the great Anatolian aristocratic families until the great evolution of the Komnenian system, when an extended family network of the Komnenoi-Doukai was formed. Then follow the marriage policies before and after the Fourth Crusade. This is an important introduction to the world of the marriage policies of the aristocracy, since it demonstrates the continuity of patterns of action by the aristocrats from the tenth century. The second subchapter focuses on the marriage strategies of the aristocracy until 1259, with the rise of the Palaiologoi to the throne. The study then turns to the marriage policies in the reigns of Michael VIII Palaiologos and his son and heir, Andronikos II, which demonstrate high rates of intermarriage activity among aristocratic families. The material is analysed in the subchapters three and four, whereas at the end of every subchapter some conclusions about the marriage strategies of every period are included.

In the conclusion, several aspects of the marriage strategies of the aristocracy are analysed. Finally, in an appendix all the aristocrats who participated in the

intermarriages are listed, as well as genealogical tables, in order to make more obvious the evolution of the marriage policies.

The Sources

The sources that provide information on the aristocracy in the early Palaiologan period are many and of different typology. In regard of the historiography, many and significant historical works cover the period 1259 until the first phase of the war of the two Andronikoi, grandfather and grandson.

George Akropolites is the main source for the empire of Nicaea and the rise of Michael Palaiologos. He writes his history as a continuation of the work of Niketas Choniates and describes the years 1203-1261. He has been characterized as a praiser of the reign of Michael VIII, avoiding to provide information on the blinding of John IV Laskaris. However, he gives an important account of the aristocracy of this period¹³. The historiographical work of George Pachymeres is also a significant source describing the reigns of Michael VIII Palaiologos and his heir, Andronikos II; he criticizes, though, strongly their policies. His history continues the history of Akropolites. Pachymeres gives a more detailed account on the events of his time and abundant information on the marriage strategies of the aristocracy¹⁴.

The “Roman History” of Nikephoros Gregoras is another major source for this study, especially the first part of his work which covers the period 1204-1341. In his history he shows his positive feelings for emperor Andronikos II and his advisor, Theodore Metochites¹⁵. By contrast, John Kantakouzenos writes his history in a form of memoirs. He is the major source for the events of the period 1320-1356 and although he offers us abundant information about it, he is not always objective¹⁶.

¹³ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή, Ποίημα Χρονικόν Ἡμιτελές* (ed. HEISENBERG A., [WIRTH P.], *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*. Stuttgart 1978); R. MACRIDES, *George Akropolites. The History*. Oxford 2007; A. KARPOZELOS, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί και Χρονικογράφοι* 4. Athens 2015, 32-45.

¹⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* (ed. A. FAILLER–V. LAURENT, *Georges Pachymères, Relations historiques [CFHB 24/ 1–5]*. Paris 1984–2000); KARPOZELOS, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί*, 60-82; On the work of Pachymeres see also, S. LAMPAKES, *Γεώργιος Παχυμέρης: πρωτέκδικος και δικαιοφύλαξ: εισαγωγικό δοκίμιο*. Athens 2004.

¹⁵ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* (ed. L. SCHOPEN – I. BEKKER, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia [CSHF]*. Bonn 1829-1855); KARPOZELOS, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί* 140-166.

¹⁶ John Kantakouzenos, *Ἱστορία* (ed. L. SCHOPEN, *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV, [CSHB 20]*. Bonn 1828-1832); G. WEISS, *Joannes Kantakouzenos- Aristokrat, Staatsmann, Kaiser und Mönch- in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14.Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden 1969; KARPOZELOS, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί* 187-212.

Another historiographical work, belonging to the category of chronicles is the Chronicle of Morea. It is written in verse and found in four different versions in Greek, French, Aragonese and Italian. As a source it is unique, since it gives us information that does not exist in other works of that time, but one must be aware of inaccuracies considering names and chronologies¹⁷. The *Istoria di Romania* of Marino Sanudo Torcello, Venetian statesman and geographer, also presents important information about the relations of the Byzantine Empire to the Latin hegemonies in Greece¹⁸.

Manuel Philes was a court poet under Andronikos II. He wrote *epitaphioi* for members of the imperial family and the nobility, and for this reason his poems are a good source for the Byzantine prosopography¹⁹.

Another type of sources that are used in this study are the Monastic Foundation Documents (Typika). This source type offers extensive information of the aristocratic families of Byzantium, since in the Palaiologan period many aristocrats founded monasteries. An example of these documents is the Typikon of the monastery of the Virgin of Bebaia Elpis (Lincoln College Typikon). It is a unique document for the Palaiologan aristocracy, since it includes the names as well as the portraits of the foundress and most of the members of her family, who in a majority held prominent positions in the administration and army and were members of the most important families of the Byzantine aristocracy²⁰.

Other important sources are the letters of scholars, and members of the clergy. The Letters of Gregory II of Cyprus, Patriarch of Constantinople (1283-1289) are essential²¹. Constantine Akropolites, statesman during the reign of emperor Andronikos

¹⁷ Το Χρονικόν του Μορέως (ed. P.P. KALONAROS, *The Chronicle of Morea*. Athens 1940); T. SHAWCROSS, *The Chronicle of Morea. Historiography in Crusader Greece*. Oxford 2009; KARPOZELOS, Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί 461-471.

¹⁸ Marino Sanudo Torsello, *Istoria di Romania* (ed. E. PAPADOPOULOU, *Μαρίνου Σανούδου Τορσέλλο, Ιστορία της Ρωμανίας*. Athens 2000).

¹⁹ Manuel Philes, *Carmina*, (ed. E. MILLER, *Manuelis Philae Carmina*, vols. 2. Paris 1855; repr. Amsterdam 1967); E. PIETSCH-BRAOUNOU, Manuel Philes und die übernatürliche Macht der Epigrammdichtung in: W. HÖRANDNER, A. RHOBY, *Die kulturhistorische Bedeutung byzantinischer Epigramme*. Wien 2008; K. KUBINA, *Die enkomiasische Dichtung des Manuels Philes*. Diss. Universität Wien 2018.

²⁰ H. DELEHAYE, *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues*. Brussels 1921, 106–136; J. THOMAS – A.C. HERO – G. CONSTABLE (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders Typika and Testaments*, 5 vols. Washington D.C. 2000; A. CUTLER, P. MAGDALINO, Some precisions on the Lincoln College Typicon in: A. CUTLER (ed.), *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art*. London 1992, 179-198.

²¹ S. EUSTRATIADES, *Γρηγορίου τοῦ Κυπρίου οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου Ἐπιστολαί καὶ Μῦθοι*. Alexandria 1910; A. LAIOU, *The Correspondence of Gregorios Kyprios as a Source for the history of Social and political Behaviour in Byzantium or, on Government by rhetoric*, in: W. SEIBT (ed.), *Geschichte und Kultur der Palaiologenzeit*. Wien 1996, 91–108.; S. KOTZABASSI, *Scholarly Friendship*

II, corresponded among others with Gregory of Cyprus and Nikephoros Choumnos, a prominent aristocrat related to the emperor by marriage, whose letter collection is also significant²². Finally, Maximos Planoudes was an important scholar of the early Palaiologan period who wrote letters with a detailed account of the activities of the ecclesiastical and civil officials, and intellectual elite²³. The letters that provide us with information about the marriage strategies of the period are those of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople to the emperor Andronikos II addressed to members of the imperial family²⁴.

Interesting is also the well-known autobiography of emperor Michael VIII, since it offers information about the period and the policies of the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty²⁵.

Moreover, substantial information about the offices and the Constantinopolitan court is given in the anonymous work of Pseudo-Kodinos²⁶, which is a unique source for the court of this period.

The ranks, titles and offices held by the aristocrats referred in the thesis are based on the information given by the historiographical sources and the PLP, since there is a very limited sigillographical evidence for this period in comparison to the preceding one.

Finally, works of art offer abundant information for the aristocracy of the period. Dedicatory inscriptions, portraits of donors and epigrams reveal aspects of the

in the Thirteenth Century. Patriarch Gregorios II Kyprios and Theodora Raoulaina. *Parekbolai* 1 (2011) 115–170; C. RAPP, Ein bisher unbekannter Brief des Patriarchen Gregor von Zypern an Johannes II., Sebastokrator von Thessalien. *BZ* 81 (1988), 12–28.

²² R. ROMANO, Costantino Acropolita, Epistole. Neapel 1991; D. NICOL, Constantine Akropolites: A Prosopographical Note. *DOP* 19 (1965) 249–256; On the letters of Nikephoros Choumnos see P.L.M. LEONE, Le Epistole di Niceforo Chumno. *EEBS* 39–40 (1972–1973) 74–95; A. RIEHLE, Funktionen der byzantinischen Epistolographie. Studien zu den Briefen und Briefsammlungen des Nikephoros Choumnos (ca. 1260–1327). Diss. Ludwig-Maximilians- Universität München 2011.

²³ P. M. A. LEONE, Maximi Monachi Planudis Epistulae. Amsterdam 1991; A. LAIOU, Some Observations on Alexios Philanthropenos and Maximos Planoudes. *BMGS* 4 (1978) 89–99.

²⁴ A. M. TALBOT, The Correspondence of Athanasius I Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronicus II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials (*DOT* 3 and *CFHB* 7). Washington 1975.

²⁵ H. GREGOIRE, Imperatoris Michaelis Paleologi De vita sua. *Byz* 29–30 (1959–60), 447–476; H. HUNGER, Βυζαντινή Λογοτεχνία. Η λόγια κοσμική γραμματεία των Βυζαντινών Α'. Athens 1991, 259–260.

²⁶ R. MACRIDES– J.A. MUNITIZ– D. ANGELOV, Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies. Farnham 2013.

patronage of aristocratic families, while they are visual testimonies of their own perception of social status.²⁷

²⁷ S. KALOPISSI-VERTI, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth Century Churches in Greece*. Vienna 1992; C. HILSDALE, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline*. Cambridge 2014; I. SPATHARAKIS, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Leiden/ Brill 1976.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ARISTOCRACY IN THE EARLY PALAIOLOGAN PERIOD

1. The Byzantine aristocracy: definition and terminology.

Aristocracy played a significant role in the structure of Byzantine society throughout its long-term history. However, every study on Byzantine aristocracy faces significant problems, when it comes to its definition. Questions could be raised about the actual character of aristocracy, the group of people that could be defined as such, its characteristics and its differentiation from other social groups, as well as the subgroups in which it could be divided. Other queries could also include the evolution of the aristocracy and the changes it might have undergone in various periods.

Several studies have undertaken the task to define and specify the term aristocracy, not only in the early and middle Byzantine period, but also in the Palaiologan era. The last centuries of Byzantium are extremely crucial, since the Empire transformed into a small state and faced an enduring period of decline, mirrored also on several aspects of social life. The aristocracy and its function under the Palaiologans is one of those aspects.

In order to describe and define the Palaiologan aristocracy, one should take into consideration the previous and current research. The existence of an aristocracy whose social, political and economic role increased as the power and influence of the imperial court and the capital declined, is according to Angeliki Laiou one of the most important characteristics of the Palaiologan period²⁸. At the same period, the Byzantine aristocracy also started to demonstrate similarities in some aspects to the feudal nobilities of Western Europe²⁹. Laiou defined aristocracy as a group of laymen, who formed the ruling elite having as distinguishing characteristics the possession of land in full or in the form of *pronoia* and could be identified by the term *dynatoi*³⁰. The land-based character of the Byzantine economy combined with the growing weakness of the central state made the landowners who already possessed economic strength politically

²⁸ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 131.

²⁹ S. REYNOLDS, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted*. Oxford 1994; E. A. R. BROWN, *The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe*. *The American Historical Review* 79, No. 4 (1974) 1063-1088.

³⁰ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 132.

more independent, since members of this group played an active role in the army and the administration³¹.

On the main role of land as source of wealth for Byzantine society and particularly of the aristocracy, based his approach Georg Ostrogorsky, who in the evolution of the aristocracy observed the development of feudal phenomena³². This conclusion was based on the properties that could be granted either in full possession or in the form of *pronoia*, but nowadays Ostrogorsky's opinion about the existence of Byzantine feudalism is no longer accepted by scholars. In the case of *pronoia*, the land was given to be held for a lifetime in return for military service. Mark Bartusis in his study about the institution of *pronoia* observed that in Late Byzantium *pronoia* was land-property frequently granted to people of elevated status and its contents could be identical to the content of grant to a monastery or a simple grant to an aristocrat, always accompanied with service requirement³³. Michael VIII changed the nature of *pronoia* by making it hereditary³⁴; a policy followed also by his son and successor Andronikos II, although it seems that there were several degrees of ownership, as Laiou emphasises³⁵.

On the other hand, Demetrios Kyritses takes distance not only from the definition of Laiou of the late Byzantine aristocracy, but also from any evidence of feudalism in Byzantine society. He argues that the economic power of the aristocracy, although connected to the land, depended also on several other aspects such as position at court, in the administration and in the army³⁶. Kyritses objected also to Laiou's term *dynatoi* for the Palaiologan aristocracy, since it could only be used for the local notables in provincial cities by that time³⁷.

Klaus Peter Matschke and Franz Tinnefeld observed that the early Palaiologan period was a period of construction for the Byzantine aristocracy. According to them, the aristocrats were not only landowners, but they could combine positions in the civil administration, attested already in the Nicaean Empire and continued in the period

³¹ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 132.

³² OSTROGORSKY, *Observations* 1-32.

³³ On *pronoia* see the works of M. BARTUSIS, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia*. Cambridge 2013, 280-282; I. KARAYANNOPOULOS, *Ein Beitrag zur Militärpronoia in der Palaiologenzeit* in: W. SEIBT (ed.), *Geschichte und Kultur der Palaiologenzeit*. Vienna 1996, 71-90.

³⁴ BARTUSIS, *Land and Privilege*, 281.

³⁵ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 144-145.

³⁶ KYRITSES, *Byzantine Aristocracy* 7-8.

³⁷ KYRITSES, *Byzantine Aristocracy* 9.

under examination³⁸. The Byzantine historian Nikephoros Gregoras referred to these aristocrats as a group of landowners, powerful and socially prominent people, who were known as magnates (μεγιστᾶνες)³⁹. This latter term is widely used by Matschke and Tinnefeld about this specific group of people in their study along with *dynatoi*⁴⁰. The two scholars accepted also the warlike and athletic model of Byzantine aristocracy expressed by Günter Weiss, because this could be also valid for the upper class of the first Palaiologans⁴¹.

However, this model combined with the land-property, does not suggest any relation to the Western feudal style and the ideals of chivalry. Knighthood and feudal institutions, as they were developed in the Frankish hegemonies, such as the principality of Achaea, were certainly not to be found in the aristocracy of the Palaiologan period, although Pachymeres thought that the Western knights of Achaea (καβαλλάριοι) corresponded to the Byzantine magnates⁴².

Related to the discussion about the aristocracy in Late Byzantium is also the term 'nobility'. This term is usually interwoven with that of aristocracy, as in the Byzantine sources the adjective 'noble' (εὐγενής) is widely used when describing a member of the aristocracy. In his entry on aristocracy in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Alexander Kazhdan argued that the Byzantines tended to avoid the words *aristoi* (ἄριστοι) and *aristokratia* (ἀριστοκρατία) in favour of *eugenes* (εὐγενής), literally "well-born," emphasizing the concepts of honourable ancestry and high-minded spiritual and moral qualities⁴³. In modern scholarship the concept of nobility does not refer simply to someone who is well-born. According to Laiou nobility consists of a hereditary caste, whose rights and privileges are safeguarded by law. In Western Europe nobles were known for their hereditary titles, which were connected also to possession of land, at least after the thirteenth century. In Byzantium, though, offices and titles were never hereditary, and no rights or privileges were attached to a class⁴⁴. Therefore, Laiou concluded that an aristocracy existed in Byzantium, but not a nobility⁴⁵. Kazhdan connected nobility to the feudal aristocracy and aristocracy to

³⁸ MATSCHKE - TINNEFELD, *Die Gesellschaft* 19-20.

³⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (205 SCHOPEN- BEKKER).

⁴⁰ MATSCHKE - TINNEFELD, *Die Gesellschaft* 28.

⁴¹ Op. cit. 21.

⁴² George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (119 FAILLER-LAURENT); MATSCHKE - TINNEFELD, *Die Gesellschaft* 19-20.

⁴³ M. BARTUSIS, 'Aristocracy' *ODB* 1, 169.

⁴⁴ More specifically on ranks, offices and titles see below.

⁴⁵ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy*, 132-133.

bureaucracy⁴⁶. According to Jean - Claude Cheynet, this separation is difficult to be supported, due to the appearance of the same families in both groups. Aristocracy on the other hand, can be distinguished by birth, wealth and responsibilities in the state⁴⁷.

As already mentioned, several terms could describe the members of high aristocracy such as *dynatoi*, magnates, aristocrats, nobles, upper strata . However, regardless of the terminology it should be stressed that they were the social elite of their time. Being a part of an elite or dominant class depended upon a set of variables, according to John Haldon, which included the relationship of a person to members of other families of the same status, imperial office and title, closeness to the emperor and access to sources of wealth and land⁴⁸.

According to Haldon “Elites usually comprise a number of separable elements, distinguished by family and clan ties, by geographical location or origin, by political affiliation, by functional positioning the state of which they are a part. They are ally layers or levels of elite status and identity. All these elements have different values at different moments, so there is a constantly fluctuating overlap of vested interests, identities, alliances, networks of patronage and influence and so forth”⁴⁹. The elite depended for its income on three factors: the possession of land, the involvement in trade and the service at court, even after 1261.

The lack of hereditary aristocracy, at least in parallel with the concept of the western feudal society or the Roman aristocracy, is observed also by Donald Nicol. Nobility may neither have had a legal definition nor being hereditary, since the titles did not pass from father to child, but the existence of the *eugeneis*, the ‘golden line of noble birth’ as Pachymeres calls it⁵⁰, cannot be ignored. This fact is also emphasized by the adoption of family names after the ninth century, mostly of the great aristocratic families and clans such as Phokas, Skleros, Maleinos, Doukas, which introduced a new aristocratic ideal⁵¹.

According to Laiou, the late Byzantine aristocracy could also be divided into subgroups. The most active and visible part of the aristocracy consisted of families at

⁴⁶ KAZHDAN (RONCHEY), L’aristocrazia 61-66.

⁴⁷ J.C. CHEYNET, Byzantine Aristocracy and its Military Function. Aldershot 2006, 2-3.

⁴⁸ J. HALDON, Social Elites, Wealth and Power in: J. HALDON (ed.), A Social History of Byzantium. Oxford 2009, 168-211, here 169.

⁴⁹ HALDON, Social Elites 171.

⁵⁰ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι, II (91-93 FAILLER–LAURENT): μεγαλογενής σειρά καὶ χρυσὴ συγκεκρότητο.

⁵¹ D. NICOL, The Prosopography of the Byzantine Aristocracy, in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries. Oxford 1984, 79-91, here 80-81.

the highest social level; their names can be found in narrative sources and documents. The other, lower one, consisted of small *pronoia*-holders, whose *pronoiai* the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos made hereditary⁵². Nevertheless, Kyritses opposed to the use of the term ‘provincial aristocracy’ denouncing it as a problematic notion, because also members of high aristocracy should be included, since they possessed lands in various provinces and often resided in provincial cities. These aristocrats appeared to coexist with members of local families, who wanted to strengthen their position on a local basis and sometimes achieved aristocratic status as individuals, but not as families⁵³. Kyritses suggested also that the aristocracy could be divided into two subgroups, the aristocracy of high birth (the extended family/ clan of the emperor) and those whose social ascent came through public service or the army⁵⁴.

The triumph of Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261 has been characterized by several scholars as the triumph of aristocracy, either civil or military⁵⁵. The recapture of Constantinople and the transfer of the imperial court from Nicaea to its former capital, had as a result the formation of a new aristocratic group consisting of two subgroups, the aristocracy of the Nicene Empire and the aristocracy of the western provinces and the Despotate of Epirus⁵⁶. The names of the families that constituted this upper class, the high aristocracy of this period, are registered by George Pachymeres in his historical work. Among them, one can find some of the most prominent families of the late Byzantine history, such as Kantakouzenos, Nestongos, Raoul, Tarchaneiotes, Tornikes, Philanthropenos and others⁵⁷. Those families are often described by historians and modern scholars with the terms *dynatoi*, magnates, aristocrats, nobles, upper strata and other.

Laiou classified the aristocracy in two groups; the one consisted not only of the known few families, the provincial aristocracy and some individuals with considerable fortunes, but also of the small *pronoia* holders and men with modest property, who may held minor offices. As a consequence, it could be assumed that with the loss of Asia Minor, many of them lost also their membership in the Byzantine aristocracy⁵⁸.

⁵² LAIOU, The Byzantine Aristocracy 133 and 135.

⁵³ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 10.

⁵⁴ Op. cit. 72; D. STATHAKOPOULOS, The Dialectics of Expansion and Retraction: Recent Scholarship on the Palaiologan Era. *BMGS* 33/1 (2009) 92-101, here 96.

⁵⁵ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (209-219 FAILLER–LAURENT) ; LAIOU, The Byzantine Aristocracy 134; MATSCHKE - TINNEFELD, *Die Gesellschaft* 20.

⁵⁶ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 1.

⁵⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (91-93 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁵⁸ LAIOU, The Byzantine Aristocracy 141.

On the other hand, families such as the Kantakouzenoi or the Synadenoi, who followed Michael Palaiologos to the capital and received significant positions in the administration, possessed vast properties largely concentrated around a specific territorial base⁵⁹, mostly in Asia Minor. Exactly this area was neglected by the imperial authority and despite the efforts of Michael's successor, Andronikos II, was lost at the end. Since the location of their properties could influence the behaviour of the aristocracy in various ways, it is not surprising that the higher aristocrats struggled to expand their connections to specific geographical areas⁶⁰. Properties in the western provinces, some of them in the form of *pronoia*, had been granted to prominent families such as the Philanthropenoi in Thrace, Synadenoi around Vizye (also in Thrace) and Tornikioi in Macedonia⁶¹.

Ranks and Offices in the Early Palaiologan Period

However, not only the possession of land property enabled a membership in the aristocracy -especially in the higher aristocracy, which was closer to the emperor. Of great importance were also distinctions of public and official character such as titles, ranks and offices. In the middle Byzantine period there were titles of honours denoting either rank or offices. Ranks divided the dignitaries into hierarchical groups according to their precedence in the ceremonies and determined the yearly allowance (*ρόγα*) given to each dignitary by the emperor. On the other hand, offices had a specific task attached to them and they were not permanent⁶².

In the eleventh century, many titles lost their significance and new titles replaced the older ones. Particular titles corresponded to the degree of relationship to the emperor in the family centred system of the Komnenoi; the hierarchical position of a family was directly related to the closeness of its kinship alliance to the imperial family. After 1204, there were differences to the titles given in the Byzantine states, the Empire of Nicaea and the Despotate of Epirus. The Lascarids of Nicaea were innovative, since they applied a pattern of dignities that lasted into the late Byzantine period. They decided to create a single court hierarchy and simplify ranks and offices,

⁵⁹ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 143.

⁶⁰ On geography and aristocracy see CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations*; KYRITSES, *Byzantine Aristocracy* 3.

⁶¹ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 143.

⁶² KYRITSES, *Byzantine Aristocracy* 20-21.

which had similar hierarchy in the court⁶³. Titles that had appeared in the Komnenian era such as *sevastohypertatos*, *novelissimos* or *protosebastos* either disappeared or became attached to specific offices.⁶⁴

Although many ranks disappeared from the court hierarchy, there are two exceptions, those of *sebastos* and *megalodoxotatos*, which survived into the Palaiologan period but only as titles granted to individuals. Some members of the high aristocracy, who could have been expected to acquire high offices, titles or ranks did not receive them from the emperor; those individuals in some cases refused any other title, since they did not receive the one they wanted⁶⁵.

Court offices could also be divided in two groups; the first one defined by the order of precedence and the other by its nature, which could be either civilian, military, functional or decorative⁶⁶. An important fact about the offices of the Palaiologan period but also at other times is that some of them remained almost totally ceremonial and they could be given only by the emperor; they were held for a lifetime unless the person was promoted or disgraced. Possessing a court office was of major significance for the personal career of an aristocrat. As Kyritsēs observes, there must have been great competition among the high aristocracy for the obtainment of an office⁶⁷. Individuals could hold only one position at a time with some exceptions such as the combination of two titles, one of military office and one purely honorary. One example is the case of Michael Tarchaneiotes, who was *megas domestikos* in 1272 and also *protovestiaros* after a successful command in 1281⁶⁸.

The highest offices were mostly occupied by persons who were either characterised as *oikeioi*⁶⁹ or they were known relatives of the emperor, as a careful examination of family names also reveals. These offices were entrusted to persons bearing few illustrious family names, some of which can be traced back to the twelfth century or even earlier. Certain individuals could also hold high offices, if they had personal power or prestige and they were also closely related to the emperor⁷⁰.

⁶³ ANGOLD, Byzantine Government 60 -73.

⁶⁴ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 22.

⁶⁵ MACRIDES–MUNITIZ–ANGELOV, Pseudo-Kodinos 32.

⁶⁶ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 32.

⁶⁷ Op. cit. 33.

⁶⁸ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 36-37; PLP 27505.

⁶⁹ P. MAGDALINO, The Byzantine Aristocratic Oikos in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries. Oxford 1984, 92-111, here 94. On the emperor's *oikeioi* see J. VERPEAUX, Les Oikeioi. *REB* (1965) 87-99.

⁷⁰ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 38.

However, there were aristocrats who never received a title or office, although they fulfilled all the social prerequisites. Examples can be found among the younger brothers of emperors or their sons, such as the porphyrogennetos Constantine, son of Michael VIII. He did not have a title, but he was the son of an emperor, he acquired an immense property and was obviously a member of the high aristocracy⁷¹.

The titles of *despotes* and *sevastokrator* were bestowed by the emperor upon his closest relatives, such as his sons and brothers⁷². The title of *despotes* was also recognized by the empire for the rulers of Epirus. *Caesar* and *panhypersevastos* were among the honorific dignities given to close associates and relatives of the emperor. *protovestiaros* was also a title that could be bestowed both upon persons with military careers and bureaucrats of the administration⁷³. On the contrary, *megas dux*, *megas domestikos* and *protostrator* were military offices. The office of *megas logothetes* was held primarily by bureaucrats with kinship ties to the emperor not by blood but mostly by marriage, after they had received their office, as the examples of George Akropolites and Theodore Metochites demonstrate. An interesting fact for this office is that the sons of the latter were also bestowed the same offices as their fathers, but the succession was not direct⁷⁴.

The list of offices is long; however, the most common for high aristocrats' offices should be presented here. *Megas stratopedarches* was a military office mostly held by members of families of the high aristocracy. High birth was also important for *pinkernes*, while *kouropalatai* were successful army commanders. Kyritses observed that aristocrats showed a preference for particular offices, especially if they were trained in the art of war and wanted to follow a military career, while others sought a career as fiscal entrepreneurs, although there were exceptions. Another interesting observation is that the offices would be limited to a specific group, according to the personal skills and family tradition⁷⁵.

To the highest military offices belong *megas dux* and *megas domestikos*, while at the middle level were those of *megas papias* and *megas hetaireiarches*; the lowest

⁷¹ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 11; PLP 21492. Constantine refused any other title except that of the despot, which was not given to him by his brother, Andronikos II, see George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι II (155 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁷² MACRIDES–MUNITIZ–ANGELOV, Pseudo-Kodinos 26-27.

⁷³ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 40.

⁷⁴ Op. cit. 41; PLP 518, 520, 17982, 17986.

⁷⁵ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 44-45.

were those of *stratopedarchai* and *protallagatores*⁷⁶. This specific career model was accessible only for the high aristocracy and the emperor's closest relatives. That means that only prominent persons could fill the highest military offices. Most of them began their career in the middle offices. However, successful officers could also originate from the lower aristocracy, the gentry of provincial cities. The children of these prominent people relied on the achievements of their parents and their social mobility could last over several generations⁷⁷. On the other hand, aristocratic women did not have titles on their own, but bore those of their husbands. The existing examples are mostly of female aristocrats, wives and daughters of prominent men.

The Self-Consciousness of the Aristocracy

Equally important is another characteristic of the aristocracy, its self-consciousness. Byzantine aristocrats were proud and conscious of their social position as it is revealed in the sources. Many families of the high aristocracy could at least claim an imperial ancestor and they were proud of their role in the Byzantine army, but also of their blood lines⁷⁸. The long string of family names that were used by the aristocrats in the early Palaiologan period, involving all their blood relations, a trend started by the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, could be regarded as a proof of their self-description as a social group⁷⁹. Sources such as Akropolites, Pachymeres and Kantakouzenos always mention them in relation to their nobility of line and their illustrious ancestry⁸⁰.

Significant evidence of their consciousness as a social class is their depiction in the illuminated manuscripts, in fresco and mosaics in churches in the entire empire and in donor inscriptions. An excellent example is the *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis Monastery, which attests the names and portraits of nine of the greatest families of Late Byzantium such as Branades, Synadenoi and Palaiologoi⁸¹. This specific document demonstrates

⁷⁶ MACRIDES–MUNITIZ–ANGELOV, Pseudo-Kodinos 26-33.

⁷⁷ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 45.

⁷⁸ LAIOU, The Byzantine Aristocracy 137-138.

⁷⁹ NICOL, The Prosopography 82.

⁸⁰ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή I (165 HEISENBERG– WIRTH); John Kantakouzenos, Ἱστορία I, II (213, 166 SCHOPEN); Pachymeres' passage has already been mentioned above.

⁸¹ J. THOMAS– A.C HERO– G. CONSTABLE (eds.), Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments, 5 vols. Washington D.C. 2000, 1512-1578; A. CUTLER–P. MAGDALINO, Some Precisions on the Lincoln College Typicon in: A. CUTLER

not only the significance of the family names, but also how the families wanted to keep their noble bloodlines and names by accomplishing intermarriages with members of their class⁸². The depiction of the aristocrats is deliberately careful, revealing their social position; they are covered in gold and fine coloured clothes in imperial red (*porphyron*) or similar colours which couldn't be found in the attire of persons of lower classes. They also wear jewellery such as crowns (*diademata*) or headcovers decorated with gold. The women wear also beautiful big earrings of gold and precious gems⁸³.

Interesting depictions of aristocrats provides also the Chora Monastery (today Kariye Camii) in Constantinople. The well-known donor portrait of Theodore Metochites, *Megas Logothetes* of Andronikos II, demonstrates clearly his social self-awareness, who is dressed in fine clothes wearing an extravagant hat, probably in the latest fashion of his class. The inscription on his left reveals his name and office. In the same monastery Maria Palaiologina is depicted as nun Melania. Maria was the illegitimate daughter of Michael VIII Palaiologos, known as the Lady of the Mongols, after her marriage with Khan Abaqa⁸⁴.

In my opinion, the upper class of the Byzantine society, being known as aristocracy, was self-conscious of its position. They projected it through patronage of art, their dress code or even the attitudes of authors belonging to the aristocracy⁸⁵. High aristocrats, the members of aristocratic families and individuals, who were closer to the emperor either through kinship or office, were proud of their blood and family alliances, which were mostly accomplished by intermarriages inside their social group. Apart from their families' connections, kinship and alliances, their inclusion in the aristocracy depended heavily on their financial strength. Their wealth and income derived mostly from their land properties, their position in the administration, the possession of offices and titles, and sometimes from other activities⁸⁶. A career in the military or civil service depended either on their family tradition or their skills. Although many offices were held by those families closer to the emperor, social mobility in Byzantium was always

(ed.), *Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art*. London 1992, 179-198; I. HUTTER, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*. Oxford Libraries. Vol. 5.2. Stuttgart 1997, 89-92.

⁸² NICOL, *The Prosopography* 83.

⁸³ See for example the depictions of Constantine Komnenos Palaiologos, his wife Eirene Komnene Branaina Palaiologina and their descendants in HUTTER, *Oxford Libraries*, folios 6-16.

⁸⁴ PLP 21395, PLP 1141.

⁸⁵ For more on the matter see P. MAGDALINO, *Byzantine Snobbery in: M. ANGOLD (ed.), The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries*. Oxford 1984, 58-78.

⁸⁶ One of these activities of the aristocrats was trade, especially in the late fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.

possible. Prominent individuals could succeed in receiving a high office and then built up their own connections that could bring them closer to the emperor through marriage.

As we are about to see below, the members of high aristocracy were well linked to each other for many decades, and an important role in that played the family alliances.

2. THE PALAIOLOGAN HIGH ARISTOCRACY

In 1258, emperor Theodore II Laskaris died and his successor to the throne was his underage son, John IV Laskaris. According to his father's wishes, George Mouzalon was assigned as regent. However, in the very same year, a conspiracy of the aristocracy led to the murder of Mouzalon and the designation of Michael Palaiologos as regent; Palaiologos was *megas konostaulos*⁸⁷, a military official in charge of the foreign troops. Certain families of the high aristocracy were involved in the selection of the new regent; their majority followed Michael Palaiologos back in Constantinople, and most of their names lasted until the fall of Byzantium⁸⁸.

Also, Akropolites recorded these specific families, which Pachymeres calls *μεγαλογενής σειρὰ καὶ χρυσῇ*, the golden chain⁸⁹. Pachymeres lists the families Angelos, Aprenos, Batatzes, Kamytzes, Kaballarios, Kantakouzenos, Livadarios, Nestongos, Palaiologos, Philanthropenos, Philes, Raoul, Strategopoulos, Tarchaneiotes, Tzamantzouros and Tornikes. He does not mention other prominent aristocratic families such as Asan, Glabades, Synadenoï, Vranades and Laskaris; however, Pachymeres hints on the existence of other golden families (*καὶ ὅσοι ἄλλοι οἷς ἡ μεγαλογενής σειρὰ καὶ χρυσῇ συνεκρότητο*).

High aristocrats were conscious of their class. Moreover, they were proud of their ancestry, which for many of them could be traced back in the Komnenian era. They also claimed imperial ancestry, by adding in their lineages the names of the glorious imperial clans/dynasties of Komnenoi and Doukai, either through direct blood

⁸⁷ The office of *Konostaulos/ Kontostaulos* seems to be inspired by the Latin office of Grand Contostable. The Byzantine sources referred to the holders of this specific office as *konostaulos*. Consequently, referring to it, I shall follow the spelling of the Byzantine sources.

⁸⁸ LAIOU, *The Byzantine Aristocracy* 133; NICOL, *Last Centuries* 30-31; GENEAKOPILOS, *Michael Palaiologus* 39-45.

⁸⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (91-93 FAILLER– LAURENT).

kinship or not⁹⁰. In order to secure the kinship through bloodline, they were engaged in intermarriages with members of their own social group, as we will clearly demonstrate later in this study. The following pages present in alphabetical order these aristocratic families of the early Palaiologan period.

The main criteria for a family to be considered a member of the high aristocracy are the kinship with the Comnenian clan, the intermarriages with the imperial dynasty of Palaiologoi, the position in the Nicaean court firstly and in the Palaiologan court afterwards. Another parameter is the intermarriages with other families of the high aristocracy; all these criteria depend on the evidence of the primary sources.

Angelos (Ἄγγελος)

The Angeloi originated from Philadelphiea in Asia Minor. They came into the historical spotlight around 1110-15 when Konstantinos Angelos married Theodora, the youngest daughter of Alexios I Komnenos. The lineage of this main couple produced three emperors and established one of the branches in the State of Epirus⁹¹.

Michael I Doukas, one of the most prominent members of the family, seems that he had never used the family name of Angelos, since it was connected to a dynasty that caused the fall of the empire in 1204. The name Angelos has been used extensively by modern scholars though. Reason for this use might be the testimonies by Byzantine historians, who were hostile to him and to his successors. On the contrary, the affinity to the imperial dynasties of Komnenos and Doukas was mostly emphasized by both Michael, his brother Theodore and their successors, since they were referred to as Michael and Theodore Komnenos Doukas or Komnenodoukas⁹². Even the offspring of the couple, Constantine Angelos and Theodora Komnene, seem to prefer the name Doukas of their maternal grandmother, Eirene Doukaina, since it was more illustrious⁹³.

Aprenos (Ἀπρηνός)

Aprenoi were probably originated from the Thracian town of Apros⁹⁴. Already in 1258, they were included in the high aristocracy of the Nicaean Empire. After the

⁹⁰ E. PATLAGEAN, *Ο Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας: Βυζάντιο 9^{ος}-15^{ος} αιώνας*. Athens 2015, 204.

⁹¹ POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 85.

⁹² NICOL, *Despotate 3*; POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 85.

⁹³ POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 85.

⁹⁴ On Apros or Aproi see A. KÜLZER, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 12, Ostthrakien (Europe)*. Wien 2008, 255-259.

thirteenth century few members of the family are mentioned mostly as Doukai-Aprenoi. The origins of this combination cannot easily be traced. A known member of the Aprenos family was the *protostrator* Andronikos Doukas Aprenos who lived in the reigning years of Michael VIII. His daughter of unknown name was the first wife of *Megas Domestikos* Michael Tarchaneiotes⁹⁵.

Asan – Asanes (Ἀσάν- Ἀσάνης)

The Byzantine family of Asan (or Ἀσάνης in the Byzantine sources) came into the forefront after the marriage of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan (John) III Asen with Eirene Palaiologina, daughter of Michael VIII in 1278. The couple had no less than ten children, all of whom survived and many of them married into prominent families of the Byzantine aristocracy⁹⁶. Andronikos Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos Asan is one of their sons, about whom Philes wrote several poems⁹⁷. The name Asan was very attached to him and his children and Andronikos has adopted the string of names born by the Palaiologoi. His daughter, Eirene married John VI Kantakouzenos, who refers often to the Asan family in his work⁹⁸.

Batatzes (Βατάτζης)

Batatzes was the name of a distinguished aristocratic family, whose members became also emperors of Nicaea⁹⁹. The origins of the family can be traced back to the tenth century when its members served in the army and were established in Thrace. According to a theory, the family name derives from the words *βάτος* (bush) or *βατάκι* (ray fish)¹⁰⁰. After an intermarriage between two distant branches of the family in the thirteenth century, the surname of Diplobatatzes was created¹⁰¹. Although the Batatzai was an old family having members such as John Komnenos Batatzes, commander of Philadelphiea and kin of the imperial dynasty¹⁰², John III Batatzes seemed to prefer the

⁹⁵ POLEMIS, The Doukai 102-103.

⁹⁶ TRAPP, Asanen 166; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 27-28.

⁹⁷ Manuel Philes, Carmina II (19 MILLER); TRAPP, Asanen 167.

⁹⁸ John Kantakouzenos, Ἱστορία II (421 SCHOPEN).

⁹⁹ K. I. AMANTOS, Ἡ Οἰκογένεια Βατάτζη. *EEBS* 21(1951), 174-178.

¹⁰⁰ POLEMIS, The Doukai 106.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.; Michael VIII had an illegitimate daughter Maria by a mistress named Diplobatzina by the sources, probably a member of the family.

¹⁰² PATLAGEAN, Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας 192. For the military tradition of the Batatzes family see J. S. LANGDON, Byzantium's Last Imperial Offensive in Asia Minor. New York 1992, 5-6.

name Doukas rather than Batatzes, emphasizing his descent from this imperial family¹⁰³.

Branas (Βρανάς)

The Branas family appear for the first time in the Byzantine sources in the eleventh century, when they seem to have followed mostly a military career. Their name is probably of Slavic origin deriving from the word ‘vran’ meaning raven; in Serbia the name Branos is attested already in the tenth century¹⁰⁴. The first known member in Byzantium is Nikolaos Branas, general of Alexios I Komnenos, who died fighting against the Pechenegs in 1086. Other members of the family were generals of Manuel I Komnenos, while Theodore Branas, one of their grandsons married the former empress Anna-Agnes of France and became a vassal of the Latin Emperor¹⁰⁵.

In the thirteenth century, the family belonged to the Nicaean aristocracy possessing properties in the region of Smyrna¹⁰⁶. The Branades intermarried with members of Komnenoi, Angeloi, Palaiologoi and Petraliphes families. The marriage of Eirene Branaina and Constantine Palaiologos, brother of the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1259 was important for both families. Both are depicted in the *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis Monastery, since they are the parents of the foundress, Theodora Synadene¹⁰⁷. Around 1300 many members of the Branas family, some of whom bore also the name Komnenos, were the emperor’s *oikeioi*¹⁰⁸.

Choumnos (Χούμνος)

The Choumnoi were first attested in the eleventh century but are more widely known in the fourteenth century. The most prominent representative, Nikephoros Choumnos held a very high position in the Byzantine state, that of *mesazon* (chief minister) and *epi tou kanikleiou*. The Choumnoi accomplished intermarriages among others with the Palaiologoi, the Tarchaneiotai and the Philanthropenoi¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰³ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* I (26 HEISENBERG-WIRTH).

¹⁰⁴ A. KAZHDAN, ‘Branas’ *ODB* 1, 319-320.

¹⁰⁵ KAZHDAN, ‘Branas’ *ODB* 1, 320.

¹⁰⁶ H. AHRWEILER, L’histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317) particulièrement au XIIIe siècle. *TM* 1 (1966) 1-204, here 168.

¹⁰⁷ PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 197-198.

¹⁰⁸ PLP 3149-3151, 3153-3171.

¹⁰⁹ PLP 30961. On Nikephoros Choumnos and the family of Choumnos see J. VERPEAUX, Nicéphore Choumnos: Homme d’état et humaniste byzantin (ca 1250/1255-1327). Paris 1959 and J. VERPEAUX Notes prosopographiques sur la famille Choumnos. *BS* 20 (1959) 255-266; POLEMIS, The Doukai 116.

Glabas (Γλαβάς)

The first representative of the Glabades is attested in the late tenth century; however, they were established as a distinguished aristocratic family in the thirteenth century¹¹⁰. Their name derives from the Slavic word “голова”, meaning in Greek ‘κεφάλι’ (‘head’)¹¹¹. During the first Palaiologoi, the family enjoyed high social standing and forged marriage alliances with other families of the high aristocracy and especially the Tarchaneiotai. They may have acquired the surname Doukas through this intermarriage¹¹².

The most distinguished member of the family is Michael Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotas. He was one of the most successful generals of Andronikos II, whose career covered almost three decades¹¹³. The contemporary sources refer to him mostly as Glabas, Doukas Glabas or Tarchaneiotas Glaba¹¹⁴. He was one of the commissioners of Philes¹¹⁵ and had financed the restorations of the monasteries of Pammakaristos in Constantinople in 1293 and of St John the Baptist in Sozopolis¹¹⁶.

Kaballarios (Καβαλλάριος)

A family of high-ranking officials for the period ca. 1250-1350, the Kaballarioi claimed their origin of the Latins, since their name means “cavalryman” or “knight”¹¹⁷. They held high positions in the Nicaean court. In 1258/9 Basil Kaballarios was married to Theodora Tarchaneiotissa, whose family was also one of the most aristocratic families¹¹⁸. The marriage was approved by Theodore II Laskaris but later annulled by

¹¹⁰ POLEMIS, The Doukai 120.

¹¹¹ The meaning of this word was known to the Byzantines, since Philes in his poem for Glabas, refers to it, Manuel Philes, Carmina II (107 MILLER).

¹¹² POLEMIS, The Doukai 120.

¹¹³ PLP 27504; G. I. Theocharides, Μιχαήλ Δούκας Γλαβᾶς Ταρχανειώτης (προσωπογραφικά). *Επιστημονική Επετηρίς τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 7 (1957) 182-206, here 199; I. G. LEONTIADES, Die Tarchaneiotai: eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie (*Βυζαντινά Κείμενα και μελέται* 27). Thessaloniki 1998, 69.

¹¹⁴ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I, II (250, 271 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία I (159, 484 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); Manuel Philes, Carmina I (91, 280, 432 MILLER).

¹¹⁵ Manuel Philes, Carmina II (14, 103, 107, 139 and many more MILLER). A poem of Philes entitled Εἰς τὰ τοῦ πρωτοστράτορος ἐκείνου τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ στρατηγήματα cites important historical information about Michael's military career, Ibid. II 240-255.

¹¹⁶ H. BELTING - C. MANGO -D. MOURIKI, The Mosaics and Frescos of St. Mary Pammakaristos (Fethiye Camii) at Istanbul (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 15). Washington 1978; P. SCHREINER, Eine unbekannte Beschreibung der Pammakaristokirche (Fethiye Camii) und weitere Texte zur Topographie Konstantinopels. *DOP* 25 (1971) 218–248; A. EFFENBERGER, Zur Restaurierungstätigkeit des Michael Dukas Glabas Tarchaneiotas im Pammakaristokloster und zur Erbauungszeit des Parekklesions. *Zograf* 31 (2007) 79-94.

¹¹⁷ A. KAZHDAN, ‘Kaballarios’, *ODB* 2, 1087.

¹¹⁸ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (34, 109 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 10037.

Michael VIII Palaiologos, for reasons that are going to be analysed below. During the reign of the first Palaiologans, members of the Kaballarios family belonged in the immediate entourage of the emperor and held offices and being listed among the emperors' *oikeioi*, such as Michael Kaballarios and Bardas Kaballarios¹¹⁹. The intermarriages of Kaballarioi, with the exception of the marriage with a member of the Tarchaneiotes family, are unknown for the period under examination.

Kamytzes (Καμύτζης)

Pachymeres in his famous passage about the golden line of the aristocratic families listed also the family of Kamytzes¹²⁰. A Manuel Kamytzes was protostrator and commander of Adrianople in 1225; another member of the family, John was megas hetaireiarches under John III¹²¹. Nonetheless, members of the family appear already in the Komnenian period, one of whom, Constantine married the emperor's Alexios I Komnenos granddaughter, Maria Komnene. By the time of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the Kamytzai were known as great landowners¹²².

Kantakouzenos (Καντακουζηνός)

The family of Kantakouzenos is one of the most famous families of the high aristocracy, which also succeeded in ascending to the throne of Constantinople. The origin of the family name has monopolised the interest of many scholars, who proposed that it is a compound of *κατὰ-κουζηνᾶν* or *κατὰ-κουζηνόν*; the name reveals probably the origin of the family since Kouzenas was the local name for the southern part of Mount Sipylon near Smyrna. In the same place existed also a monastery, called Saint Theophylaktos of Kouzenas¹²³. Therefore, the original form of the name seems to have been Katakouzenos, although in the sources is being found both as Katakouzenos and Kantakouzenos, with the latter to be used from the Byzantine writers as the official one¹²⁴.

Therefore, the family of Kantakouzenos traced its origins in Asia Minor, although from the twelfth century onward they appeared with land properties in the

¹¹⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (324 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 10034.

¹²⁰ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (93 FAILLER–LAURENT).

¹²¹ George Akropolites, *Χρονικὴ Συγγραφή* (20 HEISENBERG– WIRTH); MACRIDES, Akropolites 137.

¹²² E. TRAPP, 'Kamytzes' *ODB* 2, 1099.

¹²³ K. AMANTOS, *Γλωσσικά*. *BZ* 28 (1928) 14-25.

¹²⁴ NICOL, Kantakouzenoi ix.

Western provinces of the Byzantine Empire. The Kantakouzenoi were great landowners with estates in Macedonia and Thrace, maybe also in the Peloponnese before the Fourth Crusade. It seems though that the main inherited estates were in Serres, where the most prominent member of the family, Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos is described to have his wealth¹²⁵.

Despite its obscure beginnings at the start of the eleventh century, the family rose to prominence in the twelfth century. The earliest known members of Kantakouzenoi belonged without an exception in the military aristocracy of the Empire. In the thirteenth century they entered the high aristocracy by marrying into the families of Komnenos, Angelos and Palaiologos. During the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century the family of Kantakouzenos was related through intermarriages with the majority of high aristocracy such as the families of Asan, Branas, Doukas, Laskaris, Philanthropenos, Raoul, Synadenos, Tarchaneiotes and Tornikes, but also with those of Choumnos and Mouzalon¹²⁶.

The first prominent member of the family that appeared in the sources was a Kantakouzenos of unknown name, who took part in the defensive campaign of emperor Alexios I Komnenos against the Cumans in 1094¹²⁷. He served the emperor in many military missions with bravery and even though his name and family members before him are unknown, Anna Komnene described him as a remarkable soldier, who had the appreciation of the emperor¹²⁸. After him the family was known for its military commanders, who gained high ranks and titles such as *sebastos* John Kantakouzenos, who died in Myriokephalon in 1176¹²⁹. But obviously the most distinguished member of the family was John Kantakouzenos, the later emperor John VI. He had a strong friendship with the grandson of the emperor Andronikos II, Andronikos III and he supported him during the civil war of the two Andronikoi. He held initially the office of *megas papias*, and in ca.1325 he became *megas domestikos* before becoming emperor in 1347¹³⁰.

¹²⁵ NICOL, Kantakouzenoi x.

¹²⁶ Op. cit. xi.

¹²⁷ NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 3.

¹²⁸ Anna Komnene, Alexias X (ed. D. REINSCH - A. KAMBYLIS, *Annae Comnenae Alexias* [CFHB 40]. Berlin 2001) 286.

¹²⁹ D. NICOL, The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos. Some Addenda and Corrigenda. *DOP* 27 (1973) 309-315, here 309.

¹³⁰ PLP 10973; NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 35-108.

Laskaris (Λάσκαρις)

The first known member of the Laskaris family is the emperor of Nicaea, Theodore I. He was married to Anna, daughter of Emperor Alexios III Angelos. He received the title of *Despotes* but the family's origins and background are uncertain¹³¹. A distant relationship to the Komnenoi could be deduced from the fact that he is also called Komnenos¹³². Laskaris is believed to derive from the word of Cappadocian dialect meaning teacher (δάσκαρης) or as it is more acceptable by the scholars from the persian word *lascar* or the arab word *al-askar* meaning warrior¹³³. The last explanation seems more probable, since in the Byzantine tradition the word Λάσκαρης was interwoven with the word *πολεμιστής* (warrior)¹³⁴. The origin and the meaning of the name of the Laskaris family could reveal not only information about the family itself, but also for its role against their enemy number one after the blinding of John IV Laskaris, the Palaiologoi.

The Laskareis, as already mentioned, belonged to the high aristocracy, but they were not one of the most active families in the marriage policies during the first Palaiologoi. Nevertheless, the surname continued to exist in the late Byzantine period¹³⁵.

Libadarios (Λιβαδάριος)

The Libadarioi were one of the greatest family in the middle of the thirteenth century¹³⁶. Although we lack information on their origin, Libadarioi held high court and military offices; the daughter of a certain Libadarios, who was *pinkernes* in the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos, married the emperor's son, Theodore Palaiologos¹³⁷. Some members of the family held successfully military positions in the early Palaiologan period. Others were also founders of monasteries, such as Theodore Komnenos

¹³¹ MACRIDES, *Akropolites* 114-115; I. GIARENIS, *Η συγκρότηση και η εδραίωση της Αυτοκρατορίας της Νίκαιας. Ο αυτοκράτορας Θεόδωρος Α΄ Κομνηνός Λάσκαρις*. Athens 2008, 29-30.

¹³² POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 139.

¹³³ On the first theory see PH. KOUKOULES, *Βυζαντινών τινών επιθέτων σημασία και ορθογραφία*. *EEBS* 5 (1928) 11-12. On the second theory see D. THEODORIDIS, *Die Herkunft des byzantinischen Familiennamen Λάσκαρις*. *REB* 62 (2004) 269-273

¹³⁴ On the meaning of the word Laskaris in Late Byzantium see E. KRIARAS, *Λεξικό της Μεσαιωνικής Ελληνικής Δημόδους Γραμματείας* (1100-1669). Thessaloniki 1985, 113.

¹³⁵ POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 139; B.A. MYSTAKIDES, *Λάσκαρες 1400-1869*. *EEBS* 5 (1928) 130-168.

¹³⁶ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (91-93 FAILLER–LAURENT).

¹³⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I II (318, 181 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 92538.

Libadarios who established a monastery dedicated to the Virgin and which Manuel Philes praised¹³⁸.

Metochites (Μετοχίτης)

The Metochitai was an important family of the Palaiologan era. Their family name derived from the Greek word *μετόχιον* meaning part of a Monastery¹³⁹. The most prominent member of the family for the early Palaiologan period was Theodore Metochites, minister of Andronikos II Palaiologos, who had five sons, who all gained positions in the administration and a daughter, Eirene, who married the emperor's nephew, John Palaiologos¹⁴⁰. Theodore Metochites is depicted as a donor in a mosaic of the Monastery of Chora in Constantinople¹⁴¹.

Nestongos (Νεστόγγος)

The earliest reference to the Byzantine family of Nestongos appears in the twelfth century *Pantokrator Typikon*¹⁴². The name Nestongos (Νεστόγγος), was probably owned to a Bulgarian prince named Nestong¹⁴³. They were related to John III Batatzes, but two of them, Andronikos and Isaac, conspired unsuccessfully against him¹⁴⁴. However, the Nestongoi retained prominence; Theodore II seems to have planned to make George Nestongos his son-in-law¹⁴⁵.

In the thirteenth century the family belonged already to the high aristocracy. The Nestongoi participated in the conspiracy against the regency of Mouzalon in 1258. Several members of the family were connected through marriages with the families of Batatzai, Palaiologoi and Tarchaneiotai¹⁴⁶. Constantine Doukas Nestongos was uncle of Andronikos II, whereas Eudokia Nestongonissa, was an aunt of Andronikos II and

¹³⁸ Manuel Philes, *Carmina* II (203 MILLER); PLP 14861.

¹³⁹ E. TRAPP, 'Metochites' *ODB* 2, 1357.

¹⁴⁰ PLP 5972, 17976-17986.

¹⁴¹ For Theodore Metochites see H.-G. BECK, *Theodoros Metochites: Die Krise des byzantinischen Weltbildes im 14. Jahrhundert*. Munich 1952; I. ŠEVČENKO, *Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the Intellectual Trends of his Time* in: P.A. UNDERWOOD, *The Kariye Djami*, vols.3. Bollingen 1966, 17-91.

¹⁴² POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 150.

¹⁴³ G. MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica*. Berlin 1958, 210.

¹⁴⁴ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* (225 HEISENBERG- WIRTH); MACRIDES, *Akropolites* 169-170.

¹⁴⁵ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (95 FAILLER-LAURENT).

¹⁴⁶ POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 150-151.

*megale papiaina*¹⁴⁷. The name Doukas was probably assumed after the thirteenth century, probably through intermarriages with the Palaiologoi¹⁴⁸.

Palaiologos (Παλαιολόγος)

The Palaiologos family is the imperial family of the period 1261-1453 and one of the most long-term dynasties in the history of the Byzantine Empire. The name has become a subject of research for scholars, since there was a theory that the words consisting the name Palaiologos, in Greek *παλαιός λόγος* is a Hellenization of the Latin words *vetus verbum* and are actually denoting the origin of the family from the Italian city of Viterbo. This theory seems to be invented from the descendants of the family, who moved to Italy after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453¹⁴⁹.

The family appeared for the first time in the eleventh century, with its first known member to be the commander Nikephoros Palaiologos, counsellor of the emperor Romanos VI Diogenes, who died fighting bravely the Normans in 1081¹⁵⁰. His son, Georgios Palaiologos, was also a brave commander who married the sister of the empress Eirene Doukaina, Anna¹⁵¹. The Palaiologoi were known as an aristocratic family of military commanders; prior to 1204, Alexios III Angelos married his firstborn daughter Eirene to Alexios Palaiologos, who was intended to be his heir since he didn't have a male heir to the throne¹⁵². Alexios died before the capture of the city and therefore the emperor's heir became his second son in law, Theodore Komnenos Laskaris¹⁵³.

The claims of Michael VIII Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos to the throne were based on the plans about Alexios Palaiologos¹⁵⁴. His mother was Theodora Palaiologina, daughter of Eirene Angelina and Alexios Palaiologos and his father was Andronikos Palaiologos. Michael's parents had the same surname because they originated from two separated lines of the Palaiologoi, going back to the Komnenian era and more specifically to Georgios Palaiologos; therefore, Michael VIII called

¹⁴⁷ PLP 20197.

¹⁴⁸ POLEMIS, The Doukai 151.

¹⁴⁹ GEANAKOPOLOS, Michael Palaiologus 27-28.

¹⁵⁰ Anna Komnene, Alexias II (84 REINSCH-KAMBYLLIS); PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen vii.

¹⁵¹ Anna Komnene, Alexias II (69 REINSCH-KAMBYLLIS); PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 2.

¹⁵² Nikephoros Gregoras, Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία I (69 SCHOPEN-BEKKER); MACRIDES, Akropolites 116.

¹⁵³ MACRIDES, Akropolites 114.

¹⁵⁴ PLP 21528.

himself Diplolalaiologos, which means double Palaiologan¹⁵⁵. The names that the emperor used reveal his kinship to the imperial families of Komnenos, Doukas and Angelos. He was especially interested in the intermarriages of high aristocracy, since he was aware of claims that could be raised through family connections and relations. His son and heir, Andronikos II was also aware of this fact and he showed a unique interest in this aspect of social life.

As it can be assumed, high aristocratic families would aim at becoming part of the imperial clan and family of the emperor. This explains why the Palaiologoi engaged in intermarriages with almost all families of high aristocracy; those family ties are going to be analysed in the next chapter.

Petraliphas (Πετραλίφας)

The family of Petraliphas owned its origin to the Norman nobleman of the First Crusade Πέτρο τοῦ Ἀλίφα¹⁵⁶. Peter stayed in Byzantium under the service of emperor Alexios I Komnenos, settled in Didymoteichon in Thrace and established his family, as did another Latin, Raoul¹⁵⁷. After the Fall of Constantinople in 1204 some of its members appear in Nicaea, among the high aristocracy, while others had settled in the State of Epirus¹⁵⁸. The Petraliphai continued to exist until the fifteenth century. Generally, they forged marriage alliances with the Komnenoi, Tornikai, Branades and Doukai¹⁵⁹. The most distinguish member of the family is Saint Theodora Doukaina Petralipha, *basilissa* of Epirus and wife of Michael II¹⁶⁰.

Philanthropenos (Φιλανθρωπηνός)

The family name of Philanthropenos is etymologically connected to the Constantinopolitan Monastery Χριστοῦ τοῦ Φιλανθρώπου, the Comnenian foundation. The first Philanthropenos that attested in the sources is Athanasios Philanthropenos, abbot of St Mamas Monastery, which belonged to the Monastery Χριστοῦ τοῦ

¹⁵⁵ Nikephoros Gregoras, Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία I (69, 9-13 SCHOPEN- BEKKER); PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 2; GEANAKOPLOS, Michael Palaiologus 28.

¹⁵⁶ Anna Komnene, Alexias V (161 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

¹⁵⁷ D. NICOL, Symbiosis and Integration: Some Greco-Latin Families in Byzantium in the 11th–13th Centuries. *BF* 7 (1979) 131–135 (=D. NICOL, Studies in Late Byzantine History and Prosopography [Variorum Reprints. Collected Studies Series 242]. London 1986)

¹⁵⁸ D. NICOL, The Despotate of Epirus I. Oxford 1957, 215.

¹⁵⁹ POLEMIS, The Doukai 165.

¹⁶⁰ On Theodora Petralipha, *basilissa* of Epirus see A. M. TALBOT, Holy Women of Byzantium, Washington 1996, 326-33.

Φιλανθρώπου in 1158¹⁶¹. However, Athanasios was probably not related to the aristocratic family. The Philanthropenoi are not attested in the twelfth century, however in the thirteenth century they received high military and administrative positions¹⁶². They were connected through kinship ties, probably mostly through intermarriages with the families of Komnenoi, Doukai, Laskareis, Angeloi, Palaiologoi and Kantakouzenoi¹⁶³.

There were many prominent members of this specific family such as Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos, *megas dux* under Emperor Michael VIII¹⁶⁴ and his homonymous grandson, the *pinkernes*. The latter was much praised for his military skills and successes in Asia Minor. However, in 1296 he revolted against Andronikos II. Originally, his paternal surname was Tarchaneiotes, but he had chosen the name of his maternal grandfather¹⁶⁵.

Philes (Φιλής)

The family of Philes flourished during the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries¹⁶⁶. The most known member of the family is the poet Manuel Philes, but there other members of the family belonged in the entourage of the emperors¹⁶⁷. Theodore Philes, governor of Thessaloniki after 1246, was blinded by Theodore II Laskaris and in 1258 was an ardent supporter of Michael VIII Palaiologos¹⁶⁸. His son married into the Palaiologan family, whose union lead their ancestors to adopt also the name Palaiologos into their family names among with that of Philes¹⁶⁹.

Raoul-Ralles (Ραούλ-Ράλλης)

The Raoul family was of Norman origin. Its first mentioned in 1081, when the brothers Rotgerus (Ρογέρης) and Raoul (Ραούλ), sons of Dagobertus (Τακουπέρτος), left the court of Robert Guiscard, Norman Duke of Apulia and Calabria and went to

¹⁶¹ ATHENAGORAS, Philanthropenoi 61-62.

¹⁶² POLEMIS, The Doukai 167.

¹⁶³ ATHENAGORAS, Philanthropenoi 61.

¹⁶⁴ Op. cit. 63.

¹⁶⁵ PLP 29751; ATHENAGORAS, Philanthropenoi 64; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 30; A. LAIOU, Some Observations on Alexios Philanthropenos and Maximos Planoudes. *BMGS* 4 (1978) 89-99.

¹⁶⁶ E. TRAPP, 'Philes' *ODB* 3, 1650-1651.

¹⁶⁷ PLP 29817.

¹⁶⁸ PLP 29812.

¹⁶⁹ For example John Palaiologos Philes, PLP 29815.

Constantinople¹⁷⁰. There they entered the service of Alexios I Komnenos and participated in several diplomatic missions as Byzantine imperial ambassadors¹⁷¹. The names of their wives are not known; however, they must have been from prominent families, since such marriages were frequent enough at that time¹⁷². Their immediate descendants used the name of the family's founders as a surname probably from the middle of the twelfth century onwards. In the first half of the same century, the family was completely hellenised and in the same century, there is Constantine Doukas Raoul with the title of *pansevastos sebastos*¹⁷³.

A gap appears in the genealogical succession of the Raouls from the end of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, they left the capital after its fall in 1204 and moved to Nicaea; a member of the Raoul family is attested in Nicaea in 1242, being related by marriage to emperor John III Vatatzes and holding the title of *protovestiarios*; he was also married into the Kantakouzenos family¹⁷⁴. The Raoul continued to play an important role in the intermarriages of the aristocracy until the fourteenth century, being related already from the thirteenth century with the families of Kantakouzenos, Palaiologos and Strategopoulos¹⁷⁵. This is attested also in the case of Theodora Kantakouzene Raoulaina, niece of emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, who was married into the Raoul family¹⁷⁶.

Synadenos (Συναδηνός)

Synadenos denotes the inhabitant of the Phrygian town Synada¹⁷⁷. The family Synadenos appears for the first time in the eleventh century; they belong already in the high aristocracy since they married into the imperial family of Komnenoi¹⁷⁸. They continue to be members of the high aristocracy in the thirteenth century, using also the names Komnenos and Doukas among their surnames¹⁷⁹. In the thirteenth and fourteenth

¹⁷⁰ Anna Komnene, Alexias, XIII (423 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

¹⁷¹ S. FASSOULAKIS, The Byzantine Family of Raoul Ral(l)es. Athens 1973, 1.

¹⁷² FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 1; A. KAZHDAN, Latins and Franks in Byzantium: perception and reality from the eleventh to the twelfth century in: A. LAIOU– R.P. MOTTAHEDEH, The Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world. Washington 2001, 83–100, here 93-94.

¹⁷³ FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 13.

¹⁷⁴ Op. cit. 2.

¹⁷⁵ FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 3.

¹⁷⁶ PLP 21382; FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 25-26. D. NICOL, The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits 1250-1500. Cambridge 1994, 33-47.

¹⁷⁷ HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, Synadenoi 125; POLEMIS, The Doukai 178.

¹⁷⁸ HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, Synadenoi 154.

¹⁷⁹ For example John Synadenos Komnenos Doukas Angelos, HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, Synadenoi 134.

centuries they concluded several intermarriages with members of the high Palaiologan aristocracy such as the Kantakouzenoi and Palaiologoi.

Information about the family comes not only from historical sources and poems, but also from the Typikon of *Bebaia Elpis* nunnery, a foundation of Theodora Synadene¹⁸⁰. The illuminations of the Typikon depict many members of the family; they paint a clear picture of the kinship ties through intermarriages of this aristocratic family¹⁸¹.

Strategopoulos (Στρατηγόπουλος)

The family Strategopoulos belongs to the most important aristocratic families in the empire of Nicaea. The name derives from the Greek word *στρατηγός* (general), which surprisingly represents the career of the majority of the members of this family, who held high military positions¹⁸². The first known representative of Strategopouloi was John Strategopoulos, *megas logothetes* and *sebastos* in the court of Nicaea in the early thirteenth century¹⁸³. Nevertheless, the most prominent member was the general Alexios Strategopoulos, who started his military career under the emperor John III Batatzes. During the reign of Theodore II Laskaris, he fell into disfavour and was imprisoned; his son, Constantine was also accused for treason and blinded¹⁸⁴. For this reason, the Strategopouloi supported Michael VIII Palaiologos and Alexios gained the title of *megas domestikos* in 1259 and in 1261 he was the one who recaptured Constantinople¹⁸⁵.

It is unknown why the most distinguished members of the Strategopoulos family used the name Komnenos. It is possible that there an intermarriage with a member of the Komnenos family had taken place, probably before the thirteenth century. The intermarriages of the Strategopouloi are generally unknown, except from those with members of the Raoul family¹⁸⁶. Probably the influence of the family later declined, since there is no evidence of their presence in the court of Constantinople in the fourteenth century.

¹⁸⁰ DELEHAYE, Deux typica 106–136; Kyritses, Byzantine Aristocracy 232–234.

¹⁸¹ A. CUTLER-P. MAGDALINO, Some Precisions on the Lincoln College Typikon from: A. CUTLER (ed.) Imagery and Ideology in Byzantine Art, London 1992.

¹⁸² E. TRAPP, 'Strategopoulos', *ODB* 3, 1963.

¹⁸³ MACRIDES, Akropolites 286–287.

¹⁸⁴ PLP 26894, 26897.

¹⁸⁵ GEANAKOPLOS, Michael Palaiologos 88–92.

¹⁸⁶ FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 31–33.

Tarchaneiotes (Ταρχανειώτης)

Pachymeres listed the Tarchaneiotes family among the most influential families of the empire of Nicaea¹⁸⁷; it seems that they possessed land in the Smyrna region¹⁸⁸. The name Tarchaneiotes may derive from the Mongolian-Turkish word “tarquan” meaning blacksmith or the Bulgarian routed word ταρκάνος. However, these etymologies object to the fact that there is no evidence of a family name deriving from an office or craft with the suffix -ώτης. Therefore, it is more probable that there is a metathesis of a single letter from Τραχανειώτης to Ταρχανειώτης¹⁸⁹. The family may originated from Thrace; Anna Komnene is referring to a member of the family, Katakalon Tarchaneiotes, as one of the citizens of Adrianople¹⁹⁰.

The Tarchaneiotes family appeared for the first time in the reign of Basil II and they seemed to be a part of the military aristocracy of the time. In the beginning of the eleventh century they hold important military offices: Gregorios Tarchaneiotes for example was *katepano* of Italy (998/9-1006) whereas Basil Tarchaneiotes was *strategos*, *katepano*, *magistros*, *doux*¹⁹¹. Joseph Tarchaneiotes was also an important general under Romanos IV Diogenes; in the reign of Michael VII Doukas he became *dux* of Antiocheia (1072-1074) and later *katepano* of Adrianople (1077)¹⁹².

Although the members of the family were extremely active as military commanders, the rising of the social status of the Tarchaneiotai was achieved after intermarriages with the family of Bryennios (1077) and the kinship to the Komnenian clan¹⁹³. It is possible that after the reign of Komnenoi, the Tarchaneiotai suffered a temporary decline, but they regained their importance after 1204. Nevertheless, the peak of the family came when Nikephoros Tarchaneiotes, general of emperor John III Doukas Batatzes, married into the family of Palaiologos and more specifically to Maria-Martha, the older sister of Michael VIII Palaiologos¹⁹⁴.

The children of this couple were among the most prominent members of the family; they and their progeny played an important part in the marriage policy of high

¹⁸⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι*, I (91-93 FAILLER–LAURENT).

¹⁸⁸ F. MIKLOSICH, J. MÜLLER, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana I-IV. I-IV*, Vienna 1860-1890, here IV, 254; A. KAZHDAN, ‘Tarchaneiotes’ *ODB* 3, 2011-2012.

¹⁸⁹ I. G. LEONTIADES, *Die Tarchaneiotai: eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie (Βυζαντινά Κείμενα και μελέται 27)*. Thessaloniki 1998, 28.

¹⁹⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexias* X (287 REINSCH-KAMBYLLIS)

¹⁹¹ LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 28-29, 35-41.

¹⁹² *Op. cit.* 41-45.

¹⁹³ *Op.cit.* 29, 50-51.

¹⁹⁴ LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 29, 61-63.

aristocracy in Late Byzantium as it is going to be demonstrated in the next chapter. They were all high ranking military commanders; one of them, John Tarchaneiotes, the third son of Nikephoros, was an Athonite monk. He supported the Arsenites and he opposed Union policy of emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos¹⁹⁵.

The family of Tarchaneiotes intermarried mostly with the families of Palaiologos, Glabas, Nestongos and Philanthropenos. One of the most prominent members of the Philanthropenos family, Alexios Doukas, is also a member of the Tarchaneiotai by his paternal side¹⁹⁶.

Tornikios (Τορνίκιος)

The Tornikioi originated from the Armenian dynasty of Taron, known in the Byzantine sources as Taronites. The name Tornikios or Tornikes, T'ornik in Armenian is diminutive of the word t'orn meaning grandson¹⁹⁷. The first bearer of the name Tornikios was a son of a prince of Taron named Abu Ghanim (Apoganem) according to emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos¹⁹⁸. Apoganem was brought to the Byzantine Empire and took the title of *protospatharios* in the early tenth century; his son, came to Constantinople later and granted the rank of *patrikios*¹⁹⁹.

Even though the members of the family were mostly military commanders at the outset, from the 10th century onwards they were principally civil functionaries as the examples of John Tornikios, *megas logothetes tou dromou* in the late 12th century and his son, Constantine, who was *logothetes* reveal²⁰⁰. In the 13th century, John Tornikios was dux of Thrakesion and was proudly called himself *συμπένθερος* of the emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos²⁰¹. The Tornikioi intermarried mostly with the family of Palaiologos, but also with the Raouls and the Akropolitai²⁰². Some of their members bore also the names of Komnenos and Doukas among such as Andronikos Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos Tornikes and his brother, Constantine; the adoption of those names could be explained after the intermarriages with the family of Palaiologoi

¹⁹⁵ PLP 27487; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 30.

¹⁹⁶ PLP 29751; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 30.

¹⁹⁷ SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 115; P. CHARANIS, The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire, Lisbon 1963, 229.

¹⁹⁸ Constantine Porphyrogennetos, De Administrando Imperio I. vols.2. ed. G. MORAVCSIK- R.J.H. JENKINS, [CFBH 4]. Washington 1967, 190.

¹⁹⁹ SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 116.

²⁰⁰ Op.cit. 116-117.

²⁰¹ PLP 29126; SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 121-122.

²⁰² SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 116, 121, 123-124.

and earlier with John III Batatzes, since no information exists about any Tornikios married into the Komnenoi²⁰³.

According to the sources and the modern scholars the families of the aristocracy described above belonged to the high aristocracy of the Byzantine Empire. The duration of their presence in this specific social circle depended mostly on their successful alliances with persons of the same milieu and some of them struggled through the marriage strategies to get into the high aristocracy and remain a part of it. The majority of them moved from Constantinople to Nicaea after the Fourth Crusade and they continued being the elite of the imperial court there. These aristocratic families were completely aware of their class and they proved their self-consciousness by pursuing intermarriages between them. Five of them raised claims to the imperial throne, the Angeloi, the Batatzes, the Laskareis, the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi; the last one became the long term and last dynasty of the Byzantine Empire.

Nevertheless, there were other families who belonged to the aristocracy or entered the high aristocracy through intermarriages with members of the families mentioned before, but they were never considered actual members of the high aristocracy. The Akropolitai entered the entourage of the Palaiologan emperors and some of its members married into the high aristocracy and the imperial family of the Megaloi Komnenoi in Trebizond. The members of the Mouzalon family appeared mostly when Theodore II Laskaris tried to marry female members of the high aristocracy with prominent members of lower aristocratic esteem. These families (Akropolitai, Mouzalones), are also presented in this subchapter, as they played an active role in the marriage policy of the high aristocracy.

Akropolites (Ἀκροπολίτης)

Akropolites is a well-known family name, specifically through the most distinguished member of the family, the historian and state official, Georgios Akropolites. The Akropolitai were probably of Constantinopolitan origin, and are firstly mentioned around the 10th century²⁰⁴. In 1088, a Nikolaos Akropolites was *βεστάρχης και χαρτουλάριος τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ λογοθέτου*. Other representatives of the

²⁰³ PLP 29122; Polemis, Doukai 184-185; SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 121-122.

²⁰⁴ POLEMIS, The Doukai 82.

family are known of lead seals and references in documents and other sources²⁰⁵. Georgios Akropolites himself was sent by his father from Constantinople to the Empire of Nicaea at the age of sixteen to be further educated²⁰⁶. In the thirteenth century, matrimonial alliances took place between the family of Akropolites and representatives of the high aristocracy such as the Tornikioi and the Philanthropenoi²⁰⁷.

Mouzalón (Μουζάλων)

The Mouzalones were firstly mentioned in the eleventh century. Nikolaos Mouzalón was patriarch of Constantinople in 1147-1151²⁰⁸. The Mouzalón brothers, George and Andronikos, were raised to high positions during the reign of Theodoros II. According to Akropolites they were from Adramyttion (modern Edremit) and of humble origin²⁰⁹. Although George Mouzalón married Theodora Palaiologina (later Raoulaina)²¹⁰, the niece of the later emperor Michael VIII, he failed to be acknowledged as a member of the high aristocracy; in 1258, he was brutally murdered²¹¹. Nevertheless, another Mouzalón, Theodore, was *megas logothetes* of the emperor Andronikos II²¹².

²⁰⁵ KAZHDAN (RONCHEY), L'aristocrazia 208, 262.

²⁰⁶ MACRIDES, Akropolites 7-8.

²⁰⁷ POLEMIS, The Doukai 82.

²⁰⁸ Op.cit. 148.

²⁰⁹ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή I (124 HEISENBERG- WIRTH); George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (41 FAILLER-LAURENT).

²¹⁰ PLP 92686, 21382.

²¹¹ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (79-81 FAILLER-LAURENT).

²¹² PLP 19439.

CHAPTER TWO

MARRIAGE STRATEGIES OF THE ARISTOCRACY IN THE EARLY PALAIOLOGAN PERIOD

1. Marriage Strategies of the aristocracy from the tenth to thirteenth century

The marriage strategies played an important role in Byzantine society, especially in relation to the emperor and the members of high aristocracy. Already since the ninth century, when for the first-time surnames appeared among the members of the aristocracy and in the tenth century, when the surnames were widely used by the great aristocratic families, the importance of the intermarriages became more obvious; now, they could be traced more easily on the base of the added family names, known as *ἐπώνυμα* (surnames) or *ἐπὶ κλην/ἐπὶ κλησις*²¹³. In order to declare their origin, many prominent individuals are no longer known only by their first name combined with the name of their father, who may also have held an important or similar post in the military or civil administration; instead, they and their progeny use a specific surname demonstrating in this way their family links and connections. Therefore, the presentation of the aristocratic marriage policies before the Early Palaiologan period is necessary, since it will allow a better understanding of the function and meaning of the intermarriages within this social group. The kinship by blood or marriage could be more easily traced and the reasons for the practice of marriage strategies among specific aristocratic families could reveal their importance also for the centuries to come.

Marriage Strategies of the Military Aristocracy of the Tenth Century

Through this innovation of the tenth century, it is possible to observe not only the rise of military aristocratic families of the extremely important eastern frontier of the Byzantine empire such as Phokades, Maleinoi, Skleroi, Kourkoues, Argyroi and Doukai, but also the links between them, their family alliances and networks²¹⁴. It is

²¹³ A. KAZHDAN, The Formation of Byzantine Family Names in the Ninth to Tenth Centuries. *BS* 57 (1997) 90-109, here 108-109.

²¹⁴ On the Byzantine military aristocratic families of the Eastern frontier in the 10th century see V. BLYSIDOU, *Αριστοκρατικές οικογένειες και εξουσία (9^{ος}-10^{ος} αιώνας)*. Thessaloniki 2001; CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et Contestations* 261-272; J.C. CHEYNET, *Les Phokas* in: G. DAGRON, H. MIHAESCU (ed.) *Nicephorus Phocas. Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)*.

not coincidental that in this specific period the military aristocratic families of Asia Minor and the eastern *themata* of the empire such as the Phokades or the Skleroi came close or even ascended to the throne; their most prominent members apart from the fame they gained in the battlefields- since the majority of them were influential military commanders, had also practiced intensive family alliances by marrying into military families of the same milieu. Although the ranks and offices were not hereditary, sons were very often following the same career steps with their fathers. They were aware of their kin relations and they were self-conscious of their class, factors which made the scholars to consider those families as clans and clan formations²¹⁵.

The family networks and the practices of intermarriages of the aristocracy could be successfully noticed in several examples, but Nikephoros II Phokas and his nephew, John I Tzimiskes are the most distinctive cases. Nikephoros II Phokas was the most famous military commander of his era before becoming emperor; his ancestors were known for their military careers and his father was married to a member of the Maleinoi, an important military family. When Nikephoros became an emperor, he had by his side his brother, Leo Phokas, whose offspring actively engaged in the aristocratic intermarriages of his time²¹⁶.

John I Tzimiskes was by his mother related to Phokas family; she was a sister of Nikephoros II Phokas and his father was supposedly a nephew of the famous military commander John Kourkouas²¹⁷. John's first wife Maria, belonged to the family of Skleroi; she was the sister of Bardas Skleros²¹⁸ and even after her death, the kinship with the Skleroi was of great importance. They were his main supporters in his struggle for the throne against Phokas and Tzimiskes promoted them to senior positions in the state²¹⁹. His first choice for a planned diplomatic marriage with the king of Germany and Western emperor Otto II was Theophano²²⁰, the daughter of his brother-in-law,

Paris 1986, 289-315; J. C. CHEYNET, J.F. VANNIER, *Études Prosopographiques*. Paris 1986; W. SEIBT, *Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch- sigilographische Studie*. Wien 1976; J.F. VANNIER, *Familles Byzantines: les Argyroi (IXe -XIIe siècles)*. Paris 1975.

²¹⁵ CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations* 262.

²¹⁶ Op. cit. 268 ; PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 151-152.

²¹⁷ Theophanes Continuatus, *Χρονογραφία* VI, 42 (ed. I. BEKKER, *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* [CSHB 45]. Bonn 1838) 428-429; CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations* 270.

²¹⁸ Leon Diakonos, *Ἱστορία* VII, 3 (ed. C.B. HASE, *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis Historiae, Libri X* [CSHB]. Bonn 1828) 117; SEIBT, *Skleroi* 29-58.

²¹⁹ PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 158.

²²⁰ On Theophano see A. VON EUW, P. SCHREINER (ed.), *Kaiserin Theophanu: Begegnung des Ostens und Westens um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends: Gedenkschrift des Kölner Schnütgen-Museums zum 1000. Todesjahr der Kaiserin*. Köln 1991; A. DAVIDS (ed.), *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium*

Constantine Skleros, and Sophia Phoka. The latter was John's cousin by his mother's side²²¹. John I also married the porphyrogennete princess of the ruling dynasty, the Macedonians, to secure his position²²².

About half a century earlier, Romanos Lekapenos, the *basileopator* of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, seemed to be aware of the significance of the intermarriages of aristocratic families. Therefore, he arranged the marriages of his children to members of prominent persons and families; unfortunately, there is not enough evidence to underpin his position in the centre of a network of intermarriages prior to the marriage of his daughter to the future emperor or at a later stage²²³. Impressive is the fact that even though he was thinking of a betrothal between his son Constantine and Euphrosyne, daughter of the *Domestikos ton scholon* John Kourkouas, he cancelled his plan; his sons and co-emperors seemed to have found the marriage too risky due to the glory of the Kourkouas family²²⁴.

It seems that probably Romanos' sons and co-emperors of both their father and brother-in-law, feared that Kourkouas was going to gain more power through the intermarriage, leading easily to a revolt against them. Since Romanos had married most of his sons into significant families of the period, it was quite reasonable for him to practice a reverse strategy in order to prevent the rise of another important family to power. Besides, it must not be forgotten that Romanos himself rose to power after the marriage of his daughter, Helen with the young emperor Constantine VIII Porphyrogennetos, so he was quite aware of the consequences of the marriage policies.

Affinity played an important role in the military aristocratic families of Asia Minor; for them also the family name was significant, since they seemed to depend mostly to their relatives and members of their clan²²⁵. Nevertheless, the kinship ties seem to be known up to a specific degree of cousins; of paramount importance were the relations by blood or marriage such as first cousins, uncles, *gambroi* (sons-in-law)

and the West at the Turn of the first Millennium. Cambridge 1995; H. FUSSBROICH, *Theophano die Griechin auf dem deutschen Kaiserthron, 972-991*. Köln/Wienand 1991.

²²¹ Leon Diakonos, *Ἱστορία VII* (118 HASE); SEIBT, *Skleroi* 58-60; PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 158-159; A. PANAGOPOULOU, *Οι Διπλωματικοί Γάμοι στο Βυζάντιο (6^{ος}-12^{ος} αιώνας)*. Athens 2006, 152-170.

²²² G. DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*. Cambridge 2003, 35.

²²³ PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 149.

²²⁴ Theophanes Continuatus, *Χρονογραφία VI*, 40 (426-427 BEKKER); PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 150.

²²⁵ CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations* 261-263.

or *syggambroi* (men, whose spouses are sisters)²²⁶. The relations by marriage, being in fact relations made by choice, give a good example of the different priorities of the aristocratic families and the reasons for the followed marriage strategies. In general terms, the family bonds that lead to kinship were crucial. However, the marital affiliations did not necessary imply the cooperation of the two families. A telling example is the intermarriage between the Phokades and the Skleroi, which did not put an end to their fierce rivalry²²⁷.

Marriage Strategies of the Aristocratic Families of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. The Komnenoi and the Doukai

By contrast, the intermarriage between the Komnenos family and the rival family of Doukas ended up in the most successful alliance of aristocratic families related by marriage in the course of Byzantine history. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as in the tenth century, the social and political aspects of the aristocracy were based on the marriage policies; the latter were also reflecting the ambitions of the families. The military aristocracy projected their glory, which derived mainly from the military career and posts. Therefore, their members perceived themselves as more proper claimants of the imperial throne since the war victories were a substantial element for the imperial power²²⁸.

In the eleventh century, there is a change in the names of the aristocratic families that came into the forefront. The families that comprised the military aristocracy of the past century such as the Phokades and the Maleinoi had either disappeared from the foreground or survived through intermarriages like the Skleroi²²⁹. The military aristocracy finds its worthy representatives in the families of the Komnenoi, Doukes, Dalassenoi, Bryennioi and Diogenes²³⁰. While the Dalassenoi, the Bryennioi and of course the Doukai were known from the 10th century²³¹, others like the Komnenoi, a

²²⁶ PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 188-189.

²²⁷ CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations* 263.

²²⁸ M. MCCORMICK, *Eternal Victory*. Cambridge 1986, 4.

²²⁹ PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας*

²³⁰ CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations* 273.

²³¹ J. C. CHEYNET, *Les Dalassenoi*, in: J.C. CHEYNET, J. VANNIER (eds.), *Études Prosopographiques*. Paris 1986, 75-115.

military aristocratic family probably from Asia Minor, rose up in power for the first time²³².

When the first prominent representative of the Komnenoi, Isaakios I Komnenos, became emperor, among his comrades were many members of the military aristocracy like Romanos Skleros. Isaakios' brother was married to Anna Dalassene, also a member of the military aristocracy; with a member of the Dalassenos family was also married Constantine X Doukas, the rival of Isaakios²³³. The Doukai were a prominent family, which have tried to ascend to the throne already in the tenth century with the revolts of Andronikos and Constantine Doukas. Their unsuccessful attempts caused them such a huge downgrading that Michael VII came probably from a completely different branch of Doukai²³⁴. After the prevalence of the Doukai and the failure of Isaakios to establish his own imperial dynasty, the Komnenoi were waiting for the right moment to rise to imperial power.

Years later, Michael VII Doukas, son of Constantine X, was replaced by the usurper Nikephoros III Botaneiates, who married the emperor's wife Maria of Alania in order to legitimize his rise to power. In this case, the Doukai and the empress were searching for a strong ally to uphold the claims of the legal heir to the throne. Their allies were found among their former rivals, the Komnenoi. Empress Maria, who might also had the support of her first husband's family, used the policy of adoption of the young general, Alexios I Komnenos, nephew of the former emperor²³⁵. Isaakios Komnenos, his brother, was already married to the cousin of the empress, Eirene of Alania, while Alexios I was betrothed by that time to a member of the Argyros family²³⁶. Nevertheless, the ultimate alliance between the Komnenoi and Doukai was sealed with the rise of Alexios I to the throne and his marriage to Eirene Doukaina. According to Magdalino, the Komnenian system of intermarriages and family kin as it is known was also employed by *Kaisar* John Doukas, who had promoted the family unity, entrusted military command to other relatives, marrying into the other prominent military families of Komnenos and Palaiologos and of course supported the Komnenian

²³² K. VARZOS, *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών*, vols. 2. Thessaloniki 1984, here I 25-27.

²³³ CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations* 275, 277.

²³⁴ POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 7-8.

²³⁵ Anna Komnene, *Alexias II* (55-57 REINSCH-KAMBYLIS).

²³⁶ Alexios was betrothed to an Argyropoulina, who died probably before 1081, Nikephoros Bryennios, *Ἡ Ἱστορία* (ed. D. TSOUKARAKIS – D. TSOUKLIDOU). Athens 1996, 212-213.

coup of 1081²³⁷. The Komnenoi rose to power as the dominant military family from a specific circle, a concept which can be also noticed later, in the rise of the Palaiologoi as an imperial dynasty.

The marital union between the two families inaugurated a new era in intermarriage policies of the aristocratic families, who were directly related to descendants or relatives of the dynasty. Either representatives of families of the older aristocracy or new military aristocrats connected their fortunes to that of the Komnenoi, serving in crucial posts. The Komnenian elite was a military one with the emperors of the Komnenian restoration being military commanders. The reign of Alexios I seemed to show a return to the priorities of the soldier emperors Nikephoros II, John I and Basil II; it is of great importance that the first two came from great Anatolian aristocratic families, as the Komnenoi²³⁸.

The extended family network established already from the first dynastic pair of Alexios I and Eirene lead the majority of aristocratic families of the later Byzantine period to claim a Komnenian ancestry. The significance, which the name Komnenos acquired in the twelfth century and later as a status symbol is quite obvious. It was an idea which Alexios I introduced²³⁹. The relatives of the family, the people connected to it and the share of ranks and titles among the family made modern scholarship to describe the phenomenon as either the Komnenos- Doukas dynasty or the Komnenos-Doukas clan.

At this point, it is of paramount importance to treat the role of the imperial *gambroi* (sons in law), the spouses of the daughters and the female relatives of the emperor²⁴⁰. The historians of the time refer extensively to them and Nikephoros Bryennios, a *gambros* of the emperor himself, enumerates them²⁴¹. Alexios I started with the betrothal of his first daughter, Anna with the son of Maria of Alania, Constantine Doukas, rightful heir to the throne, sealing once again an alliance with the Doukas family²⁴². Among the other *gambroi* we found one of the sons of the former emperor, Romanos IV Diogenes and a Taronites, member of an important aristocratic

²³⁷ P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*. Cambridge 2002, 186-187. The *Kaisar* John Doukas was brother of Constantine X Doukas and grandfather of the empress Eirene Doukaina, POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 34-41.

²³⁸ MAGDALINO, *Manuel I Komnenos* 185.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*; R. MACRIDES, What's in the Name 'Megas Komnenos'. *Αρχαίον Πόντου* 35 (1979) 238-245; MAGDALINO, *Byzantine Snobbery in: ANGOLD, The Byzantine Aristocracy* 64.

²⁴⁰ PATLAGEAN, *Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας* 188-189.

²⁴¹ Nikephoros Bryennios, *Υψηλή Ιστορία* (232-233, 304-305 TSOUKARAKIS – TSOUKLIDOU).

²⁴² Anna Komnene, *Alexias VI* (184-185 REINSCH- KAMBYLIS).

family of the Komnenian era, deriving from the princes of Taron, Armenia. Many other names of aristocrats, who are going to play a significant role in the next centuries, are enlisted in the sources of the period²⁴³. One of them is George Palaiologos, *syggambros* of Alexios I, since he married Anna Doukaina, sister of empress Eirene²⁴⁴. His father, Nikephoros Palaiologos, the first known member of the family of Palaiologos, was a commander under Romanos IV and Michael VII; he had also supported Nikephoros III, but his son became a member of the Komnenian clan²⁴⁵. The Palaiologos family was related not only directly by marriage to the Doukas family. In the reign of John II Komnenos there was also an intermarriage among a Palaiologos and a Komnene²⁴⁶. Once again, the significance of the role of a female aristocrat is quite apparent, since she creates a *gambros*, a man related by marriage kinship to the family; a kinship tie that could give him legal claims even to the ascendance of the Byzantine throne.

Apart from the Palaiologoi, there were several prominent aristocratic families that were connected to the Komnenian dynasty and are going to constitute also the Palaiologan high aristocracy. Members of the Komnenian kin were Constantine Angelos -also a *gambros* of Alexios I-, who married his youngest daughter Theodora, and John Kantakouzenos, *gambros* of Andronikos Komnenos, married to Maria, John's II granddaughter. During the reign of John II, son-in-law of the emperor became also a Batatzes²⁴⁷. More than three members of the Synadenos family are also found among the Komnenian clan. Adrianos Komnenos, brother of Alexios I, married Zoe Doukaina, first betrothed to Nikephoros Synadenos; their son Alexios married also a member of the Synadenos family²⁴⁸. The Palaiologoi appeared again in an intermarriage within the Komnenian clan, since the daughter of Komnenos and Synadene, Anna married Alexios Palaiologos²⁴⁹. The daughter of Adrianos Komnenos married a member of the Tarchaneiotes family²⁵⁰.

²⁴³ For example Anna Komnene in her *Alexias* provides us with the names of many names of the sons-in-law of emperor Alexios I, such as Palaiologos, Synadenos and others.

²⁴⁴ PATLAGEAN, Ελληνικός Μεσαίωνας 188; POLEMIS, The Doukai 74-75; J.F. VANNIER, Les premiers Paléologues in J.C. CHEYNET, J. F. VANNIER, Études Prosopographiques. Paris 1986, 125-186, here 141.

²⁴⁵ VANNIER, Premiers Paléologues 134.

²⁴⁶ MAGDALINO, Manuel I Komnenos 208; VANNIER, Premiers Paléologues 153-155; VARZOS, Γενεαλογία I 680.

²⁴⁷ MAGDALINO, Manuel I Komnenos 207.

²⁴⁸ VARZOS, Γενεαλογία I 115-117; CHEYNET, Pouvoir et contestations 280.

²⁴⁹ VANNIER, Premiers Paléologues 149-151.

²⁵⁰ LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 57.

All the above-mentioned intermarriages were part of the extensive marriage policies of the Komnenian dynasty. But, even though it could be argued that the Komnenoi followed the intermarriage model of the military aristocracy introduced already in the tenth century, they have perfected the marriage strategies of their class and have made by far the most successful marriage alliances among members of the older and the upcoming aristocracy of their time. Their network of marriage alliances was the most extensive and interwoven between the emperor and his court, from whom all privileges derived. Therefore, the greatest emphasis was placed on the role of the imperial family and the most influential families were bound to it by ties of blood and marriage²⁵¹. However, apart from the first dynastic couple, who established the dynasty and both belonged to military aristocratic families, the heirs of the Komnenian throne were married mostly with foreign princesses and not female members of prominent Byzantine aristocratic families²⁵².

In the reign of Manuel I, the marriages of the immediate family and relatives of the emperor were mostly with rulers of the West or the Crusader States²⁵³. Those intermarriages included among others, the kingdoms of Austria and Hungary; the Byzantine emperor had also accomplished through the marriage alliances to interfere in the accession of the Hungarian throne²⁵⁴. That happened not only due to the pro-western policy of the emperor, but also in order to avoid political problems from members of the aristocracy. A foreign empress had no family in the direct entourage of the emperor; therefore, she could not easily influence the emperor in favour of the interests of her family or advance her family's power, raise claims to the throne and revolt against the emperor²⁵⁵. Another reason could also have been that the endogamies

²⁵¹ ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 60.

²⁵² PANAGOPOULOU, *Διπλωματικοί Γάμοι* 233-379; R. MACRIDES, *Dynastic Marriages and Political Kinship* in: J. SHEPARD – S. FRANKLIN (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy*. Aldershot 1992, 263-280, here 271.

²⁵³ For the Komnenian marriage policies see MAGDALINO, *Manuel I Komnenos* 201-217.

²⁵⁴ For more on the diplomatic marriages with the kingdoms of Austria and Hungary see A. RHOBY, *Byzanz und Österreich. 'Griechische' Prinzessinnen in Windopolis* in: *Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum Mainz. Red., C. GASTGEBER, D. HEHER (eds.), Das goldene Byzanz und der Orient. Katalog zur Ausstellung Schallaburg 2012, 183-193*; J. PREISER-KAPPELLER, *Von Ostarrichi an den Bosphorus: ein Überblick zu den Beziehungen im Mittelalter*, in: *Pro Oriente Jahrbuch 2010*. Wien 2011, 66-77; R. KERBL, *Byzantinische Prinzessinnen in Ungarn zwischen 1050-1200 und ihr Einfluß auf das Arpadenkö nigreich*. Diss. Universität Wien 1979.

²⁵⁵ As it was already noticed in the intermarriages of emperors with members of aristocratic families in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see above.

inside the Komnenos family were against the canonical law which prohibited a marriage between blood relatives up to the seventh degree²⁵⁶.

Marriage Strategies of the Angeloi and the Laskarids

The Fall of Constantinople in 1204 found on the Byzantine throne the dynasty of Angeloi. They were linked to the Komnenoi by intermarriage, since they were descendants of Alexios I son-in-law, Constantine Angelos and Theodora Komnene. Alexios III Angelos was married to Euphrosyne Kamaterissa, who belonged to the Kamateros family known for bureaucrats and patriarchs²⁵⁷. Since they had no male heir to the throne but only three daughters, Alexios III was planning to proclaim one of his sons-in-law emperor. The predominant son-in-law was the husband of his firstborn daughter Eirene, Alexios Palaiologos. However, after his death, Theodore Komnenos Laskaris, husband of Alexios' III second daughter, Anna, took his position²⁵⁸. This fact reveals that before 1204 there were already members of the high aristocracy that with their capacity as the emperor's *gambroi* (sons-in-law) were proclaimed heirs to the Byzantine throne. Of significance is also that they were both related to the family of the Komnenoi²⁵⁹. Once more, the importance of the husbands of the imperial daughters is apparent, mainly when there is no direct male line to ascend to the throne. Therefore, women seemed to play a crucial role in the marriage strategies, since their husbands could gain the capacity of the sons-in-law only by marriage and could have claims to the imperial throne.

The establishment of the empire of Nicaea under Theodore I Laskaris was a milestone for the high aristocracy. Many prominent members of the Constantinopolitan

²⁵⁶ MAGDALINO, Manuel I Komnenos 209-210, 214. The most characteristic example of those endogamies is that of Anna Komnene Batatzina, who took as her second husband her third cousin, Alexios Branas Komnenos. Other examples are Alexios Komnenos and Andronikos Kontostephanos Komnenos, whose wives were members of the Doukas family, related to the Komnenoi, VARZOS, *Γενεαλογία* II 194, 251, 395- 396.

²⁵⁷ For the family of Kamateroi see G. STADTMÜLLER, *Zur Geschichte der Familie Kamateros*, *BZ* 34 (1934) 352-358.

²⁵⁸ Before the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders, Isaakios Angelos and his son, Alexios IV, took the throne back. The husband of the third daughter of Alexios III, Eudokia, was also proclaimed emperor as Alexios V Mourtzouphlos, but many of the historians of the time do not recognize him as such, see George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 2, 3, 5 (4-7, 8-9 HEISENBERG –WIRTH). According to Choniates, Alexios V was not married to Eudokia when they left Constantinople, Niketas Choniates, *Χρονική Διήγησις* 50 (ed. J.V. DIETEN, *Niketas Choniatae Historia*, vols. 2 [CFHB 11]. Berlin /New York 1975), 571.

²⁵⁹ MACRIDES, Akropolites 116.

aristocracy followed him and settled at his court, along with families of the local aristocracy of Asia Minor. Certainly, not all of them possessed estates in Asia Minor, so it seems that they must have been depended heavily on Theodore's generosity²⁶⁰. The family ties were once again of major significance, since important military positions were given to Laskaris' brothers, a fact that shows the reliance of the emperor to his immediate family; also, the aristocrats seemed to strengthen their loyalty to the emperor by marriage into the imperial family. Theodore himself chose as his son-in-law and heir to the throne Andronikos Palaiologos, and after his death, John III Batatzes; both were related by kinship to the Komnenos-Doukas clan²⁶¹. Interesting is also the fact that many of the families of Constantinopolitan aristocracy which followed Laskaris in Nicaea were connected through blood or marriage ties to the Komnenian clan²⁶².

John III Batatzes probably did not put his siblings in prominent positions of the government, apart from his brother Isaakios Doukas, who held the rank of *sevastokrator*²⁶³. John III faced early a conspiracy against him by members of the Nestongos family, who were his relatives, and of other aristocratic families²⁶⁴. The office holders under John III did not come from the aristocracy; on the contrary, the emperor selected as his collaborators capable people, independently of their blood line and origins²⁶⁵.

The Byzantine aristocracy could not be characterized as a closed caste, since social mobility of competent individuals into the aristocracy has been observed throughout the centuries; new families moved into ranks and offices, while others such as the Kamateroi disappeared. The aristocracy had also various layers as mentioned above, where some families consisted the high aristocracy and being more wealthy and influential than others²⁶⁶. However, it seems that during the reign of Theodore II Laskaris this mobility did not find the acceptance of the aristocrats. Theodore II tried

²⁶⁰ ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 62.

²⁶¹ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 15 (26-27 HEISENBERG – WIRTH).

²⁶² See the previous chapter.

²⁶³ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 51 (101 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 68.

²⁶⁴ Akropolites emphasises how Andronikos Nestongos did not consider the ties of kinship and plotted against his first cousin and emperor. By his side were also his brother and cousin of the emperor, Isaakios, and members of further aristocratic families such as Tarchaneiotes, Synadenoï and others. George Akropolites, *Ποίημα Χρονικόν Ἡμιτελές* 23 (225 HEISENBERG – WIRTH).

²⁶⁵ ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 75.

²⁶⁶ ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 70.

obviously to reduce the power of the aristocracy and bestowed offices to persons of lower origins; he selected them on the base of their abilities rather than on their blood lines. According to Pachymeres the emperor aimed at finding the most efficient associates²⁶⁷. In order to secure their positions and knowing the significance of marriage policies in the aristocratic milieu, Theodore tried to tie his collaborators with bonds of kinship through marriage to the high aristocratic families²⁶⁸. At the same time, the emperor bypassed quite obviously aristocrats like Michael Palaiologos or Alexios Strategopoulos, who as commanders of the army had distinguished themselves serving under John III Batatzes²⁶⁹.

2. Marriage Strategies until 1259. The Rise of the Palaiologoi.

The marriage policies of Theodore II disappointed the members of high aristocracy, who searched for a worthy representative. They found him in the face of the young commander, Michael Palaiologos. The Palaiologoi were not only one of the most prominent families of the Nicaean aristocracy but they could also raise claims to the throne due to their kinship with the Angeloi and the many lost opportunities to ascend to power²⁷⁰. Michael VIII Palaiologos or Michael Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos -as he seemed to call himself²⁷¹, who by his name emphasised all his blood relations to three imperial families- was proclaimed regent of John IV Laskaris, after a conspiracy of the aristocracy in 1258²⁷². Among the members of the aristocracy that took part in this conspiracy, one can find some of the most known families of the high

²⁶⁷ Pachymeres emphasises that the emperor intended to find the most capable collaborators among his childhood friends. George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (61 FAILLER–LAURENT); The most suitable example is George Mouzalon, who did not come from an aristocratic family, or at least a family of the high aristocracy, PLP 92686.

²⁶⁸ ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 78.

²⁶⁹ Op. cit. 76.

²⁷⁰ The first case is Alexios Palaiologos, husband of Eirene Angelina and maternal grandfather of Michael VIII and the second case is Andronikos Palaiologos, who was married to Eirene Laskarina, daughter of Theodore I. They were both acclaimed *despotes* because of their marriages with the firstborn imperial daughters, MACRIDES, *Akropolites* 114-116, 148-149; VANNIER, *Premiers Paléologues* 172-174.

²⁷¹ For the list of surnames of emperor Michael VIII see Dölger, *Regesten* 30. Akropolites refers to him mostly as Michael Komnenos or Michael Komnenos the Palaiologos, George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 51, 64 (100, 134 HEISENBERG-WIRTH). Pachymeres on the contrary refers to him as Michael Palaiologos, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (137 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21528; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 3-4.

²⁷² George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (95-97 FAILLER–LAURENT).

aristocracy; the reasons are going to be analysed alongside with the intermarriages of the period.

The members of the high aristocracy aimed at marrying into the imperial family, which granted them a considerable prestige. The emperors of Nicaea seemed to exercise the right to arrange marriages of the aristocracy as a kind of reward for the services of capable associates or a kind of control through kinship over a person whose loyalty was under question²⁷³. This fact is impressive, since two different and totally opposed reasons have the same result, an intermarriage. It seems that the emperors wanted to tie with bonds of kinship by marriage their most trusted collaborators and made them their relatives. On the contrary, the marriage of a person, whose loyalty to the emperor was under question with a member of the extended imperial family, could remind many of the modern quote “keep your friends close and your enemies closer”. The emperor pursued to tie the potential rioter with kinship into the family by marriage probably in order to keep an eye on him more easily. The results of this marriage strategy are quite doubtful, since there are not many examples of a positive influence by his wife; in some cases, the conspiratory actions towards the emperor stopped, but these cases seem to have been rather rare. Furthermore, the way that the emperors treated those whom they did not trust, could bring to mind the modern term “frenemy”, a friend who could be easily or is already a hidden or obvious enemy.

Following this policy, John III Batatzes arranged a marriage for his efficient commander Michael Palaiologos, who had been earlier accused of treason and had been in trial. At first, Batatzes planned to marry him with his eldest granddaughter Eirene²⁷⁴. However, he later thought that this marriage might be too risky, due to the fact that Michael was not only descending from an illustrious family, which was also related to him, but he was also quite efficient and-above all- ambitious²⁷⁵. Even though sometimes John III set aside the regulations of the canon law about the prohibited marriages, in this case he chose not to permit it. Michael VIII and Theodore II were actually second

²⁷³ ANGOLD, *Byzantine Government* 66.

²⁷⁴ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 50 (100 HEISENBERG –WIRTH).

²⁷⁵ Akropolites emphasised that John III Batatzes thought about Michael's Palaiologos distinguished family and his 'kinship' with him, meaning obviously the fact that John's first wife was a granddaughter of Alexios III Angelos. Therefore, they were related by marriage, George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 51 (100 HEISENBERG –WIRTH); MACRIDES, *Akropolites* 268-269.

cousins, as sons of two granddaughters of Alexios III²⁷⁶. That means that Eirene was a niece (ἀνεψιά) of Michael²⁷⁷.

The proper bride for Michael Palaiologos was finally found in Theodora, the granddaughter of John's III brother, *sevastokrator* Isaakios Doukas²⁷⁸. Mother of Theodora was Eudokia, daughter of John Angelos; she was also related to the Strategopouloi²⁷⁹. Their marriage took place between 1253 to 1254 and it seems that Michael received at the same time the office of *megas konostaulos*²⁸⁰. In the *Typikon* of Saint Demetrios, Michael Palaiologos stresses that Theodora was Batatzes' niece, and that the emperor loved her as his own daughter²⁸¹. Theodora and Michael had seven children, whose marriages are going to be presented later in this chapter.

Since the Palaiologoi were a high aristocratic family, which several times came close to ascend to the throne, the marriage alliances with other aristocratic families seem to have been made through careful consideration. When Michael VIII became co-emperor of John IV, he raised also his brothers in higher offices and arranged their marriages, probably according to his policy of finding useful allies and supporters. Firstly, he made his brother John Komnenos Palaiologos, who was also a Diplopalaiologos²⁸², *sevastokrator* and then he arranged his marriage to a daughter of Constantine Tornikes in 1259, whose name unfortunately is not known²⁸³. John's father-in-law was already related to the Palaiologos family, since his father Demetrios

²⁷⁶ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 50 (100 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); MACRIDES, Akropolites 268.

²⁷⁷ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 50 (100 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); ANGOLD, Byzantine Government 66.

²⁷⁸ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 51 (100-101 HEISENBERG – WIRTH). For Theodora see PLP 21380; POLEMIS, The Doukai 109; For Theodora see also A. M. TALBOT, Empress Theodora Palaiologina, wife of Michael VIII. *DOP* 46 (1992) 295-303.

²⁷⁹ About the kinship of Eudokia to the Strategopouloi see George Akropolites, Ποίημα Χρονικόν 'Ημιτελές 51 (253 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); MACRIDES, Akropolites 269. Also for Eudokia see PLP 6228.

²⁸⁰ Pachymeres does not mention the marriage alliance, but only that Michael Palaiologos received a higher office at this time, George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (41 FAILLER – LAURENT). On the contrary, Akropolites refers to the title that was bestowed upon Michael by the time of his marriage later, insisting that he referred to that already earlier, but he had not, George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 64 (134 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); MACRIDES, Akropolites 314.

²⁸¹ GRÉGOIRE, De vita sua 451; G. DENNIS, *Kellibara I: Typikon* of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrios of the Palaiologoi-Kellibara in Constantinople in: J. THOMAS – A.C. HERO – G. CONSTABLE (eds.), Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents. A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders Typika and Testaments, 5 vols. Washington 2000, 1237-1253, here 1243.

²⁸² Michael's parents, Andronikos Palaiologos and Theodora Palaiologina, both came from two branches of the Palaiologos family. Therefore, Michael VIII Palaiologos was also called Diplopalaiologos (two times a Palaiologan). Theodora was the granddaughter of Alexios III, daughter of Alexios Palaiologos and Eirene Angelina, PAPADOPULOS Palaiologen 1-2.

²⁸³ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι II (137 FAILLER – LAURENT); PLP 21487; PAPADOPULOS Palaiologen 4-5; SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 119-120.

Tornikes, *mesazon* of Theodore I Laskaris, had married a cousin of Andronikos Palaiologos²⁸⁴.

Constantine Palaiologos was Michael's half-brother, but the name of his mother and her family are unknown²⁸⁵. In 1259, he married Eirene Komnene Laskarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina Branaina, who as the list of her surnames reveals came from the family of Branas and was related by blood and marriage to many aristocratic families²⁸⁶. They are both depicted in the Typicon of the Monastery of Bebaia Elpis, founded by their daughter, Theodora; at the same time, the enlistment of their surnames reveals their pride on their ancestry and the scion of their family²⁸⁷. They had together many children, who were active in the marriage alliances of the imperial family. Constantine was in the same year raised to the dignity of *Kaisar* by his brother and emperor; after the battle of Pelagonia, he became *sevastokrator*, like his half-brother John before him, a title he kept until his death²⁸⁸.

The role of women in the marriage strategies was also significant, since the female members of the aristocracy should marry into families of at least the same status. As a consequence, the sisters of Michael Palaiologos were married into families of the high aristocracy of Nicaea. The eldest daughter of Andronikos Palaiologos and his wife, Martha (Maria) Palaiologina²⁸⁹ married in ca.1237 the *megas domestikos* Nikephoros Tarchaneiotas, who has been one of the most sufficient generals of John III Batatzes and the most known member of his family for the period before 1259²⁹⁰. This was the second marriage for Nikephoros, since he was firstly married to the unnamed daughter of the *protostrator* Andronikos Doukas Aprenos²⁹¹; he had a daughter with her, known as Nostongissa Tarchaneiotissa, who became a nun and was a supporter of the

²⁸⁴ SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 117-119. Constantine Tornikios became *Megas Primekerios*, and his son-in-law became *despot* after the Battle of Pelagonia in 1259, George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 83 (173 HEISENBERG – WIRTH).

²⁸⁵ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 77 (161 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); PLP 21498; PAPADOPULOS Palaiologoi 6.

²⁸⁶ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι II (138-139 FAILLER – LAURENT).

²⁸⁷ DELEHAYE, Deux typica 18-105; A. M. TALBOT, *Bebaia Elpis: Typikon* of Theodora Synadene for the Convent of the Mother of God *Bebaia Elpis* in Constantinople in: THOMAS – HERO – CONSTABLE, Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1512-1578, here 1525.

²⁸⁸ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 77, 83 (161, 173 HEISENBERG – WIRTH).

²⁸⁹ PLP 21389.

²⁹⁰ George Akropolites, Χρονική Συγγραφή 36 (55 HEISENBERG – WIRTH); George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (55 FAILLER – LAURENT); LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 61-63.

²⁹¹ PLP 1207.

Arsenites²⁹². Nikephoros and Martha had together four children, three sons, who all of them followed a military career and a daughter, Theodora Tarchaneiotissa²⁹³.

Theodora was selected by Theodore II Laskaris to marry his childhood friend and collaborator, Balanidiotes²⁹⁴; this accords with the emperor's policy of marrying women of the high aristocracy with capable people of humble origin who were under his service. Even though they were betrothed in 1258, the emperor changed his mind and against her will, he married her to Basil Kaballarios, a member of a Nicaean aristocratic family²⁹⁵. Since their marriage was not consummated from impotence of the husband, Theodore II accused Theodora's mother, Martha, of sorcery and mistreated her; he also imprisoned Theodora's uncle, Michael VIII²⁹⁶. After the death of Theodore II and the rise of Michael VIII as co-emperor in 1259, the latter divorced her from Kaballarios and married her to her previous fiancé, Balanidiotes in Lampsakos; he also raised him in the office of *megas stratopedarches*. Therefore, Theodora was also known as *megale stratopedarchissa*²⁹⁷.

The expansion of the family networks of the Palaiologoi continued with marriage alliances with other families of their own milieu for the period until 1259 with the marriage of Michael's VIII younger sister, Eirene (Eulogia) Komnene Palaiologina to John Komnenos Angelos Kantakouzenos in ca.1240²⁹⁸. It was the first of the intermarriages between the two families; John shared also among his surnames those of Komnenos Angelos, as Palaiologos did²⁹⁹. Eirene and John had together four daughters, Theodora, Maria, Anna and Eugenia, whose marriages are going to be presented in the following. The first one who married was Theodora, who seems to have been the eldest daughter of the couple³⁰⁰. She was one of the aristocratic brides

²⁹² George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (385 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 27512; LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 73.

²⁹³ PLP 27510; LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 63-64.

²⁹⁴ PLP 2057.

²⁹⁵ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (55 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 10037.

²⁹⁶ According to Pachymeres, Martha Palaiologina was thrown naked in sack full of cats in order to admit Theodore's II accusation for sorcery, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (57 FAILLER–LAURENT). Nikephoros Tarchaneiotis was already dead by that time, LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 61.

²⁹⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (155 FAILLER–LAURENT).

²⁹⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (155 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21360; NICOL, *Kantakouzenoi* 14-16; D. NICOL, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos. Some Addenda and Corrigenda*. *DOP* 27 (1973) 309-315, here 311; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 18-19.

²⁹⁹ Pachymeres refers to him only by his surname Komnenos, but in an epigram of Maximos Planoudes in the church of Saint Andrew in Constantinople, rebuilt by Theodora, John's daughter, he is referred with his surnames Komnenos Angelos, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (155 FAILLER–LAURENT); Maximos Planoudes, *Ἐπιγράμματα* 2 (ed. SP. LAMBROS, *Ἐπιγράμματα Μάξιμου Πλανούδη*. *NE* 13 (1916) 414-421, here 416-417.

³⁰⁰ PLP 10943; NICOL, *Kantakouzenoi* 16-19.

that Theodore II had chosen for his childhood friend and most trusted person, George Mouzalon in 1256³⁰¹. At the conspiracy that costed the lives of the Mouzalon family, Theodora seemed to be quite scared and anxious about her husband's fortune; her uncle though, Michael Palaiologos told her to keep quiet, otherwise she might have had the same fortune³⁰².

When Michael VIII Palaiologos had risen firstly as a despot in 1258 and later as co-emperor with the support of the aristocracy, he restored many of the aristocrats in their previous posts or bestowed upon them even higher offices. Moreover, he had organised intensively the intermarriages among prominent members of the aristocratic families who supported him with members of his family such as the case of Theodora Tarchaneiotissa. Theodora, the daughter of his beloved sister Eirene was also married to a prominent member of the family of Raoul, John Komnenos Doukas Angelos Petraliphas Raoul³⁰³. His surname reveals the ties of kinship with the three imperial families and the aristocratic family of Petraliphas, with whom the family of Raoul were connected through intermarriages.

The Raoul belonged to the families of high aristocracy who seemed quite disappointed of the policies of Theodore II and after his death supported openly Palaiologos to his rise as regent emperor. Already in 1256, Theodore II decided to marry the brother of George Mouzalon, Andronikos, to the daughter of *protovestiaros* Alexios Raoul, even though he had earlier deprived him of his dignity³⁰⁴. Alexios Raoul was among the most efficient commanders of John III Batatzes and probably son-in-law of the emperor³⁰⁵. The four sons that he had with his wife, might have been imprisoned by the time of the decision of the marriage of their sister to Mouzalon³⁰⁶. After the assassination of the Mouzalones at the Monastery of Sosandra in Magnesia and while Raoulaina has been widowed for a short time, Michael VIII married her with his cousin, Andronikos Palaiologos and bestowed upon him the office of *protostrator*³⁰⁷. Andronikos had also a sister, Maria; she was married to the *protosevastos* Manuel Komnenos Laskaris, probably before 1259. Maria is known by

³⁰¹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (41 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 92686.

³⁰² George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (89 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁰³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (55 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 24125; FASSOULAKIS, Raouls 18-19.

³⁰⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (41 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 24110.

³⁰⁵ George Akropolites, *Χρονικὴ Συγγραφή* 49 (92 HEISENBERG–WIRTH).

³⁰⁶ FASSOULAKIS, Raouls 15-16, 24.

³⁰⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (155 FAILLER–LAURENT); Andronikos is the son of Michael's VIII paternal uncle, Michael Palaiologos, PLP 21432.

the sources with the surnames of her husband, Komnene Laskarina and the title of *protosevaste*³⁰⁸.

The Strategopouloi was another family of the Nicaean high aristocracy, who supported Palaiologos, even though some of its members were related by marriage to the Laskarids. More specifically, Constantine Strategopoulos³⁰⁹, *megistanas* and son of Alexios Komnenos Strategopoulos, general of John III Batatzes³¹⁰, married in ca. 1254 the daughter of the emperor's brother, the *sevastokrator* Isaakios Doukas³¹¹. The name of Strategopoulos' wife is not known and the sources referred to her as Strategopoulina³¹². Michael Strategopoulos might be their son, since he is known by the sources as a cousin of empress Theodora Palaiologina³¹³. The kinship through intermarriage did not prohibit Theodore II from blinding Constantine Strategopoulos and therefore he and his father became two of the strongest supporters of Michael VIII³¹⁴.

Constantine Strategopoulos was not the only aristocrat, who was blinded by Theodore II; the same passages reveal also the name of Theodore Philes, who was probably blinded for the same reason as Strategopoulos, accused of arrogance towards the emperor³¹⁵. Therefore, the family of Philes, also a member of the Nicaean high aristocracy, had supported the rise of Palaiologos. In 1259, Michael VIII Palaiologos married his niece Maria Kantakouzene, daughter of Eirene (Eulogia) Komnene Palaiologina and John Komnenos Angelos Kantakouzenos to the son of Theodore, Alexios Philes and raised him to the dignity of *mezas domestikos*³¹⁶.

Marriage Strategies of the Laskarids and other Families of the Aristocracy

As it can be deduced, the Palaiologoi had practiced many intermarriages with members of the high aristocracy. By contrast, the marriage policies of the Laskarids

³⁰⁸ MM IV 200, 202; E. L. BRANUSE- M. NYSTAZOPULU-PELEKIDU, Βυζαντινά Έγγραφα της Μονής Πάτμου, I Αυτοκρατορικά, Athens 1980, 252, 253, 385; PLP 14498, 14550.

³⁰⁹ PLP 26897.

³¹⁰ PLP 26894.

³¹¹ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (41 FAILLER–LAURENT). In the same passage Pachymeres refers also to Constantine's blinding.

³¹² PLP 26892.

³¹³ PLP 26898.

³¹⁴ Pachymeres reveals also the reason for the blinding of Constantine by Theodore II and refers again to his marriage to Strategopoulina, George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (93 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³¹⁵ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (93 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 29812.

³¹⁶ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι II (155 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 29809, 16910.

aimed at creating marital relations with rulers of other states, rather than with the aristocratic families of Nicaea. Since John III and his son, Theodore II Laskaris, were aware of the fact that an intermarriage could be a potent act of diplomacy and affect mostly positive the relations between two hegemonies, they decided to marry two of Theodore's daughters with foreign rulers, with whom they wanted to establish political alliances.

Eirene Laskarina, the eldest daughter of Theodore II was, as mentioned above, the first choice of John III for a marriage with Michael Palaiologos. This union did not take place because it was within the prohibited degrees of marriage. Eirene was still unmarried, when Constantine Tich, the Bulgarian ruler, asked for her hand³¹⁷. Constantine Tich or son of Toichos as he is known in the Byzantine sources, became the heir of the Bulgarian throne after the murder of Michael II Asan, brother-in-law of Theodore II³¹⁸, by his cousin Kaliman and a series of events which left the Bulgarian realm without a ruler. As he was not related to the ruling family of Asan, he sent an embassy to request a marriage with Eirene, who by her mother, empress Helen was granddaughter of the former ruler of the Bulgarians, John Asan, and therefore he could legitimize by this marriage union his succession to the throne³¹⁹. Theodore II accepted the proposal and the marriage took place in 1257³²⁰.

A treaty between John III Batatzes and the despot of Epirus Michael II was also sealed with a marriage alliance. The emperor chose the second daughter of his son, Maria to marry Nikephoros I, son of Michael II³²¹. It seems by the sources that the betrothal took place between 1248-1250³²², but the marriage, even though it was

³¹⁷ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 73 (152 HEISENBERG –WIRTH); PLP 5976, 27550.

³¹⁸ Theodore II was married to Helen Asan, daughter of the Bulgarian ruler John II Asan by his first wife, Maria of Hungary. Michael II Asan was the half-brother of Empress Eirene, since his mother was Eirene, daughter of Theodore Komnenos Doukas, brother of Michael I of Epirus.

³¹⁹ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 73 (152 HEISENBERG –WIRTH). For the significance of kinship through marriage in the legitimization of claims to the Bulgarian throne in the Bulgarian affairs see MACRIDES, Akropolites 53, 92, 335. Pachymeres and Gregoras refer also to another claimer of the throne, Mytzes, son-in-law of Asan and next to the line of the throne, since Michael had no children; the reference is important since the offspring of Mytzes took part in the intermarriages with the Palaiologans, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (449-451 FAILLER–LAURENT), Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (60-61 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

³²⁰ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 73 (153 HEISENBERG –WIRTH). Pachymeres refers also to Eirene as the wife of Constantine Tich in his passage for the death of Theodore II, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (59 FAILLER–LAURENT); MACRIDES, Akropolites 334. A fresco at Boyana portrays Constantine and Eirene, K. MIYATEV, *The Boyana Murals*, Sofia 1961, pl.51.

³²¹ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 49 (88 HEISENBERG –WIRTH); PLP 91042; POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 94-95.

³²² The exact chronology of the betrothal of Maria and Nikephoros is uncertain. Several scholars have proposed different chronologies, all between 1248-1250, for example DÖLGER- WIRTH, *Regesten* 42. A

planned for the year after the betrothal³²³, finally happened in 1256³²⁴. According to Akropolites, Nikephoros was made despot by the emperor, already by the time of the betrothal; however, the author refers to the title of Nikephoros again by the time of his marriage, probably to emphasize the legitimization of it by the emperor³²⁵.

In his passage for the betrothal between Maria Laskarina and Nikephoros I Doukas Komnenos Angelos, Akropolites informs us that the latter, when he reached Pegai, was accompanied by his mother, Theodora Petraliphaina, *basilissa* of Epirus³²⁶. The historian identified Theodora Petraliphaina as the sister of Theodore Petraliphas, son of *Megas Chartoularios* John Petraliphas³²⁷ and son-in-law of Demetrios Komnenos Tornikes, a man greatly honoured by emperor Batatzes, since apart from acting like a *mesazon* in the affairs of the empire, the emperor called him his brother in documents³²⁸. The unknown Tornikina, daughter of Demetrios, was also related to the Palaiologans, since her mother was a cousin of Andronikos Palaiologos, father of Michael VIII³²⁹.

Apart from a daughter Demetrios Tornikes had three sons, Constantine, John and Andronikos³³⁰. Contrary to his younger brothers, who either had left no offspring or about whose offspring nothing is known, Constantine had married a member of the Raoul family and had with her two daughters, whose names remain unknown. One of his daughters married, as already mentioned, John Palaiologos, brother of Michael VIII

helpful fact is that the emperor had already bestowed the title of Despot upon Michael II Doukas, since Akropolites refers to him with this title already from 1246, after John's III conquest of Thessaloniki, George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 46 (84 HEISENBERG-WIRTH); MACRIDES, Akropolites 251.

³²³ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ρωμαϊκή Ιστορία* I (48 SCHOPEN-BEKKER).

³²⁴ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 64 (134 HEISENBERG-WIRTH). Pachymeres refers also to Maria as the wife of Nikephoros I in the passage on Theodore's II death, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (59 FAILLER-LAURENT).

³²⁵ MACRIDES, Akropolites 314.

³²⁶ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 49 (88 HEISENBERG-WIRTH).

³²⁷ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 49 (91 HEISENBERG-WIRTH). The Life of Saint Theodora, *basilissa* of Epiros seems to agree to the fact that Theodora was the daughter of John Petraliphas and therefore related to the family of Petraliphas in Nicaea, even though members of the Petraliphas family seem to be also prominent aristocrats in Epirus. This *Vita* is the only source that gives a genealogy of the family, A. MOUSTOXYDES, *Βίος τῆς Ὁσίας Θεοδώρας ὑπὸ Ἰώβ. Ἑλληνομνήμων*. Athens 1965, 41-59; A. M. TALBOT, *Holy Women of Byzantium*. Washington 1996, 326-333; MACRIDES, Akropolites 176.

³²⁸ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 49 (90 HEISENBERG-WIRTH); MM IV 147; MACRIDES, Akropolites 254-255. It cannot be argued with certainty if the emperor and Demetrios Tornikes had entered a relationship of spiritual brotherhood (*adelphopoiesis*), but their affiliation was honoured by the next two generations, C. RAPP, *Brother-Making in Late Antiquity and Byzantium*. Oxford 2016. According to Pachymeres, Demetrios' sons acquired prestige from the fact the emperor John III Doukas Batatzes called their father his 'brother', George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (93 FAILLER-LAURENT).

³²⁹ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 50 (93 HEISENBERG-WIRTH); SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 117-118.

³³⁰ PLP 29129, 29126, 29122; SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 117-119, 121-123,

whereas the other daughter, known as Tornikina Komnene, married John I Doukas Angelos of Thessaly, the illegitimate son of Michael II of Epirus³³¹.

Apart from Eirene and Maria, Theodore II with his wife, empress Helen, had four more children; John IV, Theodora, Eudokia and a daughter of unknown name. Theodore II considered to marry one of his daughters to the *pinkernes* George Nestongos because he was thinking highly of him, but the death prevented him³³². Unfortunately, more information about this marriage plan is not known; we miss any hint on the Laskarid princess to become Nestongos' spouse or the reason for the selection of the *pinkernes* among the other aristocrats by Theodore. The Nestongoi, as already mentioned, was a prominent family of Nicaea related by kinship to John III; George is also mentioned as cousin (ἀντανεψιός) of Michael VIII³³³. After this proposal, the ambitious Nestongos still hoped that he was going to marry one of the princesses and he was showing his abilities as a cavalry man in the court, trying to catch the interest of Theodore's daughters³³⁴.

In the period until 1259, it is evident that the Palaiologoi were at the forefront in the establishment of an active network of marriage alliances with the majority of the families of the Nicaean high aristocracy. Through their marriage policies they accomplished to strengthen the ties of kinship with prominent members of aristocratic families, with whom they either had practiced marriage alliances in the past such as the Tornikioi, or with whom they already shared common surnames and bloodlines revealing their Komnenian ancestry like the Kantakouzenoi or to whom they were connected by marriage for the first time like the Tarchaneiotai.

Since the Palaiologos family had the most active family network in Nicaea by that time, it seems quite reasonable that Michael VIII Palaiologos found his supporters among the members of high aristocracy. Already in his role first as a despot and then as an emperor-regent, he showed that he was quite aware of the significance of the marital unions between aristocrats; that is why he tended to marry his relatives into the families of his supporters and bestowed upon them dignities or support the intermarriages between the aristocratic families, which supported him; in that way he strengthened not only his position as a heir to the throne, but also the positions of his

³³¹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (108, 243 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 29138; POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 95; SCHMALZBAUER, *Tornikioi* 119-120.

³³² George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (95 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 20724.

³³³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (95 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

allies. His interference in the intermarriages of the aristocracy had also as a result his family to be the most secured by its connections, since the most prominent persons of the empire were related to him.

Andronikos Palaiologos, Michael's father, would possibly share the same ideas with his son, since his daughters were married into some of the most prominent families of the Empire, the Tarchaneiotai and the Kantakouzenoi. The role of women seems to be quite significant, since the kinship by marriage and the role of their husbands as *gambroi*, could raise a man's claims even to the imperial throne. Subsequently, it could be assumed that it was crucial for an aristocratic family to have many female members, since they could be the protagonists of the marriage alliances of their family as conveyors of lineage³³⁵. It could be said that the Palaiologoi knew the importance of the intermarriages better than any other family- maybe with the exception of their rivals, the Laskarids- since it was their marital unions, which brought them so close to the throne already before 1204.

It could also be noticed, that in the intermarriages of this period several aristocratic families in Nicaea remained inactive. The Kammytzes family left no evidence of intermarriages in this specific period; furthermore, for the Synadenos family we lack on evidence in the sources for almost fifty years³³⁶. The Nestongoi had not an active role in the intermarriages, as only two members of this family provide evidence on their potential marriages or kinships.

On the contrary, the families of Aprenoi, Kantakouzenoi, Raoul, Petraliphai, Tarchaneiotai and Tornikioi are often mentioned in the sources, not only for the deeds of their prominent members, but also for their marriage strategies. The majority of them was eventually related to the Palaiologoi; they also appear many times to have kinship ties with each other, such as the Raoul and Petraliphas families, both of Norman origin and firstly appeared in the Komnenian era. An example of these bonds could easily be traced in John Komnenos Doukas Angelos Petraliphas Raoul, who in the list of his surnames has both those of Petraliphas and Raoul, but also surnames that reveal a connection to the great families of the twelfth century.

³³⁵ This fact had already been noticed from the ninth and tenth centuries, when the use of surnames by the aristocratic families allowed not only to the male members of the family, but also to the female to declare their lineage and be conveyors of it. Families such as the Komnenoi or the Doukai, who, it could be said, were 'privileged' by having many women among their family members, had accomplished successful marriage alliances among their milieu and obtained an extensive family network.

³³⁶ HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, Synadenoi 134.

The imperial family of the Laskarids seems by the period under research to prefer the intermarriages with rulers of other states, since the proposals of marital unions with aristocrats are quite few. Even though the marriages of the daughters of Theodore II are not related to the high aristocracy, their significance could be observed in the reigning years of the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty. The reference to the royal intermarriages of the first Laskarid daughters, Eirene and Maria are making even more remarkable the difference between the marital unions of the younger princesses of the Laskarids, who married in the reign of Michael VIII; the latter was the one who found their future spouses. Another fact that might be crucial is how luck brought two Palaiologines to become royal brides on the side of the husbands previously married to Laskarid princesses and influence anew the marriage strategies of the next periods.

As it might be noticed, the Palaiologan system of intermarriages presents already from the beginning differences in comparison to the Komnenian one. Although, both the Komnenoi and the Palaiologoi rose up in power as a dominant family from a specific circle, the latter practiced many intermarriages with families of the same milieu long before their accession to the throne and they continued this practice during at least the reign of first two Palaiologans.

3. Marriage Strategies in the Reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282)

In the previous subchapter were presented the marriage strategies of the aristocracy until 1259; it became quite obvious that the Palaiologoi were the aristocratic family with the most active network among its milieu. Michael VIII Palaiologos seemed to be really concerned in the influence that not only the marriage policies of his family could have to his role as an emperor, but also the marriage strategies of the aristocratic families that consisted his entourage.

The intermarriages of the Palaiologoi secured the support of the aristocracy to Michael VIII and his military successes strengthened his position as a worthy emperor³³⁷. In 1261 the recapture of Constantinople, accomplished by Michael's

³³⁷ The battle of Pelagonia in 1259 was a great military success for Michael VIII Palaiologos when he was still co-emperor, since he defeated the alliance of Guillaume II de Villehardouin, prince of Morea, Michael II Komnenos Doukas of Epirus and Manfred of Sicily. According to Geanakoplos, in the period immediately preceding the Nicene reconquest of Constantinople in 1261 no event was of greater importance than Michael Palaeologus' victory at Pelagonia, GEANAKOPLS, Michael Palaiologos 47. For

general Alexios Strategopoulos, led to the coronation of Michael VIII and his son, Andronikos II Palaiologos on the 15th August of the same year³³⁸; in December, the young emperor John IV Laskaris, who was still in Nicaea, was blinded, an act that confirmed the earlier fears of the Patriarch Arsenios for the luck of Theodore's son. Arsenios reacted immediately with the excommunication of the emperor, a ban that was active until 1268.

The blinding of John IV led to the immediate reaction of his sister, Eirene Laskarina, who as it was mentioned earlier, was the wife of the tsar of Bulgaria, Constantine Tich. Since she wanted to revenge Michael VIII for what he did to her brother, she induced her husband to attack the Byzantine territories³³⁹. The successful diplomatic marriage of Theodore II had now become detrimental for the Empire, since Eirene's deeds were incited by her hate for the Byzantine emperor. Michael VIII was convinced that the remaining Laskarid princesses could cause further problems as they would not probably stop their struggle to restore their brother to the throne, therefore he decided that their marriages should be arranged carefully.

Michael VIII wanted to secure his position to the throne against anyone who could be an aspiring rival, since the blinding of the rightful heir made him to be seen as an usurper among a large proportion of the population, mostly in the Byzantine territories of Asia Minor. Hence, the spouses of the Laskarid princesses must not have the power to claim the ascendance to the throne³⁴⁰. The appropriate husbands were found among two noblemen of Latin origin and a Bulgarian ruler³⁴¹. In 1261, Theodora

a detailed account and analysis of the battle of Pelagonia see D. GEANAKOPOLOS, *Greco-Latin Relations on the Eve of the Byzantine Restoration: The Battle of Pelagonia-1259*. *DOP* 7 (1953) 99-141. An interesting fact for the alliance of Michael II of Epirus is that both Guillaume II and Manfred were his sons-in-law; Manfred was married to the eldest daughter of Michael, Helen Komnene Doukaina and Guillaume to the second, Anna Angelina Komnene Doukaina in 1258, George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 76 (156-159 HEISENBERG-WIRTH); George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (117 FAILLER-LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (71-72 SCHOPEN-BEKKER); NICOL, *Despotate* 172-173.

³³⁸ George Akropolites, *Χρονική Συγγραφή* 85-88 (181-188 HEISENBERG-WIRTH); George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (191-203 FAILLER-LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (83 SCHOPEN-BEKKER).

³³⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (191 FAILLER-LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (99 SCHOPEN-BEKKER).

³⁴⁰ Michael's VIII fears about the claims of the remaining Laskarids were reasonable, since after the death of Theodore II was already under discuss if the guardianship of the underaged emperor John IV should be taken by one of the husbands of the three daughters of Theodore, when they got married and not Michael, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (107 FAILLER-LAURENT).

³⁴¹ The marriage of the daughters of Theodore II with non-Byzantines made impossible their access to the imperial throne, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (243 FAILLER-LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (92-93 SCHOPEN-BEKKER).

Laskarina married Mathieu de Véligourt, baron of Veligosti in the principality of Achaia³⁴²; her two sisters were also married in the same year. The marriage of Eudokia Laskarina was arranged with Guglielmo, count of Ventimiglia, who was a vassal of Genova³⁴³ and finally the last sister, of unknown name was married to the Bulgarian ruler of Vidyne, Svietoslav³⁴⁴.

Before the marriage policies that he followed with the last representatives of the rival dynasty of the Laskarids, the emperor wanted to create a marriage alliance with the Mongols, who were attacking the Empire in the East. He proposed the marriage of his illegitimate daughter, Maria to the Mongol khan, Hülegü³⁴⁵. Maria's mother was a lady probably of the aristocratic family of Batatzes, since she is known as Diplobatzina (two times a Batatzes)³⁴⁶. Maria was probably born before 1253/4, since Michael VIII then married Theodora; therefore, she must have been of proper age for marriage³⁴⁷. But before the young bride reached her spouse-to-be, Hülegü died and Maria finally married his son and heir, Abaqa³⁴⁸. After the death of her husband in 1281, Maria known also as Δέσποινα/ Κυρά τῶν Μουγουλίων (Lady of the Mongols), came back to Constantinople, where she established the Monastery of Mougoulion³⁴⁹. She is also depicted in the Monastery of Chora in Constantinople as a nun with the name Melania, with the inscription Lady of the Mongols³⁵⁰. Her diplomatic actions by the time of the reign of her half-brother Andronikos II, as well as the marriage of her daughter, Theodora Palaiologina Arachatlun with a member of the family of Asan are going to be analysed in the next chapter.

³⁴² PLP 7304, 2555.

³⁴³ PLP 6234 (91888), 2738.

³⁴⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (243 FAILLER–LAURENT). Nikephoros Gregoras confused the names of the Laskarid princesses and wrote that the wife of Constantine Tich was Theodora, instead of Eirene, the eldest daughter of Theodore II, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (92-93 SCHOPEN–BEKKER). Svietoslav is known by the Byzantine sources as Ὁσφεντισθλάβος.

³⁴⁵ PLP 21395, 30379; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 33-34.

³⁴⁶ As mentioned in the first chapter, the Batatzes family had two distinctive branches like the Palaiologoi. The name Diplobatzina reveals that probably in her the two branches of Batatzai met through the marriage of her parents. Unfortunately, no other information is known about Diplobatzina, since Pachymeres refers to her only by name, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (235 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 5515.

³⁴⁷ The proper age for marriage for the girls was twelve and fourteen for the boys.

³⁴⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (235 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 1141. The marriage according to Fallier seems to have taken place around 1264 after the death of Hülegü or in 1265 in the coronation of Abaqa. On the contrary, Dölger argued that the marriage took place in 1261, DÖLGER, *Regesten* 40, 67.

³⁴⁹ MM I, 312-317.

³⁵⁰ See chapter one.

Another illegitimate daughter of the emperor, Euphrosyne Palaiologina³⁵¹ served the diplomatic strategies of her father and married the ruler of the Mongols of the Golden Horde, Nogai³⁵², who was going to be one of the most faithful allies of Michael VIII until his death in 1282³⁵³. The marriage took place around 1269 to 1270³⁵⁴. It is interesting that all marriage policies related to the emperor's daughters—either illegitimate or not— took place with potential allies of the emperor in order to face the political problems that had risen up after other intermarriages arranged by Theodore II or by Michael VIII himself.

Since the problems with the Bulgarian realm continued to exist, Michael VIII searched for a new ally; he found him in Mytzes, son-in-law of tsar John II Asan, who claimed already from the time of the murder of John II the Bulgarian throne as a rival of Constantine Tich³⁵⁵. In 1262/3, the emperor agreed to an intermarriage between the son of Mytzes, John III Asan and his eldest daughter Eirene Palaiologina³⁵⁶. The marital union was not concluded until 1278; it is the first time that we observe a fifteen-year betrothal of an imperial daughter in the Palaiologan period. Since the sources do not report them being underage by the time of their betrothal, the marriage must have happened after the pressure of the danger in the north frontier of the Empire, caused by another diplomatic marriage arranged by Michael VIII³⁵⁷. Eirene Palaiologina and her husband, John III Asan, who was crowned tsar of Bulgaria in 1279³⁵⁸, are the establishers of the Byzantine aristocratic family of Asan, whose members are known as Asan or Palaiologoi Asan. The couple came back from Bulgaria after the defeat of John III by the Bulgarian Lachanas and the rise to the throne of George Terter, husband of Asan's sister³⁵⁹. They had no less than ten children, of whom seven survived. Their marriages took place under Andronikos II and some of them served the diplomacy of the emperor³⁶⁰.

³⁵¹ PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 33.

³⁵² PLP 20693.

³⁵³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (447-449 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁵⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (149-150 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

³⁵⁵ PLP 19904.

³⁵⁶ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (449-451 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21359, 1501; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 27-28; TRAPP, Asanen 166. On Eirene Palaiologina Asanina see also K. KUBINA, Manuel Philes and the Asan Family. *JÖB* 63 (2013) 177-198, here 181-183, 186-187.

³⁵⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (553-555 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁵⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (132-133 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

³⁵⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (561-567 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁶⁰ See subchapter four.

A marital union between the second daughter of Michael VIII, Anna Palaiologina and Stephan Urös II Milutin, the second son of the kral of Serbia, Stephan I Urös seemed to be proposed by the Byzantine emperor in 1269³⁶¹. Michael VIII wanted probably to extend the network of intermarriages with the foreign rulers, in order to diminish the Bulgarian threat in the northern borders. Even though there was a strong interest of both the Serbian ruler and the emperor, the marriage arrangements were finally cancelled³⁶². A new potential spouse for Anna was found in Demetrios (Michael) Doukas Komnenos Koutroules Angelos, younger son of Michael II, Despot of Epirus. Demetrios was a captive in Constantinople and after the death of his father was renamed Michael³⁶³. However, a marriage between those two seemed to be difficult, since they were related by marriage in a lower degree than the seventh, a fact that made their union unacceptable by the Church³⁶⁴. In 1278, after the decision of the Synod they were finally married³⁶⁵. The emperor bestowed upon Michael Angelos the title of *Despot*, as he had done earlier with Eirene's husband, John III Asan³⁶⁶. Michael and Anna had together two children, Andronikos and Constantine, who acquired positions in the court of the emperor³⁶⁷. Finally, the last daughter of Michael VIII, Eudokia married shortly before her father's death in 1282, the emperor of Trebizond John II Komnenos³⁶⁸.

Michael VIII had tried, when the circumstances allowed it, to first establish and then extend his network of alliances, depending heavily on diplomacy and mostly on one of the most significant means of the Byzantine diplomacy, the intermarriages. The emperor and his wife had together seven children; the marriages of their daughters Eirene, Anna and Eudokia had already been mentioned, together with those of the illegitimate daughters of the emperor, Maria and Euphrosyne. From their four sons, Manuel had died as an infant; they still had Andronikos II –the later emperor–,

³⁶¹ PLP 21350, 21184, 21180; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 29.

³⁶² George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (453-457 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁶³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (559 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21350, 193; POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 96.

³⁶⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (559 FAILLER–LAURENT); On the prohibited degrees of consanguinity see analytically below.

³⁶⁵ Τόμος ὁ ἐκτεθεὶς ἐπὶ τῷ συνοικεσίῳ τοῦ δεσπότη κυροῦ Μιχαήλ καὶ τῆς βασιλίσσης Ἄννης, θυγατρός τοῦ ἁγίου βασιλέως in: M.I. GEDEON (ed.), Ἰωάννου Βέκκου τοῦ οἰκουμενικοῦ πατριάρχου συνοδικὰ γράμματα. *Ἀρχεῖον Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ἱστορίας* 1 (1911) 43-50, here 48-50; George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (561 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁶⁶ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (561 FAILLER–LAURENT); NICOL, *Despotate* 21-22.

³⁶⁷ PLP 21435, 21495.

³⁶⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (653-659 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (148-149 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 12064, 12106.

Constantine, known as Porphyrogennetos, since he was born after his father's coronation in Constantinople and Theodore Palaiologos³⁶⁹.

The matter of marriage of his son and heir Andronikos II was of great significance; therefore, Michael VIII was searching for the proper wife, whose family could be a useful ally or she could at least bring without bloody conflicts a dowry consisting of territories belonging earlier to the Empire. Therefore, the emperor's first choice was Isabeau de Villehardouin, princess of Achaia and firstborn daughter of Guillaume II and Anna Angelina of Epirus³⁷⁰. Since the Byzantines could not take back Morea from the Latins by war, Michael VIII had proposed the marital union in order Andronikos to gain Achaia as his wife's inheritance³⁷¹. The barons of Achaia had probably understood the purposes of the emperor and they did not want Morea to become a Byzantine province, thus the proposal was rejected³⁷².

After the failed attempt for an intermarriage with the Frankish princess of Achaia and since the treaty of Viterbo had made him to be quite worried for the luck of the restored Empire, Michael VIII turned to the Western kingdoms to find a wife for his heir³⁷³. His quest led him to Eirene, daughter of king Stefan V of Hungary; she was a granddaughter of Bela IV and Maria Laskarina, daughter of Theodore I of Nicaea³⁷⁴. Since the intermarriages between the Byzantine Empire and the Hungarian realm were a tradition already from the Komnenian era, both sides were more than willing for this marriage to take place. Eirene travelled to Constantinople, renamed to Anna and married Andronikos II in 1272³⁷⁵.

³⁶⁹ PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 22-23.

³⁷⁰ Marino Sanudo Torsello, *Istoria* (129 PAPADOPOULOU); PLP 6445.

³⁷¹ The proposal had followed the defeat of the Byzantines in Prinitsa in 1263, *Chronicle of Morea* vv. 4664-4863 (196-204 KALONAROS). According to the Frankish law in the principality of Achaia, the Assizes of Romania, the female heirs of the princes of Morea could inherit the principality. This matter was of great significance for the Villehardouins, since their male lines were extinct after the death of Guillaume II, P. TOPPING, *Liber Consuetudinum Imperii Romaniae*. Feudal Institutions as Revealed of the Assizes of Romania, the Law Code of Frankish Greece. Philadelphia 1949, 39, 143. The reigning dynasty of the principality were the members, -male and female, since the *Lex Salica* was not followed by the Frankish hegemonies in the Aegean-, of the de Villehardouin family until its last female representative, Mahaut de Hainaut in 1318, M. DOUROU-ELIOPOULOU, *Το Φράγκικο Πριγκιπάτο της Αχαΐας* (1204-1432). Thessaloniki 2005, 29-33.

³⁷² Interesting is the fact that this marriage proposal is not referred to any Byzantine source, except from an account of Pachymeres about a Byzantine embassy to the Italians for a potential marriage of Andronikos. The embassy couldn't accomplish its purpose due to the presence of Charles D'Anjou, claimer of the Byzantine territories in Greece and declared enemy of Byzantium in Sicily, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (411 FAILLER-LAURENT).

³⁷³ For the Treaty of Viterbo see GEANAKOPOLOS, Michael Palaiologus 152-155.

³⁷⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (411-413 FAILLER-LAURENT).

³⁷⁵ Dölger suggested that Andronikos was crowned co-emperor already in 1261 in the coronation of his father, F. DÖLGER, *Die dynastische Familienpolitik des Kaisers Michael VIII Palaiologos* in: F. DÖLGER

The younger brothers of Andronikos II, Constantine and Theodore Palaiologos were married after the death of Michael VIII. Nevertheless, Gregoras informs us about a marriage plan that the emperor had in mind for his beloved son, Constantine Porphyrogennetos. He, except the privileges and incomes that his father had given to him, was going to be married with a prominent lady belonging to the Latin aristocracy; furthermore, Michael VIII intended to give him the territory of Thessaloniki in order to establish a new Byzantine hegemony. Even though Gregoras supports his account, it seems that this policy is far away from the diplomatic activities of Michael VIII, whose priorities were the survival of the Empire and the intermarriages of his immediate family and relatives³⁷⁶.

The Palaiologoi were a family which in order to success their alliances not only with the aristocratic families, but also with the foreign rulers, used all their relatives into their marriage strategies, female and male, legitimate or illegitimate into their marriage strategies. This was the case of the marriage of the illegitimate daughter of *Despot* John Palaiologos, brother of Michael VIII³⁷⁷. After his defeat in Nea Patra by the ruler of Thessaly, John I the Illegitimate in 1273, Palaiologos fell in disfavour and was sent by his brother in the Eastern frontier of the Empire³⁷⁸. There, John had not only many military successes, but also a diplomatic one, since he married his illegitimate and only daughter of unknown name to the ruler of Iberia, David³⁷⁹. The intermarriage was significant for the defence of the Eastern frontier of the Empire and the emperor seemed to be satisfied by his brother's action.

The members of the family of Michael's beloved sister, Eirene (Eulogia) Komnene Palaiologina and her husband, John Komnenos Angelos Kantakouzenos are the representatives of the family of Kantakouzenos. The couple had four daughters, as it was referred above. The eldest, Theodora was married to a prominent member of the Raoul family and the second, Maria was married to the *megas domestikos* Alexios

(ed.), ΠΑΡΑΣΠΟΡΑ. 30 Aufsätze zur Geschichte, Kultur und Sprache des byzantinischen Reiches. Ettal 1961, 178-188. Christophilopoulou on the contrary suggested that according to Pachymeres, Andronikos was crowned co-emperor after his marriage in 1272, E. CHRISTOPHILOPOULOU, Έκλογή, ἀναγόρευσις καί στέψις τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ αὐτοκράτορος. Athens 1956, 185-188; Generally on the matter, L. MAVROMATES, Οι Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι: προβλήματα πολιτικής και πρακτικής ιδεολογίας. Athens 1983, 25-30.

³⁷⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία I (187-188 SCHOPEN –BEKKER).

³⁷⁷ John Palaiologos had no children with his wife, the daughter of Constantine Tornikes. Also, the mother of his illegitimate daughter is not known by any of the sources.

³⁷⁸ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (285 FAILLER–LAURENT); P. MAGDALINO, Notes on the last years of John Palaiologos, brother of Michael VIII. *REB* 34 (1976) 143-149.

³⁷⁹ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (287 FAILLER–LAURENT).

Philes. The last two, Anna and Eugenia were still unmarried, when their uncle the emperor concluded peace with the Despot of Epirus, Michael II and an intermarriage. Michael's II son, Nikephoros I was windowed after the death of his wife, Maria Laskarina, daughter of Theodore II. The emperor selected Anna Palaiologina Kantakouzene³⁸⁰ as the proper bride; the marriage took place in 1265 in Epirus. After the marriage, Michael VIII invited Nikephoros I in Constantinople, where he welcomed him with honours and gave him many presents³⁸¹. Anna and Nikephoros had together three children, Maria, Thomas and Thamar, who are going to play an important role in the intermarriages of Andronikos II.

When Eirene Laskarina, wife of the Bulgarian tsar Constantine Tich died, the latter wanted to put an end in the hostilities against the Empire, because he had exhausted his army fighting against the Byzantines for his wife's claims. Moreover, he asked for the hand of a Byzantine, preferably Palaiologan, princess. Michael VIII chose his niece, Maria Palaiologina Kantakouzene, the widow of *megas domestikos* Alexios Philes³⁸². They were married in 1268/9, but unfortunately the peace between the two countries did not last long.

Michael VIII was aware that the Byzantine Empire was in danger, as his most fatal and powerful enemy by that time was Charles d'Anjou³⁸³, who was already planning his campaign for the restoration of the Latin Empire³⁸⁴. Therefore, the emperor tried to delay Charles' expedition with his intensive diplomatic activity; in this context he had suggested the Union of the Churches. His action, even though he wanted to be beneficial for the Empire, had faced the forceful opposition first of the Church, but also of the aristocratic circles of Constantinople. It also caused the division of the Byzantine

³⁸⁰ PLP 10933; NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 20-24; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiogen 19

³⁸¹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (315 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (92 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

³⁸² PLP 19910; NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 19-20; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 20.

³⁸³ Charles d'Andjou, the younger brother of the King of France, Louis IX, became King of Sicily, after his predominance firstly in the battle of Benevento in 1266, where he defeated Manfred Hohenstaufen, King of Sicily and then in the battle of Tagliacozzo two years later, where with the help of prince Guillaume II of Achaia, who was his vassal, he defeated the last representative of the Hohenstaufen, the sixteen-year-old, Conrad V, known as Conradin, GEANAKOPOLOS, Michael Palaiologus 147-165.

³⁸⁴ Charles' marriage policies mirrored clearly his ambitions. He had married his eldest daughter, Beatrice to the titular Latin emperor of Constantinople, Philipp de Courtenay and then his own son, Philipp d'Anjou, titular King of Thessaloniki to the princess of Achaia, Isabeau de Villehardouin. By the last intermarriage he had also gained the suzerainty over the principality of Achaia. An interesting fact is also that Charles' eldest son, Charles II, was married to a daughter of King Stephan V of Hungary and sister of the Byzantine empress Anna; therefore, it could be said that he was *suggambros* of Andronikos II, P. LOCK, *The Franks in the Aegean (1204-1500)*. London/ New York 1995, 66, 84-85, 360-361; On Charles d'Anjou and the Frankish hegemonies in Romania, see M. DOUROU-ELIOPOULOU *Η Ανδεγαυική κυριαρχία στην Ρωμανία επί Κάρολου I (1266-1285)*. Athens 1987.

society into those who found his diplomacy effective and to those that were totally against it. Among the prominent members of the aristocracy that were against the Union were even members of Michael's VIII immediate family and entourage such as his sisters, Eirene (Eulogia) Palaiologina Kantakouzene and Martha (Maria) Palaiologina Tarchaneiotissa and their families³⁸⁵.

Her opposition to the Union had brought also Maria Kantakouzene into direct conflict with her uncle. Instead of helping Michael VIII to obtain a beneficial alliance, she followed the policy of Eirene Laskarina and conducted her husband to start a new series of invasions in the Byzantine territories. Her mother had also moved in Bulgaria with her and as a pioneer of the anti-unionists, she accepted in the Bulgarian court all the people that were against the ecclesiastical policy of the emperor³⁸⁶. The power of Maria Kantakouzene as a queen and her involvement in the politics of the Bulgarian realm increased notably after the birth of her son with Constantine, Michael and the sickness of her husband. Since she wanted to secure her son's ascendance to the throne, Maria pretended that she wanted to adopt Svietoslav, the ruler of Vidyne and husband of the younger daughter of Theodore II; however, her intention was to murder him³⁸⁷. The success of Maria's attempt against Svietoslav followed the murder of Constantine Tich in 1277 by a shepard named Lachanas³⁸⁸.

When Maria married Lachanas in 1278 and legitimized his rise to the throne, the emperor decided to help the fiancé of his eldest daughter, John III Asan (Mytzes) to claim the Bulgarian throne. Michael VIII and John III with the valuable help of the Mongols of the Golden Horde tried to defeat Lachanas and they captured Maria, who was pregnant to his daughter and imprisoned her in Constantinople³⁸⁹. As it was mentioned above, Eirene Palaiologina and Asan married the same year and John was also crowned king of Bulgaria in 1279. Unfortunately his reign and with it the

³⁸⁵ It should be mentioned here that the names Eulogia and Maria had been taken by Eirene and Martha after they had become nuns, a common practice of the members of the high aristocracy of the Palaiologan period, E. MITSIOU, *Late Byzantine Female Monasticism from the Point of View of the Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople* in: C. GASTGEGER, E. MITSIOU, J. PREISER-KAPPELLER (ed.), *The Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople*. Wien 2013, 105-114.

³⁸⁶ Eirene and her daughter, Maria, supported at first the Arseniates and then the anti-unionists, causing great trouble to Michael VIII, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (431-435, 545 FAILLER-LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (130 SCHOPEN-BEKKER).

³⁸⁷ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (547 FAILLER-LAURENT).

³⁸⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (551-553 FAILLER-LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (130-131 SCHOPEN-BEKKER); PLP 14609, where Lachanas is also referred with his Bulgarian name Ivajlo Vurdokva.

³⁸⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (561-569 FAILLER-LAURENT).

Byzantine influence in the Bulgarian realm, did not last for a long time. John III lost the throne from George Terter and he returned to Constantinople with his wife and children, who constituted the family of Asan. Moreover, Lachanas was defeated by another son-in-law of the emperor, the Mongol Nogai³⁹⁰.

The offspring of Martha (Maria) Palaiologina, Michael's VIII sister and wife of *megas domestikos* Nikephoros Tarchaneiotos played an active part in the marriages policies of the Palaiologan dynasty. Nikephoros and Martha had three³⁹¹ sons and one daughter, Theodora Tarchaneiotissa Balanidiotissa, whose marriage was referred earlier. When Despot Michael II of Epirus died in 1267, the emperor extended his diplomatic relations to the ruler of Thessaly, John I Angelos the Illegitimate³⁹², who competed his brother, Nikephoros I of Epirus. Michael VIII had asked for the hand of one of John's daughters for his nephew, Andronikos Tarchaneiotos, eldest son of Martha³⁹³.

By the time of his marriage with the unnamed by the sources daughter of John I, Andronikos took the office of *megas konostaulos* and resided in Adrianople; his father-in-law became also *sevastokrator*³⁹⁴. Sometime near 1272, Andronikos felt possibly offended of the fact that his younger brother, Michael Palaiologos Tarchaneiotos was raised to the office of *megas domestikos* probably due to his military successes. Andronikos fled with his wife in Thessaly, to his father-in-law and caused an upheaval between John Angelos and the Byzantine empire³⁹⁵. Unfortunately, there is no evidence about any offspring of his³⁹⁶.

³⁹⁰ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (591 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁹¹ From their sons, the older two were married; their youngest son John Tarchaneiotos took part in military expeditions by the side of his maternal uncle, the *Despot* John Palaiologos. In circa 1266 he was already a pioneer of the Arseniates. His mother and half-sister, Nostongissa Tarchaneiotissa were also supporters of the Arseniates. There is no evidence about him ever being married or having any children, PLP 27487; LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 68-69. For the Arseniates see P. GOUNARIDES, *Τὸ κίνημα τῶν Ἀρσενιατῶν* (1261–1310). *Ἰδεολογικὲς διαμάχες τὴν ἐποχὴ τῶν πρώτων Παλαιολόγων*. Athens 1999.

³⁹² PLP 608; POLEMIS, *The Doukai*; NICOL, *Despotate* 11.

³⁹³ PLP 27475; LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 64-65; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 14.

³⁹⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (399-401 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁹⁵ The emperor sent his brother, John Palaiologos there as commander with a considerable military power, but he was defeated and later quitted from his office and privileges in 1273. John I Angelos, asked for the help of the Duke of Athens, Jean de la Roche against the Byzantines, suggesting also an intermarriage between Jean and one of his daughters; since the Duke was not well in his health, he suggested as potential spouse his brother, Guy I de la Roche. He finally became the husband of John's daughter, Helen Doukaina; although the alliance of the *Sevastokrator* of Thessaly was important, he was finally defeated by the Byzantine army under Alexios Philanthropenos. George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (417-419, 421, 425-427, 431-433 FAILLER–LAURENT); GEANAKOPOLOS, *Michael Palaiologus* 279-285.

³⁹⁶ LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 65.

The second son of Nikephoros Tarchaneiotēs, Michael Palaiologos Tarchaneiotēs³⁹⁷ was raised as the rest of his siblings in the imperial palace after the coronation of his uncle³⁹⁸. He married possibly before 1262 the unnamed daughter of *megas domestikos* Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos, who had been a great military commander already by the time of Theodore II³⁹⁹. The couple had together two children, Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos, who, as it is clear from the sources, preferred the name of his maternal grandfather and an unnamed daughter, who married into the Raoul family.

The youngest brother of emperor Michael VIII, *sevastokrator* Constantine Palaiologos, and his wife Eirene Branaina had together five children, Michael Komnenos Branas Palaiologos, Andronikos Komnenos Branas Doukas Angelos Palaiologos, Maria Komnene Laskarina Doukaina Tornikina Palaiologina, a daughter of unknown name and Theodora Palaiologina. Their eldest son was not married and he became a monk with the name Makarios⁴⁰⁰. Constantine and Eirene seemed to have died early enough⁴⁰¹ to leave their youngest daughter, Theodora⁴⁰² under the guardianship of the emperor, as she herself informs us in the *Typikon* of the Monastery of Bebaia Elpis⁴⁰³. According to the same *Typikon*, shortly after their death Theodora married, probably with the consent of her uncle, into the Synadenos family in ca.1280. Her husband was John Angelos Doukas Synadenos, upon whom the emperor received by the time of their marriage the rank of *megas stratopedarches*⁴⁰⁴.

Interestingly enough Theodora Palaiologina Synadene referred to her husband's lineage emphasising that it could be traced back clearly to the Komnenoi, meaning probably the intermarriages between the imperial family and the Synadenoi⁴⁰⁵. They had together three children, John, Theodore and Euphrosyne. After a military career of

³⁹⁷ PLP 27505; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 66-67; Papadopoulos confuses in his work the *Provestiarios* Michael Palaiologos Tarchaneiotēs to the *protostrator* Michael Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotēs, PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 14-15.

³⁹⁸ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (155 FAILLER–LAURENT).

³⁹⁹ In the same passage of the marriage, Alexios Philanthropenos is referred as ἀντάδελφος of Theodore I Laskaris' brother, Michael. George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι I (273 FAILLER–LAURENT); ATHENAGORAS, Philanthropenoi 63.

⁴⁰⁰ PLP 21530.

⁴⁰¹ Papadopoulos placed their death in ca. 1271, PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 6.

⁴⁰² PLP 21381; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 9; SPATHARAKIS, Portraits 193-199.

⁴⁰³ DELEHAYE, Deux typica 24; TALBOT, *Bebaia Elpis: Typikon* of Theodora Synadene 1525.

⁴⁰⁴ PLP 27125; HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, Synadenoi 134-135.

⁴⁰⁵ DELEHAYE, Deux typica 24; TALBOT, *Bebaia Elpis: Typikon* of Theodora Synadene 1525. Through their kinship with the Komnenoi, the Synadenoi had practiced an intermarriage with the family of Palaiologos already from the twelfth century (see above). Pachymeres refers to John only as Synadenos, George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι III (81 FAILLER–LAURENT).

some distinction, John became a monk under the name Joachim, probably shortly before his death. Theodora then decided to embrace the monastic life herself under the name Theodoule (ca. 1295–1300), along with her daughter Euphrosyne Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina, who was of young age⁴⁰⁶. In the *Typikon*, Theodora Synadene speaks about many members of her family apart from her parents such as not only her children and grandchildren with their spouses, but also her siblings, giving abundant information about their family connections and the use of surnames among the members of the aristocracy of the period⁴⁰⁷.

Apart from Theodora, Maria Palaiologina, the eldest daughter of the Sevastokrator Constantine Komnenos Palaiologos, married probably during the reign of her uncle, Michael VIII. On the other hand, Andronikos Komnenos Branas Doukas Angelos Palaiologos might have been married during the reign of Andronikos II, as his anonymous sister also did. Unfortunately, the exact dates of the marriages of Andronikos and Maria are not known, therefore it could only be assumed that Maria Komnene Laskarina Doukaina Tornikina Palaiologina⁴⁰⁸, as she is referred in the *Typikon*, may have been married before her youngest sister, Theodora. Her husband was Isaakios Komnenos Doukas Tornikes⁴⁰⁹ and they had together one son, Andronikos Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos Tornikes⁴¹⁰.

A common phenomenon when listing the marriages of the aristocracy is the lack of evidence regarding the dates of the marital unions. Thus, the marriages of some prominent members of the aristocratic families are mentioned in the chronological time frame that they most likely have happened, based on the information that is available about their lives, careers and sometimes the dates of the marriages of their children. The above-mentioned case of Maria Tornikina Palaiologina was one of such cases during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos; the other cases are those of Theodore Mouzalon, Michael Strategopoulos and Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotēs.

Belonging probably to the family of Mouzalones from Nicaea, Theodore Boilas Mouzalon, *logothetes tou genikou* from 1277 to ca.1282 and *megas logothetes* (1282 –

⁴⁰⁶ TALBOT, *Bebaia Elpis: Typikon of Theodora Synadene* 1512; PLP 21373; SPATHARAKIS, Portraits 199 and pl.153.

⁴⁰⁷ For the *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis see above.

⁴⁰⁸ DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 92; PLP 21396; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 8.

⁴⁰⁹ DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 92; PLP 29125; POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 185; SCHMALZBAUER, *Tornikioi* 125-126.

⁴¹⁰ PLP 29122; POLEMIS, *The Doukai* 185; SCHMALZBAUER, *Tornikioi* 126-127.

1294) was married to a Kantakouzene; their marriage was arranged by the emperor ⁴¹¹. Unfortunately, there is not enough information about the identity of the parents of this unnamed Kantakouzene, it is only supposed that she might be one of the daughters of Eirene-Eulogia and John Kantakouzenos⁴¹². They had together a daughter, Eudokia, whose marriage took place in the reign of Andronikos II.

The *protostrator* Michael Strategopoulos, apparently the son of Constantine Strategopoulos, mentioned earlier in the chapter and of his wife, known as Strategopoulina, was also a cousin of empress Theodora Palaiologina⁴¹³. He married Anna Komnene Strategopoulina Raoulaina, possibly a daughter of John Komnenos Doukas Petraliphas Raoul and Theodora Raoulaina Palaiologina Komnene Kantakouzene, who was known also as *protostratorissa*, by her husband's title⁴¹⁴. They had together a son, Andreas Strategopoulos, who died very young⁴¹⁵.

The *protostrator* Michael Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotes was one of the most successful military commanders of both of emperor Michael VIII and his son, Andronikos II ⁴¹⁶. He married Maria Doukaina Komnene Branaina Palaiologina Tarchaneiotissa⁴¹⁷, known also as *protostratorissa* and they had -after many years of marriage- a daughter of unknown name. Maria's parents were possibly the *megas papias* Nikolaos Komnenos Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotes and Theodora Doukaina Branaina Glabaina; in such a case it is observed an endogamy in the Tarchaneiotes family⁴¹⁸. Michael and Maria were responsible for the restoration of the Church of

⁴¹¹ In the passage is clear that the emperor gave in marriage this unnamed Kantakouzene to Theodore Mouzalon, George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι II (625 FAILLER-LAURENT); PLP 19439. Theodore seemed to have died in 1294.

⁴¹² For Theodore's wife, Nicol had expressed the opinion that she might have been a daughter of John Kantakouzenos and Eirene-Eulogia, because she is described as 'Kantakouzenos's daughter' and John is usually referred in Pachymeres only as 'Kantakouzenos', NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 25-26.

⁴¹³ PLP 26898; Doukaina Strategopoulina is the sister of John Doukas, father of Michael's VIII wife, Theodora Palaiologina.

⁴¹⁴ Manuel Philes, Carmina II (135, 263 MILLER); PLP 26893; FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 31-33.

⁴¹⁵ PLP 26895.

⁴¹⁶ Manuel Philes, Carmina II (14, 103, 107, 139 and many more MILLER). A poem of Philes entitled Εἰς τὰ τοῦ πρωτοστράτορος ἐκείνου τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ στρατηγήματα cites important historical information about Michael's military career, Ibid. II 240-255. Michael Glabas Tarchaneiotes had served the Empire in many posts such as those of *kouropalates* (1262), *pinkernes* (1282), *megas konostaulos* (1282-1297), before being *protostrator* in ca.1302, an office that he held until 1304 after when he became a monk, PLP 27504; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 69-72; POLEMIS, The Doukai 121.

⁴¹⁷ PLP 27511; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 78-79. Maria became a nun with the name Martha, after the death of her husband, BELTING - MANGO – MOURIKI, Pammakaristos 21; A. EFFENBERGER, Die Klöster der beiden Kyrai Martha und die Kirche des Bebaia Elpis-Klosters in Konstantinopel. *Millenium* 3 (2006) 255-293.

⁴¹⁸ PLP 4208; LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 81-82. Leontiadis referred to the matter of Maria's parents after careful consideration, expressed the opinion that her potential mother Theodora Doukaina Branaina Glabaina might had become a nun with the name Theodosia. However, he insists that the kinship relations

Pammakaristos in Constantinople, probably in ca.1263 and therefore they were known as the new *κλήτορες* of the Church with inscriptions referring to them⁴¹⁹.

During the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos, it is apparent that the emperor played a predominant role in the intermarriages of his immediate family, his relatives and the members of the high aristocracy. Since the Palaiologoi were now the imperial dynasty, their marriage strategies were planned firstly and foremost depending on the internal and external policies, of the emperor. Consequently, the members of the extended family network of the Palaiologoi had practiced several intermarriages not only with persons of the same milieu, but also with foreign rulers, serving the emperor's diplomacy.

After ascending to the throne, Michael VIII was seriously concerned to outplay any of his possible rivals; therefore, he promptly started to plan the marriages of the Laskarid princesses. As immediate descendants of the former emperor of Nicaea and probably furious after the blinding of their brother and rightful heir to the Byzantine throne, John IV Laskaris, they were a constant threat for Palaiologos. The fact that they were women did not exclude them from their imperial right as many cases in Byzantine history proved; on the contrary, as it was presented earlier in this chapter, if they were married, their husbands would be the *gambroi* of Theodore II, which automatically legitimised any claims they may have to the throne⁴²⁰. Since the older two of them were already married and their spouses had started to cause problems in the Empire by attacking the Byzantine territories, the emperor decided that the husbands of the last three daughters of Theodore II should not be considerable rivals. Therefore, he had chosen two Latin nobles, vassals of Achaia and Genova respectively and a Bulgarian ruler of minor importance and diminished any danger by 'exiling' the princesses through their marriages in territories out of the borders of the Empire⁴²¹.

between the persons involved demand a more in-depth examination, LEONTIADES, Tarchaneiotai 78. In PLP the nun Theodosia Glabaina is referred as Maria's mother, based probably in the inscription of the church of Pammakaristos, PLP 4206; SCHREINER, Pammakaristoskirche 222; On the parents of Maria Doukaina Komnene Branaina Palaiologina Tarchaneiotissa see A. EFFENBERGER, Zu den Eltern der Maria Dukaina Komnene Branaina Tarchaneiotissa. *JÖB* 57 (2007) 169-182.

⁴¹⁹ BELTING - MANGO – MOURIKI, Pammakaristos 21; SCHREINER, Pammakaristoskirche 222.

⁴²⁰ As Gregoras describes in his account, the importance of the imperial descent had made emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, to present his nieces and daughters of Kantakouzenos as daughters of Theodore II Laskaris, when he wanted to marry them with Nikephoros I of Epirus and Constantine Tich, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (130 SCHOPEN– BEKKER).

⁴²¹ Although it could be assumed that in this way the emperor had secured his dynasty from the rival family of Laskarids, an event in the period of war between the Byzantines and the Latins in Morea (1263-1266) reveals the opposite. After the battle of Makryplagi in 1264, the prince of Achaia took as prisoners the *Megas Domestikos* Alexios Philes, the *parakoimomenos* John Makrenos and Alexios Kaballarios; the

Meanwhile, Michael VIII tried to secure the Empire by forging new alliances and using many means of diplomacy, but mostly the intermarriages, to shield them. He arranged the marriages of his illegitimate daughters to Mongol rulers and of his three daughters by empress Theodora correspondingly to a claimant of the Bulgarian throne, to a son of the Despot of Epirus and to the emperor of Trebizond. Michael VIII had also proposed an intermarriage between a son of the Serbian king and one of his daughters; a proposal was also made to the prince of Achaia, in order to marry his eldest daughter to emperor's son and heir Andronikos II, who in the end took as his first wife the daughter of the Hungarian king Stephan V. The majority of those marriages and proposals of marriage were suggested by the emperor, since he was well aware of the dangers that the Empire faced, mostly by the Latins and especially of Charles d'Anjou, who wanted the restoration of the Latin Empire of Constantinople⁴²².

Not only his own children participated in the marriage alliances which served the policies of the emperor, but also the children of his siblings, the primary representatives of the prominent families of Kantakouzenoi and Tarchaneiotai. Although Michael VIII conceived the intermarriages of the daughters of Eirene (Eulogia) Palaiologina Kantakouzene to the Bulgarian ruler and the Despot of Epirus as profitable for the Empire, they finally proved problematic. Especially Maria, the wife of Constantine Tich caused many problems to her uncle due to her opposition to the Union of the Churches and her mother's influence on this matter. It was then that Michael VIII, in order to face the hostilities of the Bulgarians, had tried to raise to the Bulgarian throne his son-in-law, John III Asan, whose reign with the Byzantine support did not last long.

As it can be deduced, the role of women in the intermarriages is quite significant. The existence of many female representatives seemed to be a great privilege for an imperial or an aristocratic family, since women were preferred in the marriage strategies of their family or the emperor in order to achieve a successful alliance. The

first two were put in charge of the Byzantine army in Morea by the *Sevastokrator* Constantine Palaiologos. Philes died while imprisoned, but the emperor managed to exchange the others. By his return in Constantinople, Makrenos faced the accusations of the emperor's sister and mother-in-law of Philes, Eirene-Eulogia that he had betrayed the emperor and had contributed to the defeat of the Byzantines in Makryplagi. According to Eirene-Eulogia, he wished to marry Theodora Laskarina, the widow of Matthieu de Véligourt, who lived by that time in the Principality and to surrender Byzantine territories to the Latins, revolting also against the emperor. Makrenos was punished for treason and was blinded, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραμικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* I (275-277 FAILLER-LAURENT); PLP 92605.

⁴²² As mentioned above the marriages of his children were also an evidence of his plans for the Byzantine territories.

interaction of these women with their husbands could be either beneficial or not for the Empire, therefore the age of the bride seemed to have played an important role. Maria, the illegitimate daughter of Michael VIII with Diplobatzina, was chosen among the other daughters of the emperor by the time she was in the proper age of marriage according to the Byzantine law, that is around twelve or thirteen years old.

Whether a marriage proposal would lead to a betrothal and finally to a marriage, depended on several factors. Age was one of the most crucial; however, equally important factor was the degree of consanguinity of the two potential spouses, as it is observed in the case of Anna Palaiologina and Demetrios Michael Angelos Koutroules. Anna and Demetrios seemed to have been related in sixth degree, but since the marriage was politically important, it was finally allowed by the Church. It seems that when a marriage was extremely crucial for the Empire, the kinship prohibitions could be overruled.

When the norm was a betrothal of one year before the marriage, the unique phenomenon of a fifteen-year-long betrothal is observed in this period between the eldest daughter of the emperor, Eirene Palaiologina and her fiancé, John III Asan Mytzes. The two future spouses seem to have been both at the proper age for marriage by the time of their betrothal; nevertheless, they married only in 1278 and then Michael VIII helped his son-in-law to ascend the Bulgarian throne in 1279⁴²³. Even though Eirene and John had not married earlier due to political reasons, Eirene's engagement did not allow to her father to negotiate another marital union for her.

Of great importance are issues related to the marriage of the illegitimate daughters not only of the emperor, but also of his close relatives. John Komnenos Palaiologos, brother of Michael VIII, succeeded to marry his only daughter to the King of Iberia. The matter of her being illegitimate did not bother the Iberian ruler; for his part, the emperor was quite satisfied with the successful marriage strategy of his brother, even though it is not quite clear whether it was an action motivated by the emperor or it was an initiative of his brother. However, it seems that the direct imperial descent mattered greatly, and there were cases where the foreign ruler demanded a marriage only with a legitimate daughter of the emperor. The same principle affected

⁴²³ The rise of John III Asan Mytzes to the Bulgarian throne was important for Michael VIII, who wanted to expand his influence on the realm and restore the relations of the two countries, which were disturbed due to the former marriage alliances. Therefore, the emperor was quite unsatisfied when Eirene and her husband returned to Constantinople and they had not defended their claims against those of George Terter.

also the intermarriages between the members of the aristocratic families, since there is no record of this period for intermarriages with illegitimate children apart from the ruler of Thessaly, John the Illegitimate.

At this point it is of importance to comment on the different treatment of male and female relatives of the Emperor. For example, the nieces of emperor, the two Kantakouzene, who opposed to their uncle's diplomacy and caused more troubles to the Empire than benefits through their marriages, seemed not to have been prevented from further intermarriages with members of aristocratic families. On the contrary, the marriage of Michael's nephew, Andronikos Tarchaneiotes to the daughter of the ruler of Thessaly and his opposition to the emperor, led to the abandonment of this type of intermarriage; from now on this was left for the emperor's brothers, sons or grandsons. In other words, this case confirmed the emperor's concerns about how dangerous a member of an aristocratic family could be, when he gained enough power through his marriage, even when he was related to the emperor.

It could also be noticed that many of the aristocratic families in Constantinople had participated in the intermarriages of the period. The most active were indeed the families of Kantakouzenoi and Tarchaneiotai, which were also related immediately with the emperor. The families of Raoul, Strategopouloi, Synadenoï and Tornikioi had also accomplished several marital unions between them, as also did the family of Glabas-Tarchaneiotes. A member of the Mouzalon family appeared also in the marriage strategies of the period. Of major importance is the fact that many of the prominent members of those families are linked by ties of blood or marriage with the family of the Palaiologoi. In the same period appears also for the first time the family of Asan as an aristocratic family of Constantinople with its founders to be the eldest daughter of the emperor and her husband.

The offspring of many aristocratic couples, whose intermarriages were presented in the previous subchapters will take part in the marriage strategies of the aristocracy in the next period. Therefore, the marriage policies of the early Palaiologan aristocracy continue in the reigning years of Michael's VIII heir, Andronikos II.

4. Marriage Strategies in the Reign of Andronikos II, until the First Phase of the Civil War (1282-1320)

Although Andronikos II seemingly had a quite different character from his father and followed a different external and internal policy he was aware of the importance of marriage strategies. Hence, he arranged marital unions not only for the members of his immediate family, but also for his relatives and many prominent members of the high aristocracy of his time.

Very early in his reign, Andronikos II had to negotiate his own marriage, since his first wife Anna had died in 1281. Even though they had together two sons, Michael IX and Constantine, the emperor decided after some consideration that for diplomatic reasons, which could benefit the Empire, he should marry again. Although his policies were mostly focused on the defence of Asia Minor and on the rejection of Michael's VIII efforts for the Union of the Churches, in the beginning of his reign his diplomacy was turned to the West.

His father already from 1281 had suggested the marital union with a daughter of king Peter III of Aragon and Constanza Hohenstaufen; the intermarriage would have sealed the alliance of the two rulers against the Angevins⁴²⁴. Since this intent seemed too risky for Peter after the events in Sicily (Sicilian Vespers), Andronikos turned to the king Alfonso X of Castille⁴²⁵. The latter was reluctant, since the Byzantine emperor had rejected the Union of the Churches and was not accepted in the circles of the Catholic rulers as a potential son-in-law. However, the king of Castille found the proper bride for the emperor, not among his daughters, but in his granddaughter, Yolanda of Montferrat⁴²⁶. The emperor seemed to be quite satisfied by his choice, since with his marriage to Yolanda, who was renamed Eirene, he received as a dowry Thessaloniki, which the family of Montferrat was claiming as its inheritance⁴²⁷.

⁴²⁴ In 1282, prior to Michael's VIII death, had taken place the uprising of the Sicilians against the suzerainty of the Angevins, which cancelled the campaign of Charles d'Anjou against Byzantium. This revolt is rumoured to have happened due to the diplomacy of Michael VIII, who was associate of the claimant of the kingdom of Sicily, Peter III of Aragon. The claims to the Sicilian throne were inherited by his wife, Constanza of Hohenstaufen, after the death of her father, Manfred of Sicily in the battle of Benevento in 1266, GEANAKOPOLOS, Michael Palaiologus 247-268; Especially on the matter see S. RUNCIMAN, *Sicilian Vespers*. Cambridge 1958.

⁴²⁵ PLP 91142.

⁴²⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (167-168 SCHOPEN– BEKKER); PLP 21361.

⁴²⁷ The kingdom of Thessaloniki was considered an inheritance of the family of Montferrat already after the Fourth Crusade, when Boniface de Montferrat claimed Thessaloniki arguing that it was given as a

‘The Porphyrogennetos’ Constantine Palaiologos⁴²⁸, brother of Andronikos II and beloved son of Michael VIII, married during his brother’s reign. As already mentioned, his father was possibly thinking of marrying him with a noble woman of Latin origin, a fact quite extraordinary, since in the early Palaiologan period the only members of the imperial family who married foreigners were the heirs to the throne⁴²⁹. However, Constantine finally married Eirene Raoulaina, daughter of John Komnenos Doukas Angelos Petraliphas Raoul and Theodora Komnene Palaiologina Kantakouzene Raoulaina in ca.1289⁴³⁰. Even though the two spouses were related in a lower degree than the seventh, since Eirene Raoulaina was Constantine’s niece, it is impressive that there was no objection by the Church to their marriage⁴³¹. They had together a son, John Palaiologos. Constantine was known only as landowner (μεγιστάνας), since he refused to accept any other title than that of despot, which his brother did not want to give him.

This fact caused an incident between his wife and the wife of Constantine Strategopoulos, known as Strategopoulina. When the emperor was in Nymphaion⁴³² in 1292 for the celebration of the Feast of Peter and Paul, the high aristocracy had also joined the imperial family. Eirene Raoulaina and her husband entered the hall where the celebration was going to take place and although her husband took his place among the emperor and the other aristocrats, Eirene demanded from Strategopoulina, who was an old woman by that time, to take her position. Since Strategopoulina refused to do so, invoking her age, Eirene quarrelled with her and was angry with the fact that even though she was the wife of emperor’s brother, she had no title to secure her precedence at court and was only an *ιδιώτις*⁴³³. The kinship relation between the two women and

pronoia to his ancestor, Rainier de Montferrat when he married Maria Komnene, daughter of emperor Manuel I Komnenos, LAIOU, Constantinople and the Latins 46.

⁴²⁸ PLP 21492; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 23.

⁴²⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (187 SCHOPEN–BEKKER). The foreign noble women and princesses were probably chosen due to the fact that the marriage could be beneficial for the Empire on a diplomatic level contrary to the members of high aristocracy, who could easily interfere in the politics of the Empire for the benefit of their family.

⁴³⁰ In his account of their marriage, Gregoras inform us only about Constantine’s age, who was then reaching the age of thirty, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (190 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 24142; FASSOULAKIS, Raoul 30-31. Failler expressed the opinion that the marriage took place before 1288, based on the fact that Pachymeres describes their son, John Palaiologos, as seventeen-year old in 1305, when he became a *Panypersevastos*, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (565 FAILLER–LAURENT); A. FAILLER, *Pachymeriana altera*. *REB* 46 (1988) 67-83, here 72.

⁴³¹ The blood relation was from Eirene’s mother, Theodora Raoulaina, who was daughter of Eirene-Eulogia Kantakouzene, sister of Michael VIII and Constantine’s first cousin.

⁴³² Due to the intensive efforts of Andronikos II to restore and defend the Byzantine territories in Asia Minor, he and his court moved for some time from Constantinople to Nymphaion.

⁴³³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (173 FAILLER–LAURENT).

the genealogy of Strategopoulina, who Pachymeres described as Raoulaina's aunt, although she was in fact the daughter of the great-great uncle of Eirene, are also mentioned in this passage. It is a telling example of the kinship relations of the families of the high aristocracy from the generations of John III Batatzes until Andronikos II Palaiologos⁴³⁴.

Constantine Palaiologos 'Porphyrogennetos' probably chose to defend his wife's deeds; however, since he could not insult directly the Strategopoulina, because they were related after all, he turned to an *οἰκεῖος* of hers, *paneugenestatos* Constantine Mavrozomes⁴³⁵. The emperor was infuriated by Constantine's actions and showed his discontent to his brother. Shortly after this incident, Constantine was accused of conspiracy. Andronikos II then imprisoned him and some of his friends, who were also accused for treason and their properties were confiscated⁴³⁶.

The fourth son of Michael VIII, Theodore Palaiologos was also married during his brother's reign in 1293⁴³⁷. At first, Andronikos II planned a marriage alliance between his brother and the daughter of Theodore Mouzalon, probably named Eudokia, who however was accused of having illegitimate relations with a male relative⁴³⁸. Finally, the emperor through careful consideration, decided that Theodore should married the daughter of the *Pinkernes* Libadarios⁴³⁹. Of interest is the fact that he gave

⁴³⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (173 FAILLER–LAURENT). Failler referred extensively to the kinship structure that Pachymeres described in this passage. More specifically he analysed the terms of kinship mentioned by Pachymeres starting with *ἀντανεψία* meaning cousin, then *ἀδελφιδῆ* denoting the niece (Strategopoulina is the niece of John III Batatzes) and *θεία*, which had a less precise meaning, since Strategopoulina is called "aunt" of Eirene Raoulaina, although she is actually daughter of a great-great-uncle of Eirene. Finally, Strategopoulina is also described by Pachymeres as a *μάμμη*, grandmother of both Eirene and Constantine, but she was neither the grandmother of the first nor the second. Therefore, Failler emphasized that obviously 'the collateral line is shifted to the direct line. The use of this terminology probably implies a legal nuance: the deceased grandmother is somehow represented or replaced with the granddaughter or grandchild by a person who is at the same degree as the grandmother, but at a variable proximity (sister or cousin of the grandmother), in a collateral branch', FAILLER, *Pachymeriana altera* 71-73.

⁴³⁵ PLP 17443; Constantine Mavrozomes was rumoured to have an affair with Strategopoulina. He paraded naked in a public square and he was finally released by the emperor, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (175 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴³⁶ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (175-181 FAILLER–LAURENT). Among the conspirators was also Strategopoulina's son, Michael Strategopoulos. It is not known if Constantine was in fact conspiring against his brother or Andronikos II acted this way out of jealousy, since his father preferred Constantine as his heir to the throne, finding a way to diminish any of Constantine's claims to the throne. But even though Michael VIII may have favoured his third son, by the time of Andronikos' II grief for the death of his first wife, Anna of Hungary, the emperor, Michael VIII, recalled Constantine's right to wear the purple shoes and acclaimed Michael IX as co-emperor, securing the line of succession, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* II (531 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴³⁷ PLP 21464; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 27.

⁴³⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (201 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 91886.

⁴³⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (201 FAILLER–LAURENT).

Eudokia to his own son, Constantine ‘Porphyrogennetos’ in 1294 and bestowed upon him the title of Despot⁴⁴⁰. Theodore Palaiologos wanted also to become a Despot and he refused the title of *Sevastokrator* that his brother gave him⁴⁴¹.

The emperor, who showed such an interest in the marriages of his brothers and his younger son, could certainly not neglect his son and heir to the throne, Michael IX Palaiologos⁴⁴². Andronikos II tried already from 1288 to find the proper bride for his son, turning at first to the West. The first candidate was Catherine de Courtenay, titular empress of the Latin Empire of Constantinople and therefore a desirable bride among the Western nobility⁴⁴³. The reasons for the emperor’s choice are more than obvious; a marriage alliance between the heir to the Byzantine throne and the titular Latin empress would have ensured the legitimisation of Catherine’s claims to the throne and at the same time eliminate the Angevin danger. Andronikos’ proposal was difficult to accept, since the Angevins did not want this marriage. However, Maria of Hungary, wife of Charles II d’Anjou and aunt of both Catherine and Michael IX, supported the proposal of her brother-in-law⁴⁴⁴. Unfortunately, even though the discussions of a marriage alliance continued until 1294 and the Pope was encouraging this effort, in order Andronikos to return to his father’s Unionist policies⁴⁴⁵, Catherine finally married Charles de Valois and Andronikos continued to search for a wife for his son⁴⁴⁶.

At the same time, the Angevins were trying to arrange a marriage between Philipp d’Anjou, prince of Taranto and Thamar of Epirus⁴⁴⁷, daughter of Despot Nikephoros I Doukas Angelos of Epirus. Even though Nikephoros was thinking of the

⁴⁴⁰ Theodore Mouzalon, who was ill as Pachymeres described in the same passage, had died prior to the marriage of his daughter to Constantine, Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (201-203 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21499; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 37.

⁴⁴¹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (203 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴⁴² PLP 21529; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 36-37.

⁴⁴³ PLP 444; Catherine was the daughter of Philipp de Courtenay, titular emperor of the Latin Empire of Constantinople and Beatrice d’Anjou, daughter of Charles I d’Anjou. As it can be assumed, Catherine’s husband would have inherited her claims to the throne; as a consequence, many prominent noblemen wanted her as their wife.

⁴⁴⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (171 FAILLER–LAURENT). Maria of Hungary was the sister of Anna, Andronikos’ II first wife.

⁴⁴⁵ LAIOU, Constantinople and the Latins 49-52.

⁴⁴⁶ Andronikos II, when it came to the marriage strategies, was not a person who could simply give up; seventeen years later, in 1311 he suggested the marriage of his grandson Andronikos III, son of Michael IX, to the only daughter of the couple, Catherine de Valois (see below).

⁴⁴⁷ PLP 8152; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 32; NICOL, Byzantine Lady 24-32. Thamar was the youngest daughter of Nikephoros and Anna. Their eldest daughter, Maria, had married to Giovanni Orsini, eldest son of count Riccardo Orsini of Cephalonia; the marriage took place while Maria was held hostage in Cephalonia, without the consent of her father, who finally accepted the marital union, NICOL, Despotate 43.

advantages of this union against Byzantium, his wife, the *basilissa* Anna Palaiologina Kantakouzene, cousin of Andronikos II, was convinced that a marriage between her daughter and the heir of the Byzantine throne would be more beneficial, not only for the Despotate but also for the Empire. In 1295, when Nikephoros died, Anna made clear her intentions for an alliance between the two states; she wanted obviously to protect her territories from the attacks of the ruler of Thessaly and consequently, she suggested the intermarriage between her daughter and Michael IX⁴⁴⁸.

The exact date of the discussions for the marriage alliance cannot be easily determined. The account of Pachymeres placed the marriage proposal after the death of Nikephoros, but since it is not quite precise, several scholars have suggested different dates⁴⁴⁹. However, despite the efforts of Anna, the marriage did not take place, since Thamar and Michael IX were second cousins and therefore, their kinship relations were into the prohibited degrees of consanguinity⁴⁵⁰. The excuse seems to be quite reasonable, but one should not forget that the decision of the Synod of 1278 was still in effect, which had allowed the marriage between Demetrios Michael Angelos Koutroules and Anna Palaiologina, who were also closely related⁴⁵¹. Hence, the reason for the rejection of this proposal should probably have been political⁴⁵².

The search of Andronikos II for the proper bride for Michael IX continued. This time, the emperor turned to the Christian kingdoms of the East. He first proposed an intermarriage between his heir and one of the sisters of the King of Cyprus, Henry II de Lusignan, however the different confessions of the potential spouses set an obstacle on Henry II, who wanted Pope's permission⁴⁵³. Thus, the emperor turned to the King of Cilician Armenia, Het'um II⁴⁵⁴ and asked for one of his sisters. Finally, Rita, who was

⁴⁴⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (225-227 FAILLER–LAURENT). Anna, who was against the Union of the Churches like her mother, Eirene-Eulogia, had contributed to the improvement of the relations between the Despotate and the Empire after the death of her uncle. She wanted also the Despotate to be more connected with the Empire and did not support the policy of her husband, who preferred an alliance with the Angevins. The *basilissa* seems to be completely aware that the Angevins wanted to gain more territories and expand their suzerainty, as they had earlier done with the Principality of Achaia, NICOL, Despotate 36-38.

⁴⁴⁹ According to Laiou, the marriage alliance was suggested already from 1288 and Anna was probably acting secretly of her husband, LAIOU, Constantinople and the Latins 41-43. On the contrary, Nicol suggested that not only the death of Nikephoros happened later, but also the marriage proposal should be placed in the period 1296-1298, NICOL, Despotate 49.

⁴⁵⁰ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (227 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴⁵¹ See above.

⁴⁵² Thamar finally married the grandson of Charles I d'Anjou, Philipp of Taranto and Anna succeeded in receiving her son, Thomas of Epirus the dignity of Despot, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (227 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴⁵³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (231 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴⁵⁴ PLP 30787. Het'um was married to Heloise, Henry's II Lusignan sister.

renamed Maria, married Michael IX in 1295; her sister, Theophano, who had accompanied her to Constantinople, took the name Theodora and with the mediation of the emperor she was going to marry, Theodore, the son of John I the Illegitimate of Thessaly⁴⁵⁵. Michael IX and Maria-Rita had together four children, Andronikos III, Manuel, Anna and Theodora.

The marriage of Constantine Palaiologos, second son of Andronikos II and Anna of Hungary, was presented earlier in the subchapter. When his wife, Eudokia Mouzalonissa died childless, Constantine had fallen in love with her maiden, Kathara, with whom he had an illegitimate and only son, Michael Katharos⁴⁵⁶. Nevertheless, he fell in love again –even more vigorously this time– with an aristocrat, Eudokia Palaiologina. She was the daughter of *protasekretis* Theodore Neokaisareites, but she was already married to an aristocrat named also Constantine Palaiologos⁴⁵⁷. After the death of her first husband, Eudokia and Constantine were finally married –probably before 1320–, but they had no children⁴⁵⁸. Impressively, this is the first time in this period that a marital union took place because the two spouses had fallen in love.

The first son of Andronikos II with his second wife, Eirene, was John Palaiologos⁴⁵⁹. Quite disappointed from the exclusion of her children from the Byzantine throne, the empress started to think of a partition of the Empire, according to the feudal law of the West⁴⁶⁰. She planned therefore to marry her firstborn son to a noble lady of Latin origin; in the end she chose the princess of Achaia, Isabeau de Villehardouin. The fact that Isabeau was almost twenty-five years older than her son, did not seem to disturb her⁴⁶¹. However, the emperor had a different opinion on the matter and the plan failed.

⁴⁵⁵ In the same passage is mentioned that Theophano had died in Thessaloniki, before her marriage to Theodore, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (233 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21394, 195.

⁴⁵⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (293-296 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 10124, 10141.

⁴⁵⁷ PLP 20091, 21490.

⁴⁵⁸ Gregoras depicts in detail the love of Constantine for Eudokia, who at first repelled him because she was married until the death of her husband, when they could live together, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (293-295 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 21369.

⁴⁵⁹ PLP 21475; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 38-39.

⁴⁶⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (233-234 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); MAVROMATES, *Πρότοι Παλαιολόγοι* 47-49.

⁴⁶¹ The age difference between John Palaiologos and Isabeau reminds of the case of Maria Komnene, daughter of emperor Manuel I Komnenos, who at the age of thirty had married the eighteen-year-old Rainier de Montferrat. A marriage with such an age gap, with the older being the princess of Achaia, widow for a second time, could not easily work for John Palaiologos, who would have to face the knight elite of the principality, which supported mostly the Angevins against the Byzantines.

In 1299, the emperor had arranged a marriage between Eirene Choumnaina, the daughter of the *epi tou kanikleiou*, Nikephoros Choumnos and his nephew, Alexios II Komnenos of Trebizond⁴⁶². The dowry of Eirene seemed to be legendary, since Pachymeres reported that it could attract even the son of an emperor⁴⁶³. Eirene had received the *δεσποτικά παράσημα* and was ready for her trip to Trebizond, but the marriage plans failed, since Alexios II finally married a lady of the Iberian aristocracy⁴⁶⁴. The emperor thought that such a dowry could find its place into the imperial family, while at the same time he could not deprive Eirene from her dignity, he decided to marry her to his son John, whom he made despot⁴⁶⁵. This infuriated the empress, who had different marriage plans for her firstborn son and wanted to see him at least a ruler of some considerable territories. She left Constantinople for Thessaloniki, her 'dowry', and established there her own court⁴⁶⁶. Eirene and John lived happily married from 1303-1307, when John Palaiologos died without leaving any children⁴⁶⁷.

Empress Eirene decided that her second son should have the fate that she wanted for him. Since her brother, John I de Montferrat, had died childless, he designated Eirene and her children as his heirs. The empress at first wanted John to become the Marquis de Montferrat; however, after his marriage to Eirene Choumnaina, she decided that her second son, Theodore, should claim his inheritance; the emperor on the other hand had suggested their third son, Demetrios⁴⁶⁸. Theodore left for Italy, where he

⁴⁶² PLP 12084, 30936, 30961.

⁴⁶³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (317, 319 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁴⁶⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (317 FAILLER–LAURENT). Of interest is the refusal of Alexios II of Trebizond to marry Eirene Choumnaina, a member of the aristocracy- even though not of the old high aristocracy. A similar attitude was also observed by John II Komnenos, who at first refused to marry Eudokia Palaiologina, but then travelled himself to Constantinople in order to marry her. Alexios II may have refused because Eirene was not a member of the imperial family, but a member of a family which came into the forefront in the reign of Andronikos II; actually, Alexios II married without the permission of his uncle a princess of Iberia. Later tried Andronikos II to annulate this marriage but the Church refused to do so, because the Iberian princess was pregnant.

⁴⁶⁵ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (317 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (241 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

⁴⁶⁶ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (317-319 FAILLER–LAURENT). The permanent quarrels between the emperor and his wife was a huge matter; the Patriarch Athanasios I tried to reconcile the couple and was the intermediary in many of their family matters, see A. M. TALBOT, *The Correspondence of Athanasios I, Patriarch of Constantinople* (*CFHB* 7). Washington 1975, 186-190, 226-229, 250-255.

⁴⁶⁷ Eirene became a nun, over the objection of her parents, taking the name Eulogia, probably to honour the aunt of her husband Eirene- Eulogia. She corresponded with many people of the clergy and important scholars of her time, NICOL, *Byzantine Lady* 48-59.

⁴⁶⁸ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (659 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 21465; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 39.

married Argentina Spinola, a member of a maritime family of Genova. Gregoras criticised this marriage, because he found Argentina's family and lineage improper for the emperor's purple-born son⁴⁶⁹. Finally, Demetrios Palaiologos, whom his mother wanted to see as Milutin's heir, had a daughter, Eirene Palaiologina and maybe another child from a mother of unknown name⁴⁷⁰.

As already mentioned, the role of women in marriage alliances was crucial; an aristocratic family with many daughters could accomplish many intermarriages and connect through kinship ties to many families of the same milieu. Furthermore, an emperor with many daughters could marry them with his potential allies. Unfortunately, Andronikos II, did not have many daughters. He had two illegitimate daughters, Maria and Eirene, from unknown mothers and only one daughter, Simonis Palaiologina, with his second wife, Eirene.

In 1299, the emperor married his illegitimate daughter, Maria, to the Mongol ruler of the Golden Horde, Toqta, in order to obtain an alliance. The intermarriage was planned already from 1292 and even though Maria Palaiologina had already then left Constantinople to meet her future husband, Toqta married her only after the end of his war against Nogai⁴⁷¹. Eirene Palaiologina, Andronikos' II second illegitimate daughter, was married the ruler of Thessaly, John II Doukas in ca. 1315⁴⁷². The emperor had proposed this marital union, in order to obstruct the marriage plans of his wife, who wanted to marry their son, Demetrios Palaiologos to the daughter of the Duke of Athens⁴⁷³.

When in 1298 the ruler of Serbia, Stephan II Urös Milutin had asked for an intermarriage with a Palaiologan princess, the emperor was left without many choices. Milutin had probably in mind Eudokia Palaiologina, Andronikos' II younger sister, who had returned to Constantinople, after the death of her husband John II Komnenos,

⁴⁶⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (237 SCHOPEN-BEKKER). According to Laiou, neither the emperor nor the Patriarch seemed to disagree to this marriage, probably because they might have hoped of the help of the Spinola family and Genova against the Catalan danger, A. LAIOU, *A Byzantine Prince Latinized: Theodore Palaiologus, Marquis of Montferrat*. *Byz* 38 (1968) 386-410, here 395-396.

⁴⁷⁰ PLP 21456; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 40.

⁴⁷¹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (295 FAILLER-LAURENT); PLP 92632, 29149; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 42.

⁴⁷² Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (278-279 SCHOPEN-BEKKER); PLP 91848, 206; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 42; NICOL, *Despotate* 74-75.

⁴⁷³ Gregoras refers to a daughter of the Duke of Athens, but it is known that Guy II de la Roche died childless, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (243 SCHOPEN-BEKKER); PLP 24398.

emperor of Trebizond⁴⁷⁴. The emperor seemed also to have thought of his sister for that marriage; however, Eudokia, already an empress-widow and mother of two sons, Alexios II Komnenos and Michael, vehemently rejected the proposal, although her brother had tried to persuade her in all possible ways, even by the use of threats⁴⁷⁵.

This might have been the first case (at least in the Palaiologan period) when a marriage plan was rejected by the future bride. The evidence shows that in the intermarriages between the aristocratic families and the relatives of the emperor, the imposing imperial will was taken for granted, not only for women, but also for men. Moreover, it was almost impossible for women to express their opinion, let alone their disagreement in regard of a potential marital union. The case of Eudokia Palaiologina is unique for the period examined, but the reasons for her refusal being finally accepted by the emperor must be carefully examined. Apart from the fact that Eudokia was the widow of an emperor and old enough to resist to an unwanted marriage, she was also the mother of the new emperor of Trebizond, Alexios II. It seems quite reasonable, that Andronikos II did not want to displease his nephew and ally; furthermore, it may have been impossible for Eudokia to abandon her son and emperor and live for the rest of her life in the Serbian realm.

The refusal of Eudokia had left no other candidate, apart from the young daughter of Andronikos II, Simonis Palaiologina⁴⁷⁶. The emperor had no other choice than to marry his five-year-old daughter to the fifty-year-old Serbian ruler⁴⁷⁷; the marriage had caused the reaction of the Church, not only because of the age of Simonis, but mostly due to the huge age difference between the future spouses⁴⁷⁸. The Patriarch John X opposed totally to this marriage, although the emperor tried to convince him by explaining that he loved his daughter, but the Serbian danger was great for the Empire and there was no other choice left⁴⁷⁹. Only her mother, Eirene seems to have completely

⁴⁷⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (297 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (202-203 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

⁴⁷⁵ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (303 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (203 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

⁴⁷⁶ PLP 21398; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 41-42.

⁴⁷⁷ The majority of his female relatives were either already married or underaged. Possibly Stephan II Urōs demanded a princess of the Palaiologan dynasty with an executive position in the court, that means either a sister or a legitimate daughter of the emperor; this could explain why Andronikos II did not choose Eirene Palaiologina, his illegitimate daughter, who might have been of the same age.

⁴⁷⁸ For an extensive analysis of the ages of marriage see below.

⁴⁷⁹ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (323 FAILLER–LAURENT).

agreed to this marriage, for her own political reasons⁴⁸⁰. Simonis left for the Serbian court, on the condition that the marital union would be consummated when she came of proper age⁴⁸¹; but her spouse broke this promise with disastrous consequences for the young girl⁴⁸². The outcome of this intermarriage proved the emperor's mistake when he did not consider more carefully the age limitations and obstacles, as his father had done earlier.

Following the example of his father, Andronikos II included in his marriage strategies not only his children, but also his immediate relatives such as his nieces and nephews. The children of his eldest sister, Eirene Palaiologina and John III Asan, former rulers of Bulgaria took part in important intermarriages of the time, starting with Maria Asanina, who married the leader of the Catalans, Roger de Flor in 1303⁴⁸³. By the time of the betrothal, the emperor had bestowed upon Roger the dignity of *Megas Doux* and later that of *Kaisar*⁴⁸⁴. The Catalan Company, an army of warlike mercenaries who were invited by the Byzantine Emperor to put under control the expansion of the Turks in Asia Minor started devastating the Byzantine territories when their payments were not delivered, causing tremendous problems and becoming the greatest danger the emperor had to face. Andronikos II probably thought that the best way to control such an enemy was by an alliance; consequently, he used the most efficient weapon of Byzantine diplomacy, the intermarriage.

Michael IX did not share his father's opinions, since the increase of Roger's power seemed to worry him. In 1305, when de Flor was murdered in Adrianople, possibly under Michael's orders, the Catalans were furious and rose against the emperor. Meanwhile, three Catalans were candidates for becoming leaders of the Company; Berengar de Rochefort became finally the leader and Ferran Ximenes de

⁴⁸⁰ She was hoping that the childless kral could select her son, Demetrios Palaiologos as his heir, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (243 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

⁴⁸¹ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (203 SCHOPEN–BEKKER).

⁴⁸² Simonis was only eight by that time and she became unable to carry any children later. The historians of the time refer to the event with repulsion, for example Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (203, 243 SCHOPEN–BEKKER). Simonis tried to escape from her husband, who insisted that only if he kept her, he could only keep the peace with Byzantines. She ran away and tried to become a nun, but her half-brother Constantine brought her back to Milutin, who had started the hostilities against the Empire, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (287–288 SCHOPEN–BEKKER). Simonis was finally free at the age of twenty-four, when her husband died. Although she became a nun, she stand always by the side of her father and brothers, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (411, 533 SCHOPEN–BEKKER). She is mostly mentioned in the sources as *Κράλαινα* (wife of kral, queen).

⁴⁸³ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (437 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (220 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 16890, 24368; TRAPP, Asanen 167.

⁴⁸⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (220 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); LAIOU, Constantinople and the Latins 141.

Arenos⁴⁸⁵, one of the two defeated warriors, found refuge in the Byzantine court bringing with him a part of the Catalan Company⁴⁸⁶. For the sake of the Empire, Andronikos II was once more willing to marry one of his nieces to a Catalan warrior. Consequently, the emperor selected possibly also Maria's younger sister, Theodora Palaiologina Asanina as a spouse for Ferran, who became also *megas doux* in ca.1307⁴⁸⁷.

Eirene Palaiologina and John III Asan had together ten children as already mentioned, of which only seven are known by name; six of them are known to have been married and only four to have a scion. The firstborn son of the couple, Michael Palaiologos Komnenos Asan had married to a lady known by the sources only as Asanina, that is by the surname of her husband; it seems that they did not have any scion⁴⁸⁸. There is not much evidence of the wife of the second son, Andronikos Komnenos Palaiologos Asan, but we know that they had four children, Manuel Komnenos Raoul Asan, John Asan, Eirene-known in the sources as Kantakouzene due to her marriage with John VI Kantakouzenos- and Helen⁴⁸⁹. Among the surnames of his eldest son, Manuel, one could find also the surname Raoul. Andronikos is only known by the surnames Komnenos Palaiologos which he inherited from his mother, Eirene Komnene Palaiologina, and the surname of his father, Asan. Since, however, women could also be conveyors of lineage, it is possible that his wife was a member of

⁴⁸⁵ PLP 27944; Ferran is known in the Byzantine sources as Φαρέντζας Τζυμής, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (232 SCHOPEN- BEKKER).

⁴⁸⁶ LAIOU, Constantinople and the Latins 146-147, 174.

⁴⁸⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (232 SCHOPEN-BEKKER); PLP 1531. Gregoras in his account about the marriage asserts that d' Arenos took as his wife, Θεοδώρα, τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀδελφιδῇ χηρεοῦσῃ (the widowed niece of the emperor), meaning possibly Theodora Asanina, who may have been the only unmarried niece of the emperor with this name by that time. However, several scholars expressed different theories about the identity of Ferran's wife. In PLP is written that Ferran married Maria Asanina, widow of Roger de Flor, although it seems difficult considering that Roger had died in 1305 and Maria bore in the same year his child. Trapp also suggested that Maria Asanina might have been the Catalan's wife based on the fact that the only known marriage of Theodora is possibly before 1321 to Manuel Tagaris. Therefore, she might have been much younger than her sister Maria, who according to Trapp, was possibly born in 1279, almost immediately after her parents' marriage. The characterization *χηρεοῦσῃ* in Gregoras' passage contributed also to this conclusion, TRAPP, Asanen 168. Finally, Theodora Palaiologina Asanina appears in a document of the Monastery of Zografou with the title of *megale doukaina*, a dignity bestowed upon d'Arenos and not Tagaris, who became *megas stratopedarches* by the time of their marriage, L. MAVROMMATIS, La pronoiā d'Alexis Commène Raoul à Prévista. *Byzantina Symmeikta* 13 (1999) 203-227, here 204-205. It is known that women are mentioned in the sources by their spouses' dignity.

⁴⁸⁸ PLP 1489; TRAPP, Asanen 168.

⁴⁸⁹ John Kantakouzenos, *Ἱστορία* II (299 SCHOPEN); PLP 1514, 1520.

the Raoul family. Otherwise, there would be no obvious reason for Manuel using the surname Raoul⁴⁹⁰.

The wife's anonymity is also noticed in the marriage of the third son of the family, Constantine Palaiologos Asan⁴⁹¹. Constantine's son, Michael Komnenos Tornikes Palaiologos Asanes bears the three surnames already known from the members of the family, that is Komnenos Palaiologos Asanes, but also the surname Tornikes. Similarly, to the above mentioned case of Andronikos, one could assume that Constantine's wife was a member of the Tornikes family.

The only son of the family, whose spouse is known, is Isaakios Palaiologos Asan⁴⁹². She was Theodora Palaiologina, the so-called Arachatlun, the daughter of Maria Palaiologina, the Lady of the Mongols, and Abaqa⁴⁹³. They were married probably after her mother's death in 1307 but surely before 1320, when Theodora died childless. Impressive is that Isaakios and Theodora were first cousins, since their mothers were half-sisters; nevertheless, the Church did not object to their union although it fell into the prohibited degrees of consanguinity⁴⁹⁴.

Eugenia Palaiologina, the youngest daughter of Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina and John Kantakouzenos, was one of the last cousins of Andronikos II who married during his reign⁴⁹⁵. She was probably married to Megas Domestikos Syrgiannes⁴⁹⁶ and they had together a son, Syrgiannes Palaiologos Philanthropenos Komnenos⁴⁹⁷.

The last cousin of Andronikos II, who wedded during his reign was an unnamed daughter of Sevastokrator Constantine Palaiologos and his wife, Eirene Branaina. She is known in the sources as Σμίλτζαινα (wife of Σμίλτζος), since she married in 1292 the King of Bulgaria, Smilec⁴⁹⁸. They had together two children: the first was John

⁴⁹⁰ By that time no intermarriages between the ancestors of family members to the Raouls are registered.

⁴⁹¹ PLP 1504; TRAPP, Asanen 168.

⁴⁹² PLP 1494; TRAPP, Asanen 168; KUBINA, Philes and Asan Family 187-188.

⁴⁹³ MM I 313; PLP 1229; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 34.

⁴⁹⁴ Based on this fact, Kyritses suggested that Theodora might have been an adopted daughter of Maria, a Mongol girl who she brought with her in Constantinople, since there is no evidence that she had children with Abaqa, KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 262-263.

⁴⁹⁵ PLP 21368; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 21.

⁴⁹⁶ Syrgiannes might have been of Cuman origin with his name being possibly *Sytzigan* in its original version, from the Cuman word *Sičgan*, meaning mouse. It was hellenised to Syrgiannes, when he was baptised (Κυρ Γιάννης, master John), I. VÁSÁRY, Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365. Cambridge 2005, 120.

⁴⁹⁷ PLP 27167, NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 24-25.

⁴⁹⁸ George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι III (293 FAILLER–LAURENT); PLP 26265, 26266; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 8-9.

Kommenos Doukas Angelos Branas Palaiologos⁴⁹⁹; he returned in Constantinople after the death of his father in 1298 and is enlisted in the *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis. The second child was Theodora, who married at first Eltimir, brother of George I Terter and then the son of Stephan II Urös Milutin, Stephan III Urös Decanski⁵⁰⁰.

The brother of Σμίλτζαίνα and Constantine's Palaiologos younger son, Andronikos Komnenos Branas Doukas Angelos Palaiologos might also have been married in this period⁵⁰¹. Although the date of his marriage is unknown, his wife was the daughter of the famous commander Michael Komnenos Doukas Glabas Tarchaneiotēs⁵⁰². Unfortunately, it is uncertain whether they had any offspring.

The marital union of Theodora Komnene Palaiologina, youngest daughter of Sevastokrator Constantine Palaiologos, and John Angelos Doukas Synadenos was presented in the previous subchapter. They had together three children: a daughter, who followed her mother in the monastery and two sons, all known and portrayed in the *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis.

The first son, John Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos Synadenos, who obviously had the same name with his father, was first *megas konostaulos* and then *protostrator*; he had married twice⁵⁰³. His first wife was Thomais Komnene Doukaina Laskarina Palaiologina Kantakouzene⁵⁰⁴; the date of their marriage is unknown, but they seemed to have together two daughters, Anna and Eirene. In the *Typikon* they both bore also the family name Kantakouzene, probably inherited from their mother, even though their great-grandmother bore also this surname⁵⁰⁵. Of unknown date was also his marriage to his second wife, Eirene Laskarina Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina, who seemed to be alive when the *Typikon* was composed⁵⁰⁶. No offspring is mentioned from this union. Unfortunately, we lack on evidence on both Thomais' and Eirene's family ancestry but judging from their surnames they must have been members of families related to the Laskarids.

⁴⁹⁹ John is referred in the *Typikon* as the son of the Δέσποινα τῶν Βουλγάρων (Lady of the Bulgarians), DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 84, 93; TALBOT, *Bebaia Elpis: Typikon* of Theodora Synadene 1562; PLP 21486.

⁵⁰⁰ PLP 6025, 21181.

⁵⁰¹ PLP 21439; DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 92; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 7.

⁵⁰² LEONTIADES, *Tarchaneiotai* 72.

⁵⁰³ DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 13, 82, 91, 95; PLP 27126; HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, *Synadenoi* 135-136.

⁵⁰⁴ DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 84, 91; PLP 10944; NICOL, *Kantakouzenoi* 149-150.

⁵⁰⁵ HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, *Synadenoi* 136.

⁵⁰⁶ DELEHAYE, *Deux typica* 13; PLP 21362; PAPADOPULOS, *Palaiologen* 9-10.

The second son, Theodore Doukas Komnenos Palaiologos Synadenos, governor of Prilep until 1320, had married earlier the same year Eudokia Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina Synadene, daughter of *eugenestatos* Theodore Doukas Mouzakios⁵⁰⁷. They had together two daughters, Theodora and Maria. The couple is depicted in the *Typikon* of Bebaia Elpis⁵⁰⁸. Interesting is the fact that Eudokia did not added in her surnames that of her father, but she is known with those of her husband. This marital union is one of the few, where the couple is not distantly related and the family of the bride did not appear previously in the marriage arrangements of the high aristocracy. Therefore, for her family this union signaled the entry into the high aristocracy of the reign of Andronikos II.

Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos (Tarchaneiotes) was one of the most efficient military commanders, whom the emperor had bestowed with the dignity of *pinkernes* in 1293. He distinguished himself in the defence of Asia Minor, but then he revolted against the emperor⁵⁰⁹. He was a nephew of Andronikos II, son of his cousin Michael Palaiologos Tarchaneiotes and the daughter of Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos⁵¹⁰, whose name seemed to prefer. He married Theodora Philanthropene⁵¹¹, probably a daughter of *megas logothetes* Constantine Akropolites and Maria Tornikina Komnene Akropolitissa⁵¹². Constantine was the firstborn son of George Akropolites, the historiographer; his wife, Maria – who as her name reveals – belonged to the family of the Tornikioi, was possibly a daughter of John Tornikes. Moreover, Alexios and Theodora might have had one son, Michael Philanthropenos⁵¹³.

The reign of Andronikos II covered a period of almost forty years and during that period the emperor had the opportunity to arrange also the marriages of some of his grandchildren and those of his siblings. In 1313 took place the marriage of Thomas I of Epirus and Anna Palaiologina, daughter of Michael IX, which was proposed already

⁵⁰⁷ DELEHAYE, Deux typica 92; PLP 27120, 27096, 19428; HANNICK-SCHMALZBAUER, Synadenoï 136-137; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 10.

⁵⁰⁸ SPATHARAKIS, Portraits 195.

⁵⁰⁹ His revolt is thoroughly described by the sources of the period, George Pachymeres, Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι III (237-251 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία I (360-362 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 29752; ATHENAGORAS, Philanthropenoï 64-65. Alexios Philanthropenos is also known from his correspondence with Maximos Planoudes, see A. LAIOU, Some Observations on Alexios Philanthropenos and Maximos Planoudes. *BMGS* 4 (1978) 84-99.

⁵¹⁰ PLP 29751.

⁵¹¹ Manuel Philes, Carmina I (319 MILLER); PLP 29743, is identical with 7295.

⁵¹² PLP 520, 29140; SCHMALZBAUER, Tornikioi 123-124. On Constantine Akropolites see D. NICOL, Constantine Akropolites: A Prosopographical Note. *DOP* 19 (1965) 249-256.

⁵¹³ PLP 29775.

in 1307⁵¹⁴. The intermarriage was succeeded after the constant insistence of the *basilissa* of Epirus, Anna Kantakouzene, who continued to support the alliance of the Despotate with the Empire, especially after the outcome of Thamar's marriage to Philipp of Taranto⁵¹⁵. A crucial fact is that even though the two spouses were also closely related –Thomas was in fact Anna's uncle– the Church did not prohibit the marriage, as had happened earlier with Thamar and Michael IX, probably because by that time it served the emperor's policies towards the Despotate and Thessaly. However, Anna's marriage did not benefit the Empire; soon after, the Byzantine army, under the command of the emperor's nephew, Syrgiannes Palaiologos, attacked the Despotate and Thomas imprisoned his wife as retaliation⁵¹⁶. In 1318, the Despot was murdered by his nephew, Nicola Orsini; until then he had followed a policy totally opposed to the Empire. Since Thomas and Anna did not have any children, the Despotate of Epirus passed to the family of Orsini; Nicola married Anna Palaiologina, who died in 1320 without any offspring⁵¹⁷. Another daughter of Michael IX, Theodora Palaiologina was married in 1307 to the Bulgarian ruler, Theodore Svietoslav⁵¹⁸.

As already mentioned, the emperor had unsuccessfully proposed in 1311 an intermarriage between his eldest grandson, Andronikos III and the titular empress of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, Catherine de Valois⁵¹⁹. Following the same policy of marriages with foreign princesses, Andronikos II selected as bride for his grandson and co-emperor from 1307, Adelheid, daughter of Henry I of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen, who was renamed to Eirene and married Andronikos III in 1317⁵²⁰.

In the same period and surely before 1320 was also married Andronikos' III best friend, John VI Kantakouzenos to Eirene Kantakouzene, daughter of Andronikos Palaiologos Komnenos Asan and cousin of Andronikos III⁵²¹. About John's

⁵¹⁴ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* IV (495 FAILLER–LAURENT); Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (283 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 21344, 197; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 44; NICOL, Despotate 75.

⁵¹⁵ Thamar was mistreated by her husband, although she gave her dowry to free him, when he was imprisoned, and she was forced to become a nun when he wanted to remarry, NICOL, Despotate 55-56, 61-62.

⁵¹⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (297 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); NICOL, Despotate 77-78.

⁵¹⁷ NICOL, Despotate 82-83, 91.

⁵¹⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (283 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 21379, 27251; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 45.

⁵¹⁹ PLP 21437; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 43.

⁵²⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (277 SCHOPEN–BEKKER); PLP 21356.

⁵²¹ The exact date of the marriage is not known, but Kantakouzenos in his History asserts that he had left his wife in Kallioupolis, before he returned to Constantinople in 1320. So by that time they were already married and lived there, see John Kantakouzenos, *Ἱστορία* I (24 SCHOPEN); PLP 10935, 10973; NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 35-103, 104-108.

Kantakouzenos father almost nothing is known; he was a member of the illustrious family of Kantakouzenos, the Governor of Peloponnese from 1286 to 1294 and he had probably died before the birth of his son⁵²². John VI referred many times in his work to his mother, Theodora Palaiologina Angelina Kantakouzene, even though he did not give adequate information on her ancestry⁵²³. John and Eirene had together six children, Matthew, Manuel, Andronikos, Maria, Theodora and Helen.

To the same generation as the children of Michael IX belonged probably also the son of Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos' Palaiologos, brother of Andronikos II and Eirene Raoulaina, John Palaiologos⁵²⁴. Although his father was accused of conspiracy against the emperor, John had received the title of *panypersebastos* and he married in ca. 1305/1306, Eirene, the daughter of *megas logothetes*, Theodore Metochites⁵²⁵.

It is hard not to notice that in the reign of Andronikos II the majority of the intermarriages of the entire Early Palaiologan period took place. The emperor, following the marriage policy of his father and grandfather, which helped the family of Palaiologoi to ascend to the imperial throne, interfered in almost all intermarriages of the aristocracy of this period, directly or not. He started by trying to build marriage alliances for himself, his son and heir and his grandson to foreign princesses, in order to obtain allies and earn more in the diplomatic field. This tradition, observed also in the Komnenian era, seemed to have been followed by the Palaiologan dynasty until the end.

The emperor included in his marriage plans not only his own children and grandchildren, but also those of his siblings and other relatives. He did not hesitate to marry his nieces with members of the high aristocracy and with foreign rulers, nobles or mercenaries, who wanted to serve the Empire. The latter received dignities and through their marriage to members of the high aristocracy, they entered the entourage of the emperor. The good example for this case is Roger de Flor, the leader of the Catalan Company who after his marriage to Maria Asanina received the title of *kaisar*.

Apart from his immediate family and close relatives, who were indeed members of the high aristocracy, Andronikos II negotiated also the marriages of the daughters of

⁵²² NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 27-30.

⁵²³ PLP 10942. Modern scholarship suggested that her lineage was interwoven even with the family of Tarchaneiotes. The fact that she is mentioned in the sources as Palaiologina Angelina Kantakouzene may signalise a direct kinship with the Palaiologan family, NICOL, Kantakouzenoi 30-33.

⁵²⁴ PLP 21479; PAPADOPULOS, Palaiologen 23-24.

⁵²⁵ PLP 5972, 17982.

his closest collaborators, such as Nikephoros Choumnos and Theodore Metochites. The emperor had proposed the marriage of Eirene Choumnaina to the emperor of Trebizond and when his attempt failed, he did not hesitate to marry her with his son, John Palaiologos, although he knew that the empress would oppose this marriage. Moreover, he might have also proposed the marital union of his nephew, the *panypersevastos* John Palaiologos, son of Constantine Palaiologos 'Porphyrogennetos' with the daughter of his *mesazon* Theodore Metochites, Eirene. In this way, he assured the introduction of the families of his high officials and extremely rich individuals into the high aristocracy, since their daughters married into the imperial family.

While the emperor continued to plan marriage alliances, which were beneficial for Empire, based on his kin and relatives, the aristocratic families involved, gained in power. Among the imperial entourage, they appear to be closer to the emperor raising in higher ranks, mostly after the time of their marriage. However, sometimes members of those families opposed to the emperor's will, probably when they believed that he mistreated their son or daughter-in-law. An event concerning the Asan family describes such an opposition, when Eirene Palaiologina Asanina and her children tried to persuade Roger de Flor not to go in Adrianople, fearing the worse, knowing probably Michael's IX intentions, of which his father, Andronikos II must have been aware⁵²⁶.

As already mentioned, in the reign of Andronikos II took place many intermarriages, therefore it seems quite reasonable that some of them drew the attention of modern scholars due to some peculiarities. The same person, Constantine Palaiologos, second son of Andronikos II is involved. The first instance is the plan of a marriage between the daughter of Theodore Mouzalon, Eudokia Mouzalonissa and Theodore Palaiologos, younger brother of the emperor. It fell apart, when it became known that the girl had an illegal relationship with a relative. The fact was on its own quite shocking for the society of the time; even more impressive is that the emperor, who was probably a friend of Mouzalon, did not abandon his marriage plan and he honoured Mouzalonissa with a marriage to his beloved son, Constantine Palaiologos.

After the death of his first wife Eudokia and an affair with her maid, who bore his only son, Constantine Palaiologos fell in love with Eudokia Neokaisaritissa, an aristocrat married already to a man with the same name as the emperor's son. Again,

⁵²⁶ This actually happened, since he was murdered, Ramon Muntaner, *Crónica XVII* (ed. R. D. HUGHES-J. N. HILLGARTH, *The Catalan Expedition to the East: from the 'Chronicle' of Ramon Muntaner*. Barcelona/ Woodbridge 2006), 69-70.

the emperor had not opposed to an affair that might have caused a great scandal. The sources describe Eudokia in an extremely positive way, probably because she resisted Constantine's love while married. She reciprocated Palaiologos' feelings only after her husband's death, when the couple finally married.

The third and best-known case is the marriage of Andronikos' II only legitimate daughter, Simonis to the kral of Serbia, Stephan II Urõs Milutin. The marriage plan was not extremely notable on its own, since the Palaiologans usually made marriage proposals to the Serbian rulers, already from the time of Michael VIII. The reason of the enormous interest of this marriage lies on the extreme age difference between the spouses, since the young princess was at the time of her marriage only five years old and Milutin was reaching his fifties. The age difference between the two spouses was a common phenomenon⁵²⁷, maybe not in such an extreme version; however, the disrespectful behaviour against a child-bride and daughter of the Byzantine emperor was recorded for the first time in the sources⁵²⁸.

At this point is of importance to refer to a major difference between the marriage strategies practiced by the first two Palaiologan emperors. While proposing or arranging an intermarriage Michael VIII seemed to be careful enough in relation to the age of the future spouses. He married his daughters and sons, but also the members of his immediate kin only if they had come in the proper marriage age, that is twelve to thirteen years for the girls and fourteen for the boys. On the contrary, Andronikos II seems to have arranged the marriages of his children and relatives at a young age, with the marriage of his daughter, Simonis to be the most characteristic example. The proposal faced certainly the opposition of the Church. The matter of the neglect of the marriage age seems to be related to a high degree to the imperial priorities for the Empire's defence. The pressure for the defence of Asia Minor, which was an extremely important territory of the Empire, in combination with the refusal of the Union of the Churches, obliged the emperor to search for allies in the Balkans; consequently, the situation demanded urgent solutions such as an alliance with the rulers of the Balkan territories at any cost.

⁵²⁷ John III Batatzes married Costanza-Anna of Hohenstaufen, when he was in his fifties and she was around fourteen years old. Andronikos II also married for the second time when he was twenty-nine-years old to Eirene-Yolanda, who was only eleven by that time.

⁵²⁸ For example Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (203, 243 SCHOPEN –BEKKER).

Involved in the marriage strategies of the high aristocracy in Andronikos' II reign is the majority of the families already known from the previous periods. The families of Kantakouzenoi, Tornikioi and Tarchaneiotas are in the forefront with many intermarriages among their members and marital unions with the imperial family, followed by the Raouls and the Libadarioi. The Choumnos and Metochites families appear for the first time in the marriage policies of Andronikos II, marrying their female members into the imperial family. Another illustrious family is the one of Asan which derived from a royal couple married in the reign of Michael VIII. They appear for the first time as Byzantine aristocratic family, when John III Asan, king of Bulgaria, and his wife, Eirene Komnene Palaiologina abandoned the Bulgarian realm and settled in Constantinople. The Asan seemed to be quite active in the intermarriages of the period and many of their descendants were married into important families of the same milieu.

As already mentioned, the families consisting the high aristocracy in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century were those of Kantakouzenoi, Libadarioi, Raouls, Tornikioi, Tarchaneiotas with the new entrances of Asan, Choumnoi and Metochites; in the intermarriages appeared also the Akropolites family. Most of those families were already related, a fact that seemed to have stopped at some point any marriage plans between them. In this period, it is more obvious that all aristocratic families were closely related to each other, since there are many cases where the spouses were related in a degree lower than the seventh⁵²⁹. This kind of marriages faced surprisingly not the opposition of the Church, especially if they were for the benefit of the diplomatic efforts of the emperor. The phenomenon of emperors marrying members of their entourage defying the prohibited degrees of kinship was common already in the Komnenian era, it was continued by the emperors of Nicaea and of course by the first Palaiologans⁵³⁰. The emperor could bring up the close kinship ties of the two future spouses only if the marriage appeared non-beneficial for the Empire or did not serve the imperial policies⁵³¹.

⁵²⁹ Cf. for example the case of Constantine Porphyrogennetos Palaiologos and Eirene Raoulaina, who were related in the fifth degree, since they were uncle and niece.

⁵³⁰ See above 43-48.

⁵³¹ It was mentioned earlier that Andronikos II refused a marriage between Thamar of Epirus and his son, Michael IX under the pretext that they were closely related, since Thamar was Michael's second cousin by her mother, Anna Palaiologina Kantakouzene. However, Thomas I of Epirus, Thamar's brother, married later the daughter of Michael IX, Anna Palaiologina, although they were relatives of a degree lower than the seventh, since Anna was Thomas' niece.

With the presentation of the marriage strategies in the reign of Andronikos II ends in the present research, since in the first phase of civil war between the two Andronikoi, they changed significantly. Cause of the civil war was the death of Andronikos' III brother, Manuel, who was accidentally murdered by the guards the young co-emperor had placed in his lover's house. Upon Manuel's death followed that of his father, Michael IX, who could not stand the loss of his son⁵³². For his grandfather, emperor Andronikos II, the incident revealed once more the immature character of his grandson, who wanted passionately to become emperor, but he was extremely intractable⁵³³. Andronikos III was also afraid that his grandfather would prefer another grandson as his heir to the throne, Michael Katharos, the illegitimate son of Constantine Palaiologos. Therefore, in April 1321 with the support of his best friend, John Kantakouzenos, he went to Adrianople, his base during the civil war⁵³⁴.

⁵³² Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (285-286 SCHOPEN– BEKKER). Kantakouzenos mentions also that Manuel's death followed that of his sister, Anna Palaiologina, John Kantakouzenos, *Ἱστορία* I (13-14 SCHOPEN).

⁵³³ Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (285 SCHOPEN– BEKKER).

⁵³⁴ John Kantakouzenos, *Ἱστορία* I (84-89 SCHOPEN).

CONCLUSIONS

Marriage strategies were one of the most crucial indicators of the self-consciousness of a social group, since intermarriages with people outside of this group are left almost unnoticed –especially in the Middle Ages. The marriage strategies of the high aristocracy of the early Palaiologan period presented in this specific thesis provide a telling example of the practices followed by the first Palaiologan emperors and the aristocracy of their time concerning marital unions.

As it was described earlier, the imperial dynasty of the Palaiologoi was a family of the high aristocracy, before ascending to the throne. It is not a coincidence that Pachymeres referred to the families constituting the high aristocracy of the time, right before he mentioned the conspiracy that brought Michael VIII Palaiologos to the forefront, first as *despotes* and then as co-emperor of the underaged John IV Laskaris; the members of those families had helped Michael, who belonged to their milieu and when he became an emperor, Palaiologos rewarded them for their support⁵³⁵.

Marriage Strategies among the high Aristocracy. The Matter of Endogamy

The Palaiologoi was the most powerful family, since they counted many members involved in the marriage policies of the aristocracy and they had come several times extremely close in the ascendance to the throne, already from the early thirteenth century. Therefore, it seems quite reasonable that already under the Laskarids they had accompliced several intermarriages with members of other illustrious families such as the Kantakouzenoi and the Tarchaneiotai.

By the time that Michael VIII Palaiologos came into power first as an emperor-regent and after 1261 as a sole emperor, he showed that he was more than willing to support the marriage alliances among his family's members and his collaborators, by interfering in the marriage arrangements of the aristocracy, contracting beneficial marriages for his entourage and exercising his power even to dissolve marital unions that were not anymore wanted⁵³⁶. As the majority of emperors before him, Michael VIII knew the importance of kinship by blood or marriage in his social group and wanted probably to expand his family network in order to secure his position through strong

⁵³⁵ George Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικὰ Ἱστορία* I (93 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁵³⁶ See above the case of Theodora Tarchaneiotissa Balanidiotissa, niece of Michael VIII.

allies. He also wanted to keep his closest collaborators into his direct entourage and diminish any claims of his rivals to the throne. Consequently, he practiced intermarriages that were beneficial not only for the Empire, but also for the security of his own dynasty.

Michael's VIII son and heir, Andronikos II, even though completely different character of his father, was also aware of the significance of the marriage policies. In his long-term reign, he practiced multiple intermarriages, not only among his immediate relatives, but also his collaborators and certainly, the families of his siblings. Furthermore, Andronikos II had to face many changes and urgent dangers concerning the Empire, therefore he was using Byzantine's diplomacy ultimate weapon, intermarriages in several cases. In his marriage alliances involved the majority of the members of the high aristocracy, a fact that reveals the importance of marriage policies among members of this social group.

An interesting fact that must be addressed at this point are the members that constituted an aristocratic family. In the famous passage of Pachymeres, the historiographer presented the families of high aristocracy and described them as a 'golden chain'⁵³⁷. Those families included first-degree relatives, since their prominent members were in reality the direct offspring of specific persons, such as the cases of the Strategopouloi, who by that time consisted of Alexios and his son Constantine, and the Tornikioi, who are in fact the children of the *mesazon* Demetrios Tornikes⁵³⁸.

Core of the high aristocracy was undoubtedly the immediate family of the emperor, that means his siblings with their spouses and their immediate offspring. The children of Martha (Maria) and Nikephoros Tarchaneiotes constituted the family of Tarchaneiotes and their descendants are to be found among the Tarchaneiotes, the Kantakouzenoi and the Angeloi. The children of Eirene (Eulogia) and John Kantakouzenos among the Kantakouzenoi, the Angeloi and the Raouls. Subsequently, the offspring of Michael's VIII half- brother Constantine could be found among the Palaiologoi, the Synadenoi and the Tornikioi. In the reign of Andronikos II, the offspring of his sister Eirene and John III Asan constituted the family of Asan, with their descendants to be found among also the families of Kantakouzenoi and

⁵³⁷ See above 22-23.

⁵³⁸ KYRITSES, Byzantine Aristocracy 222-223.

Philanthropenoi, while those of Eudokia to the Megaloi Komnenoi of Trebizond and of Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos' to the Palaiologoi⁵³⁹.

As it can be deduced, the affinity among the members of the families of the high aristocracy might have been a common phenomenon. The existence of marriages where the spouses were related in a degree of consanguinity lower than the seventh seems quite reasonable, since the majority of the high aristocratic families due to their own marriage strategies could be related by blood or marriage⁵⁴⁰. They might have been against the rules of the Canon or Civil Law, but they helped them consolidate their power within a small circle. Thus, all evidence supports the argument of an endogamy practiced by the high aristocracy of the early Palaiologan period. A further sign of endogamy, even though occasionally beyond the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, was the intermarriage between members of two distant branches of the same family. The parents of Michael VIII, Andronikos and Theodora were both coming from two different branches of the Palaiologos family, thus Michael and his brother, John were known as Diplopalaiologoi; Diplobatzina, the mother of one of Michael's VIII illegitimate daughters seemed also to have been a descendant of a marriage between two distant branches of the Batatzes family.

However, in several occasions the endogamy of the high aristocracy was avoided. Andronikos II, whose reign reasonably seems to have the majority of marriages with spouses closely related, was more than willing to include members of families outside the high aristocracy in matrimonial connections of his immediate family. The marital unions of two of his sons, Constantine and John and his nephew, John Palaiologos with the daughters of his ministers Theodore Boilas Mouzalon, Nikephoros Choumnos and Theodore Metochites respectively, are the most telling examples; another case is the marriage of Constantine Palaiologos to Eudokia Neokaisaritissa, daughter of the *protasekretes* Theodore Neokaisareites.

Impressive is the fact that many aristocratic families who until 1259 were included in the high aristocracy, seem to have been excluded from the network of family alliances by marriage, even though prominent members of those families were in crucial

⁵³⁹ On the matter see also KYRITSES, *Byzantine Aristocracy* 226-227. Andronikos II had more siblings but some of them, although married, were childless.

⁵⁴⁰ They have already been presented in the cases of Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos' Palaiologos with Eirene Raoulaina, who were fifth degree relatives, of Thomas I of Epirus and Anna Palaiologina also related in the same degree, Michael Koutroules with Anna Palaiologina and Isaakios Asan with Theodora Arachatlun, who were first cousins.

posts. The Nestongoi, related both to the Batatzai and the Palaiologoi, seem to be absent from any of the aristocratic marriage policies, even though they still served in key positions of the Empire. The Batatzai and the Laskaris families disappeared from the forefront; for the latter it is known that Michael VIII took care of that matter up to a certain level. The Kaballarioi probably have lost their most prominent members in the Thessalian campaign in the decade of 1270-1280; the Kamytzai disappeared after 1259 and the Aprenoi extinct possibly in the fourteenth century. Finally, the Philanthropenoi probably survived only through their female members, since Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos, grandfather of the same named *pinkernes*, might have been the last male representative of the family⁵⁴¹.

It may be assumed that the families, which did not renew their relations to the ruling dynasty of the Palaiologoi or did not participate in the marriage strategies of the high aristocracy of the time finally lost their significance. Moreover, many families of the high aristocracy survived, only through their matrilineal sides, as had happened in the Komnenian era, keeping the surnames through their female ancestors.

Family and First Names of the High Aristocracy

As it was presented earlier, the use of surnames already from the ninth century by the members of the aristocracy was an innovation that turned out to be extremely helpful to the modern scholars in tracing the intermarriages and their offspring. Until the twelfth century, the members of the aristocracy were mainly known by one surname, mostly that of their father. However, in the years after 1204, many aristocrats claimed their descent from the Komnenos – Doukas imperial family. This had as a consequence that many prominent members of high aristocracy added the surnames of Komnenos Doukas among the main surname of their family in the early Palaiologan period.

The main representative of this innovative demonstration of a lineage through the family names was Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, attested in the sources also as Michael Komnenos or as he preferred to call himself Michael Doukas Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos or Diplopalaiologos. The sequence of the surnames is not coincidental, since Michael declared through them his ancestors, who legitimised also

⁵⁴¹ His grandson with the same name was mainly a Tarchaneiotes by his father, even though he preferred his grandfather's name, passed to him by his mother.

his right to ascend to the throne. Among his surnames are listed those of Komnenos and Doukas, asserting the intermarriages of the Palaiologans with both the imperial families of Komnenoi and Doukai; then are mentioned the Angeloi because through his grandmother Eirene Angelina he could raise claims to the imperial throne and finally the one of Palaiologoi with the two different branches of the family that were connected to him.

Many prominent representatives of the high aristocracy followed the example of Michael VIII, by listing the surnames of all their important ancestors. To the majority of those surnames, they could be easily traced those of the Komnenos – Doukas, declaring their kinship by blood or marriage, mostly on the side of their female ancestors, who could be transmitters of the lineage, since only few members were known to derive directly from the male line of the Komnenoi. Of course, every aristocrat could add in his list of surnames every ancestral surname he considered of great importance. Those surnames were indicators of the aristocratic intermarriages already from the Komnenian era and could also reveal to a certain degree the endogamous strategies of the marriages followed by the high aristocracy.

Moreover, the full lists of aristocratic surnames could not be found in the historiographers, who usually referred to them with one of their surnames, mainly that of their father; even though sometimes they mentioned also partly their lineages, in order to be more precise to the identity of a person, whose actions were described⁵⁴². The main information about the chain of family names used by the aristocrats were mostly transmitted through documents such as the monastic *Typika* and poems, such as those of Manuel Philes. Among the *Typika* of the Palaiologan period, one of the most important is that of Bebaia Elpis Monastery, founded by the niece of emperor Michael VIII and daughter of Constantine Palaiologos, Theodora Palaiologina Synadene. The parents of Theodora, Constantine Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos and Eirene Komnene Laskarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina Branaina, as well as the offspring of the marriage of Theodora to John Angelos Doukas Synadenos and their descendants, among with her siblings and part of their offspring were depicted in the *Typikon*, with an enlistment

⁵⁴² Akropolites referred to Michael VIII Palaiologos only as Komnenos, probably to flatter the emperor by emphasising his imperial lineage. Pachymeres referred to almost all the aristocrats and the emperor by strictly mentioning only one family name, except from the cases that he wanted to clarify if the name was of matrilineal descent in the case of Alexios Philanthropenos or wanted to be more precise as in the presentation of Nostongissa Tarchaneiotissa, daughter of Nikephoros Tarchaneiotis by his first marriage, probably to a Nostongissa.

of all the family names used by each member. Men usually had three to four surnames, while women bear up to six; among them was also the family name of their husband. Even the inscriptions of the portraits in the *Typikon* and the reference to the names inside the text differ, giving probably the long and short versions of the surnames used.

The family names of the early Palaiologan aristocracy did not follow a specific pattern; one could use each of the surnames declaring patrilineal or matrilineal descent, as long as they were to be found in his ancestry. This can be traced in several cases where two siblings were using different surnames of their family's lineage, such as the sons of Theodora Synadene, Theodore and John, who were known probably either as Theodore Komnenos Doukas Synadenos Palaiologos and John Komnenos Doukas Synadenos, or in a simplification of their names, possibly by themselves, as Theodore Synadenos and John Palaiologos. Moreover, there is also the case where a young aristocrat preferred to bear his maternal grandfather's name rather than that of his father, even though he was also a well-known aristocrat. The example is that of *pinkernes* Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos, who was known by the surnames of his homonymous grandfather. Alexios, originally a Tarchaneiotes, had chosen for unknown reasons those names, possibly to honour his grandfather, who was a glorious military commander.

Women could also bear as many surnames as they wanted, declaring their family ancestry. They could also pass their surnames to their children, who could have been really proud of their mother's ancestry. Among their family names, the female aristocrats added also that of their husbands. If their husband's family was more illustrious than their own, then they were mostly known by his surnames⁵⁴³.

However, the surnames are not the only indicators of an aristocratic family that follow a specific pattern. The first names of the members of the families of the high aristocracy could also pass from one generation to the other. The most famous names were those of the founder or the most prominent person of the family – who sometimes could be the same person – from the time that the family came to forefront. A first name could not only reveal the kinship ties or the family to which someone belonged, but also a bond of spiritual relationship such as the spiritual parenthood⁵⁴⁴. Already in the

⁵⁴³ A telling example is the case of Eudokia Komnene Doukaina Palaiologina Synadene (Mouzakiotissa), wife of Theodore Doukas Komnenos Palaiologos Synadenos, who is known by her husband's surnames and not her father's, Theodore Doukas Mouzakios.

⁵⁴⁴ Such as in the case of Eyphrosyne, daughter of Michael VIII, who baptized a girl, who was named after her. For more on the name patterns see R. MACRIDES, *The Byzantine Godfather*, in R. J. MACRIDES,

tenth century, members of the great Anatolian aristocratic families were using specific names that were passing mostly from grandparent to grandchild and could be indicators of each family such as the names Bardas and Nikephoros for the Phokas family, Bardas and Constantine for the Skleroi, Leo and Pothos for the Argyroi⁵⁴⁵. The same could be observed in the Komnenian era, with some specific first names to be preferred by the Komnenoi and Doukai, such as Alexios, John, Andronikos and Isaakios for men and Eirene and Anna for women⁵⁴⁶.

In the early Palaiologan period, the same can be noticed in the families of the high aristocracy, mostly in the Palaiologoi and the aristocratic families who had ties of kinship with them. Among men the names Andronikos, Constantine and John are the most popular. Andronikos was the name of Michael's VIII father, Andronikos Palaiologos; Constantine and John were names revealing probably a kinship to the Komnenoi and Doukai. Michael, the name of the founder of the dynasty was also widespread in the aristocratic circles; interesting is the fact that the names George and Nikephoros, first names of the first known members of the Palaiologoi in the Komnenian era were not used widely among the aristocracy of the time. Women were usually named after the empress Theodora, wife of Michael VIII; other chosen names were Eirene and Anna; Eirene was honouring Eirene Angelina, the daughter of Alexios III Angelos, who gave to the Palaiologoi the first right to ascend to the imperial throne. Both Anna and Eirene were quite popular in the family of Komnenoi and Doukai, as already mentioned and it is no surprise that they were used to such a degree by the Palaiologan aristocracy; the majority of the families constituting the high aristocracy of the time claimed their ancestry from the Komnenos – Doukas clan. First names such as Euphrosyne and Thomais were probably personal choice or had a special story behind them, like the name Simonis of Andronikos' II daughter⁵⁴⁷; Eudokia on the other hand,

Kinship and Justice in Byzantium, 11th - 15th Centuries. Variorum Collected Studies. Aldershot 2000, 139-162 [First published in *BMGS* 11 (1987)].

⁵⁴⁵ CHEYNET, Pouvoir et contestations 268-269.

⁵⁴⁶ This could be explained by the history of those two families that were connected through the marriage of Alexios I Komnenos and Eirene Doukaina. Alexios was the founder of the dynasty, John was either way a common name in Byzantium, probably especially in Asia Minor. Moreover, Andronikos was a name used mostly by the Doukai and Isaakios was the first of the Komnenoi who became an emperor. Manuel was also another popular name among the Komnenoi, in the memory of the eldest son of John Komnenos and Anna Dalassena, who was a general of Romanos IV Diogenes. Eirene was common among women in honour of Eirene Doukaina; many women of the Komnenoi – Doukas family were also named Anna after the mother of Alexios I, Anna Dalassena.

⁵⁴⁷ Simonis was named after Saint Peter. Before her birth, Andronikos II had with his wife, Eirene many daughters born, who had not survived infancy. When Simonis was born, the emperor followed a folklore practice to assure that this daughter could survive. He lightened a candle for each of the twelve Apostles;

a name widely spread among the female aristocrats, was also to be found among the Komnenoi.

The Role of Women in the Marriage Strategies

As already mentioned, women played a significant role in the marriage strategies of the high aristocracy and the imperial family, since their marital unions could prove extremely beneficial for their kin. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that those aristocratic families with many female members were 'privileged', since they could accomplish more intermarriages within their social group. Moreover, women were in the enhanced position of being conveyors of lineage. From the twelfth century onwards, their progeny could enlist their surnames and possibly glorify more the female lineage by using their family names, if their family was more illustrious than the one of their husbands.

Of great importance is also that special titles were applied through marriage to male relations already from the ninth century, since the husband of a daughter, sister or sister-in-law was a *gambros*, son-in-law⁵⁴⁸. In the case of the imperial daughters, the kinship by marriage could grant to the husband himself or their offspring the right to raise claims to the throne, especially when the direct male line of the imperial dynasty was possibly extinct⁵⁴⁹.

Although women could be bearers of family lineage, it is impressive that among the intermarriages of the early Palaiologan period examined in the present thesis, there are several cases where the first names or the surnames or the lineage of the female aristocrats are not known. The wives of John Komnenos Palaiologos, brother of Michael VIII, and Michael Palaiologos Tarchaneiotes, nephew of the aforementioned emperor are only two examples among many. Their first names remained unknown, although the sources mention that they were the daughter of Constantine Tornikes and the daughter of *megas domestikos* Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos respectively; they were obviously coming from two illustrious families of the high aristocracy of the period. The second case is even more interesting, since the daughter of the couple is

the light which survived more than the others, was that of Saint Peter (Simon), so he named his daughter after him, George Pachymeres, *Συγγραμικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* III (305 FAILLER–LAURENT).

⁵⁴⁸ RAPP, *Brother-Making* 212.

⁵⁴⁹ Such as the cases of Eirene Angelina and Anna Angelina, described already above.

also not known either by name or surname; it is only known that she was married in the family of Raoul⁵⁵⁰. Another telling example is the wife of Theodore Boilas Mouzalon, who was mentioned in the sources as a 'Kantakouzene', without any further information. The fact that she was a member of the Kantakouzenos family did not make the sources to try to be more detailed, when talking about her and inform us about her parents or other kinship ties. The family of Asan has also some telling examples, when it comes to the wives of the sons of Eirene and John III; all of them are not known neither by their first name nor their family name, leaving us wonder if their family names could be possibly traced through the enlisted surnames of their offspring⁵⁵¹. The only exception is Theodora Palaiologina Arachatlun, wife of Isaakios Komnenos Palaiologos Asan.

Unnamed remained also those women, with whom emperors and aristocrats had their illegitimate children. A huge question has been raised about the social group to which they belonged, especially when the only emperor's mistress known by her name in this period is Diplobatzina, mother of the first illegitimate daughter of Michael VIII, Maria, and probably a member of the Batatzes family. Michael VIII had one more illegitimate daughter, Euphrosyne; his son, Andronikos II had also two illegitimate daughters, Eirene and Maria, also by unknown mothers. Another question is whether their pregnancy outside marriage was accepted by the Byzantine society and what kind of reactions had their families and social entourage. Impressive is also the fact that the offspring of their children could marry into the high aristocracy; the daughter of Maria, Lady of the Mongols, Theodora Arachatlun had married a legitimate son of the illustrious family of Asan. However, not only the emperors could have illegitimate children as the cases of John Komnenos Palaiologos and Constantine Porphyrogennetos attested. The first had an illegitimate daughter of unknown mother and married the ruler of Iberia; the latter had between his two marriages his own illegitimate son by a female servant.

The matter of female agency is a further topic to be examined. In the early Palaiologan period it was possible for women to make their own choices, as specific cases could reveal. Eudokia, sister of Andronikos II refused a second marriage to a man she did not want to marry, and she refused to go to the Serbian court. However, the

⁵⁵⁰ Her brother is the famous *pinkernes* Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos (Tarchaneiotes).

⁵⁵¹ See above for the presumptions about the families that the wives of Asan belong.

reasons for her vehement refusal against the emperor's wishes should be examined carefully. Eudokia was of some age and she could express her opinion; she was the widow of the emperor of Trebizond and her firstborn son had already ascended his father's throne. Therefore, her refusal may have been connected to her wish to return to Trebizond after a while. During her presence in Constantinople, Eudokia had also become an intermediary between the two imperial courts. On the other hand, Eudokia Neokaisaritissa Palaiologina was a married aristocrat who chose to refuse an extramarital affair with the son of the emperor, whom she loved, in order to stay faithful to her moral values. Consequently, she was praised for her virtue by Gregoras, along with her physical beauty and intelligence⁵⁵².

Moreover, among the female aristocrats of the time one can find extremely intelligent and educated women, such as Theodora Raoulaina and Eirene Choumnaina, who corresponded with many scholars of their time⁵⁵³. Those two, together with Theodora Synadene and Maria of the Mongols are only some of the cases of windowed aristocrats entering monasteries⁵⁵⁴. It was actually a common phenomenon for members of the high aristocracy to take the monastic vows, after the death of their spouses or when they wanted to abandon the world and live a peaceful life. As was mentioned earlier, Theodora Synadene had founded the Monastery of Bebaia Elpis, where she had withdrawn along with her daughter, Euphrosyne; their example seemed also to have followed and other female relatives of the family. Additionally, Maria, Lady of the Mongols, who had also taken part in a diplomatic expedition arranged by her brother to the lands of her dead husband, had founded a nunnery, where she resided as a nun with her daughter Theodora; the latter married probably after her mother's death⁵⁵⁵.

⁵⁵² Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία* I (293-294 SCHOPEN-BEKKER). Gregoras got to the point to compare her with the Pythagorean Theano and Hypatia of Alexandria.

⁵⁵³ For Theodora Raoulaina see A. RIEHLE, *Καὶ σε προστάτιν ἐν αὐτοῖς τῆς αὐτῶν ἐπιγράφομεν σωτηρίας*. Theodora Raulaina als Stifterin und Patronin in: L. THEIS –M. MULLETT –M. GRÜNBART, *Female Founders in Byzantium and beyond (Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte LX/LXI, 2011/12)*. Wien–Köln–Weimar 2013, 299-315. For Eirene Choumnaina see CONSTANTINIDES HERO A., *A Woman's Quest for Spiritual Guidance: The Correspondence of Princess Irene Eulogia Chumnaina Palaiologina*, Brookline 1986; A. CONSTANTINIDES HERO, *Irene-Eulogia Choumnaina Palaiologina, Abbess of the Convent of Philanthropos Soter in Constantinople*. *BF* 9 (1985) 119–147.

⁵⁵⁴ On Theodora Synadene and Maria, Lady of the Mongols see also C. L. CONNOR, *Women of Byzantium*. New Haven/ London 2004, 277-308, 312-316.

⁵⁵⁵ On the matter see A.-M. TALBOT, *Building Activity in Constantinople under Andronikos II: The Role of Women Patrons in the Construction and Restoration of Monasteries*, in: N. NECİPOĞLU (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*. Leiden 2001, 329–343; L. THEIS –M. MULLETT –M. GRÜNBART, *Female Founders in Byzantium and beyond (Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte LX/LXI, 2011/12)*. Wien–Köln–Weimar 2013.

Examining the marriage strategies of the high aristocracy, one should probably mention the spouses' age. The allowed age of marriage was twelve to thirteen for girls and fourteen for boys. Whenever the age of the future bride is mentioned in the sources, –something rather rare– she was reaching or was already in puberty. With the exception of the marriage of the underage Simonis Palaiologina to Stephan II Urös Milutin, it seems that the age limitations were quite strict. This fact could also be supported by the source evidence; it is known that several times the arranged marriage or betrothal could take place prior to the proper age and according to the Byzantine tradition the woman moved to her husband's house. However, the couple did not consummate the marital union, until both had reached the proper age, as can be deduced by the dates of marriages and dates of their first children's birth⁵⁵⁶. This matter was of great significance for women, since an early sexual intercourse could lead to irreversible damages to the uterus and the capability of bearing children⁵⁵⁷. Impressive is also the fact that aristocratic women practiced their first marriage already in puberty, contrary to men, who could also reach the age of thirty and married then for the first time⁵⁵⁸.

The results of Marriage Strategies

Finally, is of great significance an account of the marriage strategies of high aristocracy. In the reign of the two first Palaiologans, one can count more than fifty proposals of marriage and marital unions, mostly organised and supported by the emperors. It seems that the families constituting the high aristocracy were more than willing to take part in the marriage strategies, trying to stay in the forefront through a beneficial marriage and claim their positions in the emperor's entourage, if they did not already belong to it.

Families such as the Kantakouzenoi, Tarchaneiotai, Synadenoi, Raoul and Asan were the most notable families of both reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II and

⁵⁵⁶ A telling example is the marriage of emperor Andronikos II to Anna of Hungary, which took place in 1272. Nevertheless, their first son, Michael IX was not born until ca. 1278. On the other hand, the firstborn daughter of Eirene Palaiologina and John III Asan was supposed to have been born right after their marriage in 1278, because both spouses had by far reached the proper age of marriage, since their betrothal, see above.

⁵⁵⁷ A. WALKER, *Wife and husband: a 'golden team'*, in I. KALAVREZOU (ed.), *Byzantine Women and their World*. New Haven 2003, 215-231, here 218.

⁵⁵⁸ See the case of Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos' Palaiologos, who according to Gregoras was thirty years old, when he married Eirene Raoulaina, Nikephoros Gregoras, *Ῥωμαϊκή Ἱστορία* I (190 SCHOPEN –BEKKER).

already included in the immediate relatives of the emperor. Obviously noticing the gradual decline of families such as the Nestongoi, who were related to Michael VIII and of the Strategopouloi, related to the empress Theodora Palaiologina, the aforementioned families decided probably to stay as active as they could. The acquisition of many children and mostly of many daughters, seemed to have helped those families to receive a dominant position next to the imperial family of Palaiologoi; it is not a coincidence that those families were basically the immediate family of the emperor, since they consisted of his siblings and offspring. The practice of endogamy between those families seemed also reasonable, considering that they were probably of equal power, even if they sometimes did not obtain high positions at court, since their kinship to the emperor was probably already recognisable among the members of the same milieu⁵⁵⁹.

Among those families of the high aristocracy were also many who became extinct over time or had declined; other families, which did not belong to the high aristocracy, seem to have tried to find a way to get into the imperial family and the direct entourage of the emperor. The families of the ministers Mouzalon, Choumnos and Metochites were probably belonging to the aristocratic circle, but not to the highest one. The marriages of their daughters to members of the imperial family or relatives by blood of the emperor had opened them a way into the high aristocracy, from which for example the Metochites family had benefited.

It is obvious that the intermarriage between a member of a family belonging to the high aristocracy with a person of the same milieu was probably to the advantage of both families, who had accomplished a beneficial marriage alliance. On the other hand, it seems that when a member of an illustrious aristocratic family was married to a person belonging to a very rich family, but not necessarily an aristocratic one, the latter family could obtain probably more by this marriage. Therefore, not only the emperor but also the members of the high aristocracy were quite careful, when practicing marriage strategies.

As it might be noticed, the Komnenian system of intermarriages, as well as the Palaiologan system shared a lot of similarities. Both the Komnenoi and the Palaiologoi had risen as a dominant family from a specific circle. Nevertheless, the Komnenoi had

⁵⁵⁹ Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos' Palaiologos did not bear a title, as did also the sons of Eirene Palaiologina Asanina, who were of royal ancestry by both of their parents.

practiced the majority of their intermarriages after they had ascended to the throne; on the other hand, the Palaiologoi practiced numerous marriage strategies among the families of the same milieu long before their ascendance to the throne. In the time of the Palaiologoi, the aristocratic families had already a self-consciousness and were proud for their ancestors; they may also have shared the same distant ancestors with the imperial family of their time. Michael VIII and Andronikos II, following the example of the Komnenoi, included in their marriage policies not only their children, but also the offspring of their siblings and closest relatives. In the Komnenian era, the older aristocratic families were fading and new ones came into forefront, mostly in the capacity of the emperor's *gambroi*. During the reigns of the first Palaiologoi, many families were constantly present in the high aristocracy, others tried to claim their position in this social circle, while others who remained inactive in the intermarriages slowly disappeared.

An interesting fact is that in the Komnenian era the aristocrats who held the most important positions in the court, participated as well in the intermarriages with the emperor's relatives. By contrast, families like the Nestongoi or the Kaballarioi might have held high positions in the military, but they did not take part in intermarriages. The titles were also essential for the relatives of the emperor in the Komnenian period. The relatives of the Palaiologoi might have not be known by their titles, but mostly by their kinship to the emperor. The aristocracy of the Komnenian era had mostly a military character and the emperor's sons and daughters-in-law were descendants of those families. In the early Palaiologans, were mentioned the marriages of the emperor's offspring with members of aristocratic families belonging to the administration.

To sum up, the present thesis presented the marriage strategies of the high aristocracy of the early Palaiologan period. It has been shown with an enlistment of the marriage proposals and the marital unions, as well as with a detailed analysis of the marriage policies that the members of the high aristocracy concluded marriage alliances with families of the same milieu, mostly under the influence of the emperor's wishes. Through those practices, they aimed at remaining in the emperor's entourage and their social circle or at entering into the high aristocracy. Therefore, the Palaiologan system of intermarriages had established a great network of kinship among the families of the high aristocracy.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Byz</i>	Byzantion
<i>BF</i>	Byzantinische Forschungen
<i>BMGS</i>	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
<i>BS</i>	Byzantinoslavica
<i>BZ</i>	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
<i>DDIEE</i>	Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορικῆς καὶ Ἐθνολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας τῆς Ἑλλάδος
<i>DOP</i>	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
<i>EEBS</i>	Ἑπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
<i>JÖB</i>	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
<i>MM</i>	MIKLOSICH F., MÜLLER J., Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana I-IV, Vienna 1860-1890
<i>NE</i>	Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων
<i>ODB</i>	Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium, ed. KAZHDAN A., TALBOT A.M., CUTLER A., GREGORY T., ŠEVČENKO N. Oxford 1991.
<i>PLP</i>	Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit, ed. TRAPP E. et alii. Wien 1976–1996.
<i>REB</i>	Revue des Études Byzantines
<i>TM</i>	Travaux et Mémoires

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis focuses on the marriage strategies of the Byzantine aristocracy in the early Palaiologan period. It aims at analysing the marriage policies of the aristocratic families in the entourage of the early Palaiologan emperors, as well as the reasons the marriages among aristocrats were either contracted or not, and the degree of the imperial interference in them.

At first, it presents the historical frame and the sources. The first chapter offers a definition of the aristocracy and its function within the Byzantine society, as well as a list of the families of the early Palaiologan aristocracy with a presentation of their history. In the second chapter, which is the main chapter of this research, are presented the marriage strategies of the aristocracy as a social group already from the tenth century until the evolution of the Komnenian system. Then, follow the marriage policies prior and after the Fourth Crusade. This is an introduction to the world of the marriage policies of the aristocracy, since it demonstrates the continuity of patterns in action. Subsequently, the chapter focuses on the marriage strategies of the aristocracy until 1259, with the rise of the Palaiologoi to the throne. The study turns then to the marriage policies during the reigns of Michael VIII Palaiologos and his son, Andronikos II, which demonstrate high rates of intermarriage activity. Finally, in the conclusions several aspects of the marriage strategies of the aristocracy are analysed.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit den Heiratsstrategien der byzantinischen Aristokratie in der frühen Palaiologenzeit. Sie zielt darauf ab, die Heiratspolitik der aristokratischen Familien im Kreis der frühen Palaiologen zu analysieren, sowie die Gründe des Erfolges bzw. Misserfolges der aristokratischen Heiratspläne, und das Ausmaß der imperialen Einmischung in diesen Plänen.

Zunächst stellt diese Arbeit den historischen Rahmen und die Quellen vor. Das erste Kapitel bietet eine Definition der Aristokratie und ihrer Funktion innerhalb der byzantinischen Gesellschaft, sowie eine Liste der Familien der frühen palaiologischen Aristokratie mit einer Präsentation ihrer Geschichte. Im zweiten Kapitel, dem Hauptkapitel dieser Studie, werden die Heiratsstrategien der Aristokratie als soziale Gruppe bereits ab dem 10. Jahrhundert bis zur Entwicklung des komnenischen Systems vorgestellt. Danach folgt die Heiratspolitik vor und nach dem Vierten Kreuzzug. Dies ist eine Einführung in die Welt der Ehepolitik der Aristokratie, da sie die Kontinuität der Handlungsmuster demonstriert. Dann konzentriert sich das Kapitel auf die Heiratsstrategien der Aristokratie bis 1259 mit dem Aufstieg des Palaiologoi auf den Thron. Die Studie wendet sich dann der Heiratspolitik während der Regierungszeiten des Michael VIII. Palaiologos und seines Sohnes Andronikos II zu, die eine hohe Rate an Mischehen aufweisen. In den Schlussfolgerungen werden schließlich verschiedene Aspekte der Ehestrategien der Aristokratie analysiert.

APPENDIX

I. Excel Lists

The Excel lists include the aristocrats that participated in the intermarriages of the early Palaiologan period, their offspring and their ancestors, when necessary. They are listed with their names as they appear in PLP, with the PLP numbers also included. Next to every marriage proposal or concluded marriage is listed also the name of the emperor, under whose reign the wedding took place.

II. Tables

The tables refer to the intermarriages of every aristocratic family in the early Palaiologan period. Therefore, the second or third marriages of some aristocrats are not presented, since they were not concluded during the chronological limits of this thesis. In every family are presented mostly the children that took part in the marriage strategies of the period, even though occasionally names of childless members of the family or aristocrats that took monastic vows or even died in infancy are included. Sometimes there is not a presentation of the offspring of the family as a whole, but only indicatively a reference of children as an explanation of the sequence of the family names and lineage or the participation in the marriage policies. The way that the offspring are presented is mostly by order of birth. Finally, the illegitimate children of emperors and aristocrats are connected to the family trees by intermittent lines.

NAME	PLP NR.	PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE OR BETROTHAL	EMPEROR	SPOUSE	EMPEROR
Angelos, Demetrios Michael Doukas Komnenos Koutroules	193			Palaiologina, Anna Komnene (1278)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Angelos, Theodore	195	Theophano, Armenian princess (1295)	Andronikos II Palaiologos		
Angelos, Thomas Doukas Komnenos	197			Palaiologina, Anna (daughter of Michael IX) (1313)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Angelos, John I Doukas	205			Tornikina Komnene (1261)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Angelos, John II Doukas	206			Palaiologina, Eirene (1315)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Angelos, Michael II Doukas Komnenos	220			Doukaina, Theodora Petralipha (ca. 1231)	
Angelos, Nikephoros I Doukas Komnenos	91042	Laskarina, Maria (Betrothal)	John III Batatzes	(1)Laskarina, Maria (1256) (2) Kantakouzene, Anna Palaiologina (1264)	1. Theodore II Laskaris 2. Michael VIII Palaiologos
Akropolites, George	518			Eudokia	
Akropolites, Constantine	520			Tornikina, Maria Komnene Akropolitissa	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Aprenos, Andronikos Doukas	1207				
Asan, Andronikos Komnenos Palaiologos	1489			Raoulaina (?)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Asan, Constantine Palaiologos	1504			Tornikina (?)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Asan, Isaakios Palaiologos	1494			Palaiologina, Theodora Arachatlun (b.1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Asan, John III. Mytzes	1501			Palaiologina, Eirene Asanina Komnene (1278)	Michael VIII Palaiologos

Asan, Michael Palaiologos Komnenos	1514			Asanina	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Asanina	1520			Asan, Michael Palaiologos Komnenos	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Asanina, Maria	16890			Roger de Flor (ca. 1303)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Asanina, Theodora Palaiologina	1531			Ferran Ximenes de Arenos (ca.1307)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Balanidiotes	2057	Tarchaneiotissa, Theodora Palaiologina (Betrothal)	Theodore II Laskaris	Tarchaneiotissa, Theodora Palaiologina (1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Branaina, Eirene Komnene Lascarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina	3149			Palaiologos, Constantine Komnenos (1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Choumnaina, Eirene Palaiologina	30936	Alexios II Komnenos of Trebizond (1299)	Andronikos II Palaiologos	John Palaiologos (1303)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Choumnos, Nikephoros	30961				
Diplobatzina	5515				
Doukaina, Theodora Petralipha	5664			Angelos, Michael II Doukas Komnenos	John III Batatzes
Doukaina, Thamar Angelina (of Epirus)	8152	Palaiologos, Michael IX Doukas Angelos Komnenos (1294)	Andronikos II Palaiologos	D'Anjou, Philipp II of Tarant (1294/5)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Kaballarios, Basil	10037			Tarchaneiotissa, Theodora Palaiologina (1258/9)	Theodore II Laskaris
Kantakouzene	10928			Mouzalou, Theodore Boilas	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Kantakouzene, Anna Palaiologina	10933			Angelos, Nikephoros I Doukas Komnenos (1264)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Kantakouzene, Eirene Asanina	10935			Kantakouzenos, John VI (b.1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos

Kantakouzene, Theodora Raoulaina Palaiologina Komnene	10943			(1) Mouzalon, George (2) Raoul, Ioannes Komnenos Doukas Angelos Petraliphas (1259)	(1) Theodore II Laskaris (2) Michael VIII Palaiologos
Kantakouzene, Thomais Komnene Doukaina Laskarina Palaiologina	10944			Synadenos, John Komnenos Doukas	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Kantakouzene, Maria	16910			(1) Philes, Alexios (1259) (2) Constantine Tich, Tsar of Bulgaria (1268/9) (3) Lachanas(Ivajlo Vurdokva), Tsar of Bulg. (1278)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Kantakouzenos, John Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos				Palaiologina, Eirene (Eulogia) (ca.1240)	John III Batatzes
Kantakouzenos, John VI Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos	10973			Kantakouzene, Eirene Asanina (b.1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Komnene Laskarina	14498			Laskaris, Manuel Komnenos (ca.1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Komnene, Eudokia Palaiologina	12064	Stefan Uroš II. Milutin of Serbia 1298	Andronikos II Palaiologos	Komnenos, John II of Trebizond (1282)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Komnenos, John II of Trebizond	12106			Komnene, Eudokia Palaiologina (1282)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Libadarios					
Laskarina, Eirene	5976	Michael VIII Palaiologos(b.1253/4)	John III Batatzes	Constantine Tich, Tsar of Bulgaria (ca.1257)	Theodore II Laskaris
Laskarina, Maria				Angelos, Nikephoros I Dukas Komnenos	Theodore II Laskaris
Laskarina, Eudokia	91888			De Ventimiglia, Guglielmo (1261)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Laskarina, Theodora	7304			Matthieu de Velicourt (1261)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Laskarina				Svietoslav (1261)	Michael VIII Palaiologos

Metochites, Theodore	17982				
Metochitissa, Eirene Palaiologina	5972			Palaiologos, John (ca. 1305/6)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Mouzalon, Andronikos				daughter of Alexios Raoul (1257/8)	Theodore II Laskaris
Mouzalon, George	92686			Kantakouzene, Theodora Raoulaina Palaiologina Komnene	Theodore II Laskaris
Mouzalon, Theodore Boilas	19439			Kantakouzene	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Mouzalonissa, Eudokia	91886	Palaiologos, Theodore Komnenos	Andronikos II Palaiologos	Palaiologos, Constantine	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Neokaisareites, Theodore	20091				
Nestongos, George	20724	Proposal of marriage with a daughter of Theodore II	Theodore II Laskaris		
Nostongissa Tarchaneiotissa	27512				
Palaiologina, Anna	21344			(1)Angelos, Thomas Doukas Komnenos 1307(?) (2) Angelos, Nikolaos (Orsini, Nicolo) (1318)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Anna (Anna of Hungary)	21348			Palaiologos, Andronikos II Doukas Angelos Komnenos 1272	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Anna Komnene	21350	Stefan Uroš II. Milutin of Serbia 1268/9	Michael VIII Palaiologos	Angelos, Demetrios (Michael) Doukas Komnenos Koutroules (1278)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Eirene	91848			Angelos, John II Doukas of Thessaly (ca.1315)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Eirene Asanina Komnene	21359			Asan, John III Mytzes (1278)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Eirene (Eulogia) Komnene	21360			Kantakouzenos, John Komnenos Angelos (ca.1240)	John III Batatzes
Palaiologina, Eirene Komnene Dukaina (Yolanda of	21361			Palaiologos, Andronikos II Doukas Angelos Komnenos (1284)	Andronikos II Palaiologos

Montferrat)					
Palaiologina, Eirene Laskarina Komnene Doukaina	21362			Synadenos, John Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Eudokia Neokaisaritissa	21369			(1) Palaiologos, Constantine (2) Palaiologos, Constantine ' Porphyrogennetos' (ca. 1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Eugenia Kantakouzene	21368			Syrgiannes	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Euphrosyne				Nogai, Khan of the Mongols of the Golden Hord	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Maria	92632			Toqta, Khan of the Golden Horde (1299)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Maria Doukaina (Rita of Armenia)	21394			Palaiologos, Michael IX (1296)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Maria Komnene	21395	Hülegü, Khan of Mongols	Michael VIII Palaiologos	Abaqa, Khan of Mongols (1265)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Martha (Maria)	21389			Tarchaneiotes, Nikephoros (ca.1237)	John III Batatzes
Palaiologina, Maria Komnene Branaina Laskarina Dukaina Tornikina	21396			Tornikes, Isaakios Komnenos Doukas	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Simonis	21398			Stefan Uroš II. Milutin of Serbia (1299)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Theodora	21379			Theodore Svietoslav, Tsar of Bulgaria (1308)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Theodora Arachatlun	1229			Asan, Isaakios Palaiologos (b. 1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologina, Theodora Doukaina Komnene	21380			Palaiologos, Michael VIII Doukas Komnenos (1253/4)	John III Batatzes
Palaiologina, Theodora Komnene Synadene	21381			Synadenos, John Doukas Angelos (ca.1280)	Michael VIII Palaiologos

Palaiologos, Andronikos	21432			daughter of Raoul Alexios (1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Andronikos III	21356			Palaiologina, Eirene (Adelheid of Braunschweig- Grubenhagen) (1317)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Andronikos II Doukas Angelos Komnenos	21436	Isabeau de Villehardouin, Princess of Achaia (1264)	Michael VIII Palaiologos	(1) Palaiologina, Anna (Anna -Eirene of Hungary) (1272) (2) Palaiologina, Eirene (Yolanda of Montferrat)	(1) Michael VIII Palaiologos (2) Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Andronikos Komnenos Branas Doukas Angelos	21439			daughter of Tarchaneiotes, Michael Glabas Doukas Komnenos	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Constantine	21490			Palaiologina, Eudokia Neokaisareitissa	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos'	21499			(1) Mouzalonissa, Eudokia (2) Palaiologina, Eudokia Neokaisaritissa (ca.1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Constantine 'Porphyrogennetos' Doukas Komnenos	21492	lady of Latin nobility	Michael VIII Palaiologos	Raoulaina, Eirene Palaiologina (ca. 1289)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Constantine Doukas Angelos Komnenos	21498			Branaina, Eirene Komnene Lascarina Kantakouzene Palaiologina 1259	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologos, John	21475	Isabeau de Villehardouin, Princess of Achaia	Andronikos II Palaiologos	Choumnaina, Eirene Palaiologina (1303)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, John	21479			Metochitissa, Eirene (ca. 1305/6)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, John Komnenos Doukas Angelos	21487			daughter of Tornikes Constantine (1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Michael VIII Doukas Angelos Komnenos	21528	Eirene Laskarina, daughter of Theodore II Laskaris	John III Batatzes	Palaiologina, Theodora (1253/4)	John III Batatzes

Palaiologos, Michael IX Doukas Angelos Komnenos	21529	Doukaina, Thamar Angelina	Andronikos II Palaiologos	Palaiologina, Maria Doukaina (Rita of Armenia) (1296)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Theodore Komnenos Doukas Angelos	21464	Mouzalonissa, Eudokia	Andronikos II Palaiologos	daughter of Livadarios (1293)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Palaiologos, Theodore Komnenos	21465			Argentina Spinola (1306)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Petaliphas, John				daughter of Demetrios Komnenos Tornikes	
Petaliphas, Theodore				Tornikina, daughter of Demetrios Tornikes	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Raoul, Alexios	24110			niece of emperor John III Batatzes (?)	John III Batatzes
Raoul, John Komnenos Doukas Angelos Petraliphas	24125			Kantakouzene, Theodora Raoulaina Palaiologina Komnene (1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Raoulaina, Anna Komnene Strategopoulina				Strategopoulos, Michael	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Raoulaina, Eirene Palaiologina	24142			Palaiologos, Constantine 'Porphyrogenetos' (ca. 1289)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Smiltzaina	26265			Smilec of Bulgaria	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Strategopoulina	26892			Strategopoulos, Constantine (b. 1254)	John III Batatzes
Strategopoulina, Anna Komnene Raoulaina	26893			Strategopoulos, Michael	
Strategopoulos, Alexios Komnenos	26894				Michael VIII Palaiologos
Strategopoulos, Andreas	26895				
Strategopoulos, Constantine	26897			Strategopoulina, daughter of Isaakios Doukas (b. 1254)	John III Batatzes
Strategopoulos, Michael	26898			Raoulaina, Anna Komnene Strategopoulina	Michael VIII Palaiologos

Synadene, Eudokia Doukaina Komnene Palaiologina	27096			Synadenos, Theodore Doukas Palaiologos Komnenos (b.1320)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Synadene, Euphrosyne	21373				
Synadenos, John Komnenos Doukas Angelos	27125			Palaiologina, Theodora Komnene Synadene (ca.1280)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Synadenos, John Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos	27126			(1) Kantakouzene, Thomais Komnene Doukaina Laskarina Palaiologina (2) Palaiologina, Eirene Lascarina Komnene Doukaina	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Synadenos, Theodore Doukas Palaiologos Komnenos	27120			Synadene, Eudokia Doukaina Komnene Palaiologina	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Tarchaneiotes, Andronikos	27475			daughter of John I Doukas of Thessaly (ca.1267)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Tarchaneiotes, Michael Doukas Glabas	27504			Tarchaneiotissa, Maria Doukaina Komnene Branaina Palaiologina	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Tarchaneiotes, Michael Palaiologos	27505			daughter of Philanthropenos, Alexios Doukas (ca.1262)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Tarchaneiotes, Nikephoros				1. daughter of Aprenos, Andronikos Doukas 2. Palaiologina, Martha Maria (ca.1237)	John III Batatzes
Tarchaneiotes, Nikolaos Komnenos Doukas Glabas	27507			Tarchaneiotissa, Maria Doukaina Komnene Branaina Palaiologina	
Tarchaneiotissa, Theodora Palaiologina	27510	Belanidiotes (Betrothal)	Theodore II Laskaris	(1) Kaballarios, Basil (1258/9) (2) Balaneidiotes (1259)	(1) Theodore II Laskaris (2) Michael VIII Palaiologos
Tarchaneiotissa, Maria Doukaina Komnene Branaina Palaiologina	27511			Tarchaneiotes, Michael Doukas Glabas	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Tornikes, Andronikos Komnenos Doukas Palaiologos	29122			Tornikina	John III Batatzes
Tornikes, Demetrios				cousin of Andronikos Palaiologos (father of Michael VIII Palaiologos)	John III Batatzes (?)

Tornikes, Isaakios Komnenos Doukas	29125			Palaiologina, Maria Komnene Branaina Laskarina Doukaina Tornikina	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Tornikes, John	29126				
Tornikes, Constantine	29129			Raoulaina	John III Batatzes
Tornikes, Michael	29129				
Tornikina Komnene	29138			Angelos, John I Doukas	Michael VIII Palaiologos (?)
Tornikina, Maria Komnene Akropolitissa	29140			Akropolites, Constantine	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Philanthropene, Theodora (?)	29743			Philanthropenos, Alexios Doukas (1294)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Philanthropenos, Alexios Doukas (Tarchaneiotes)	29752			Philanthropene, Theodora (?)	Andronikos II Palaiologos
Philes, Alexios	29809			Kantakouzene, Maria (1259)	Michael VIII Palaiologos
Philes, Theodore	29812				

(2) Unknown + Andronikos Palaiologos + (1) Theodora Palaiologina

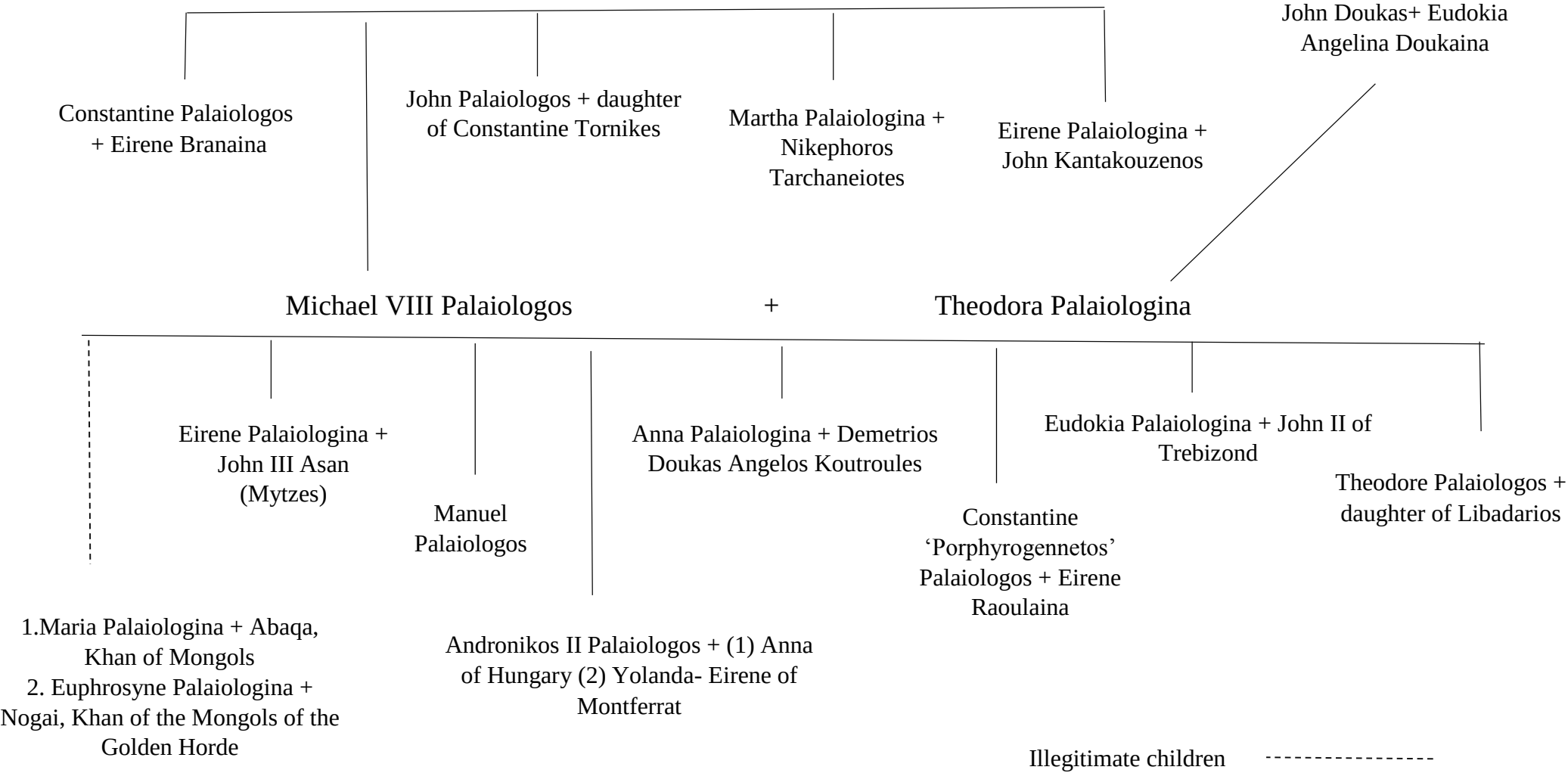


Table 1. Intermarriages of the Palaiologoi (1)

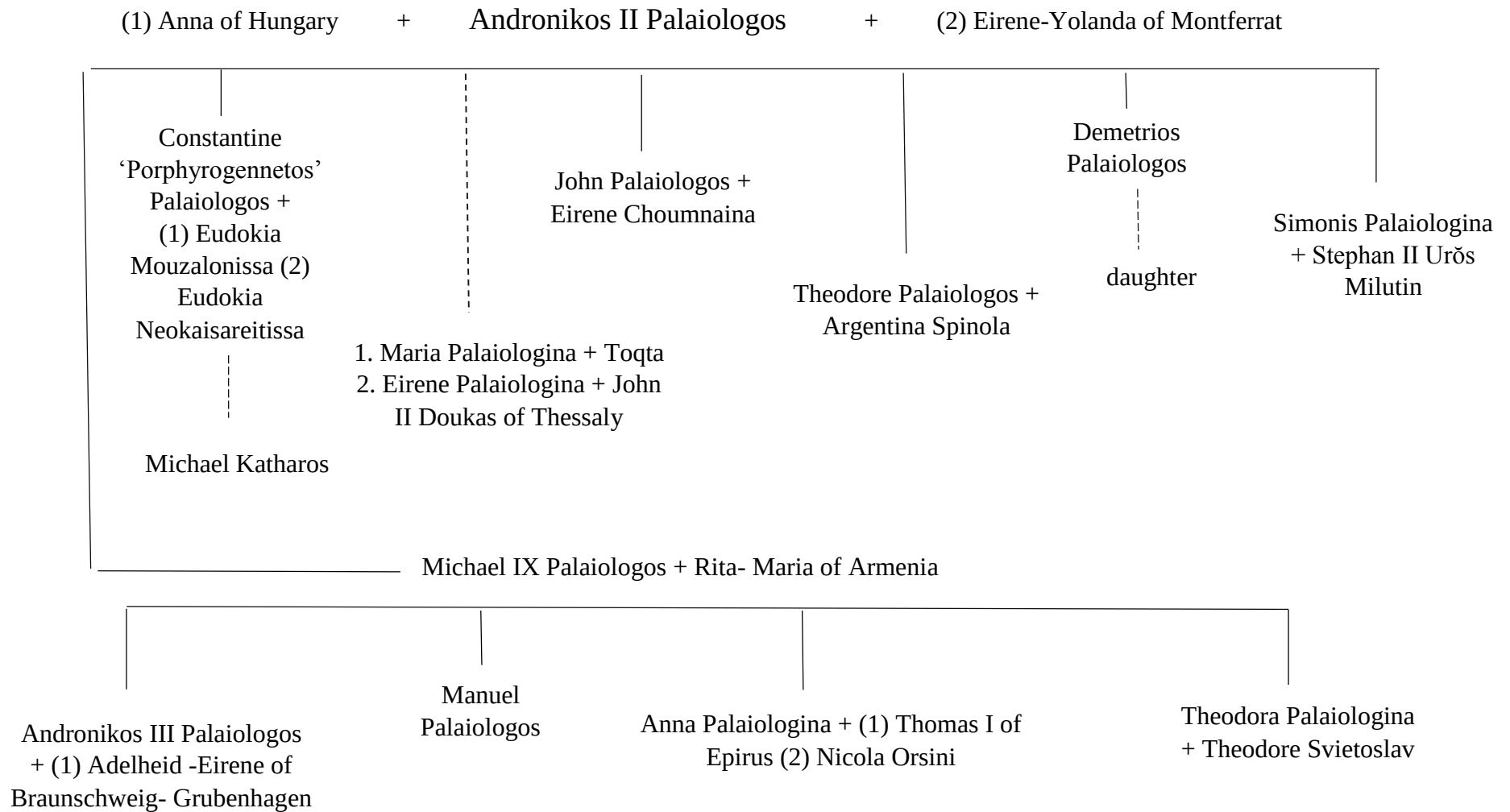


Table 2. Intermarriages of the Palaiologoi (2)

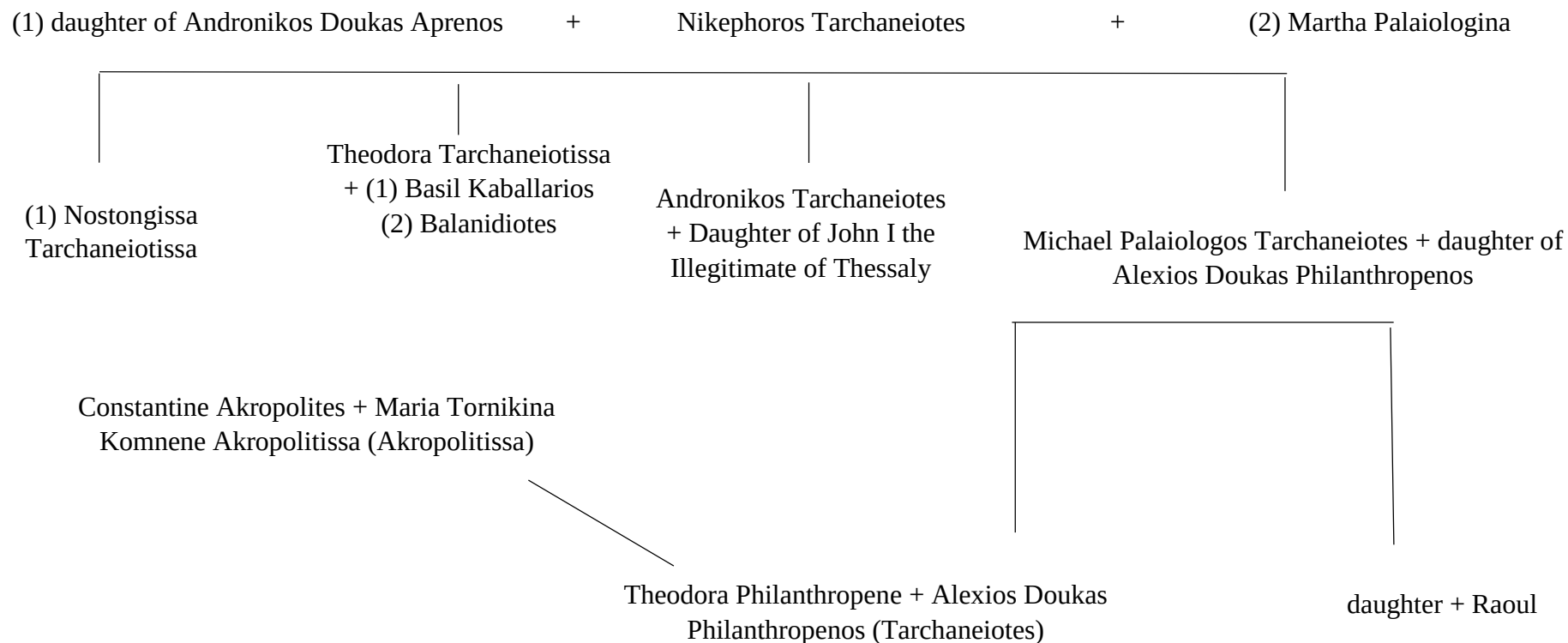


Table 3. Intermarriages of the Tarchaneiotai and the Akropolitai

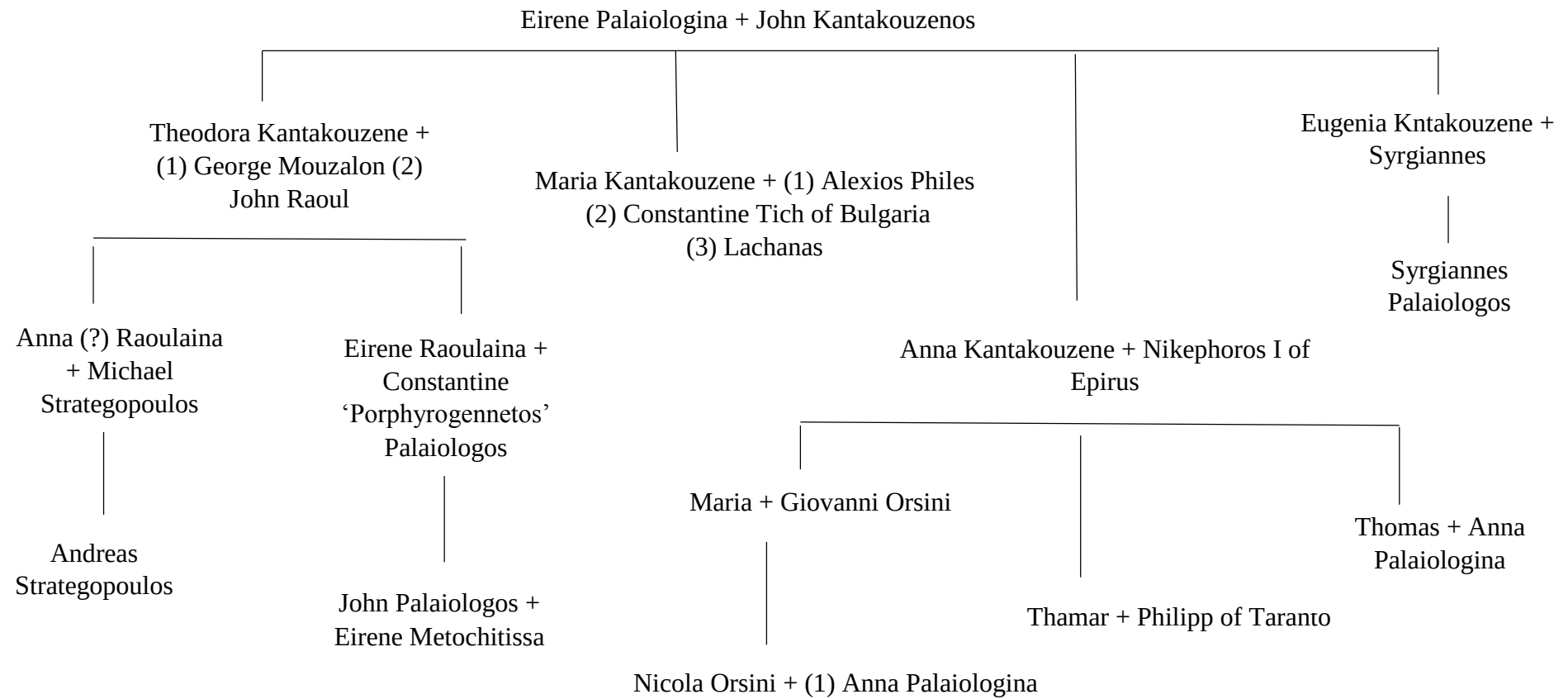


Table 4. Intermarriages of the Kantakouzenoi

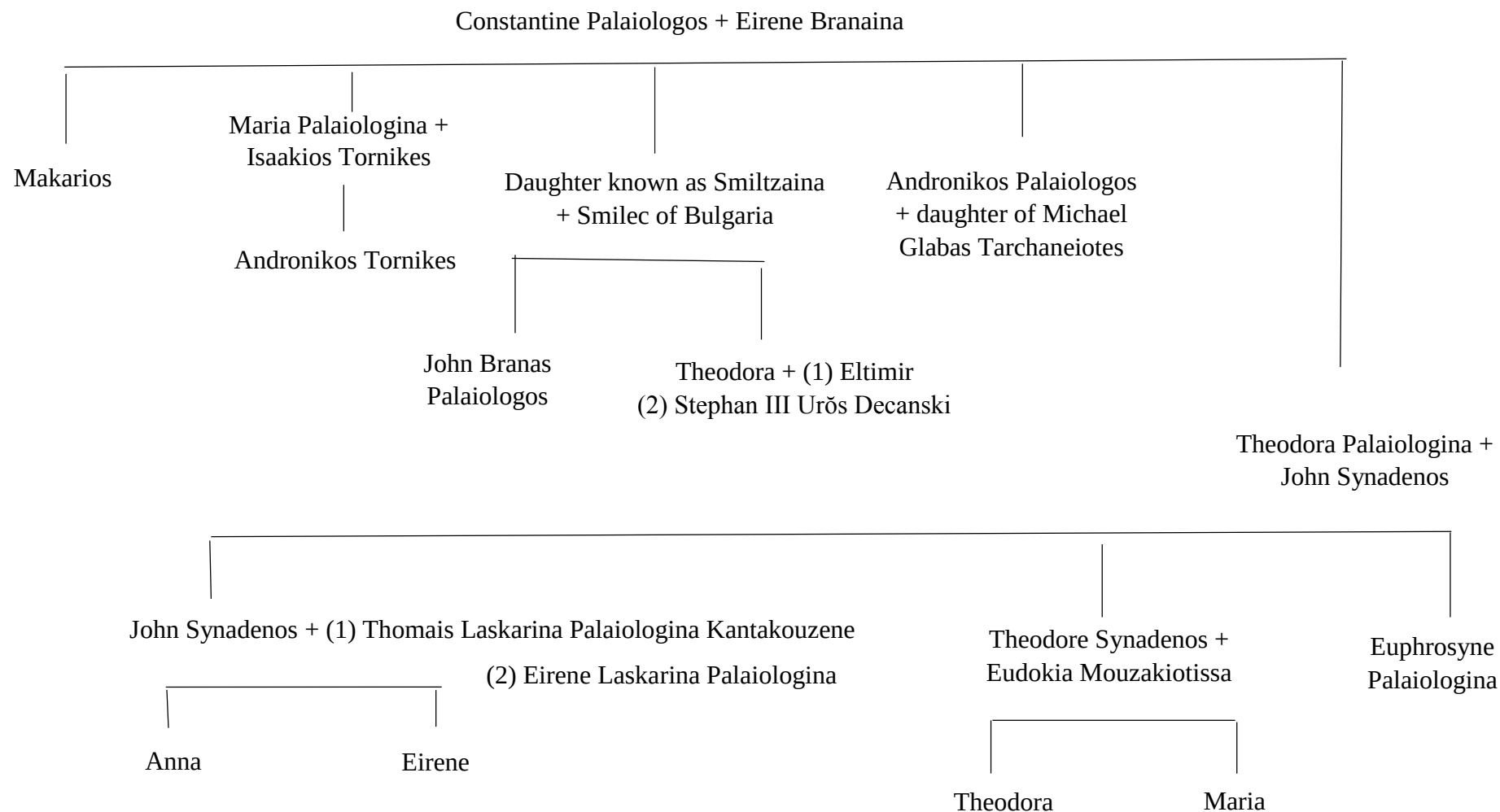


Table 5. Intermarriages of the Palaiologoi and the Synadenoi

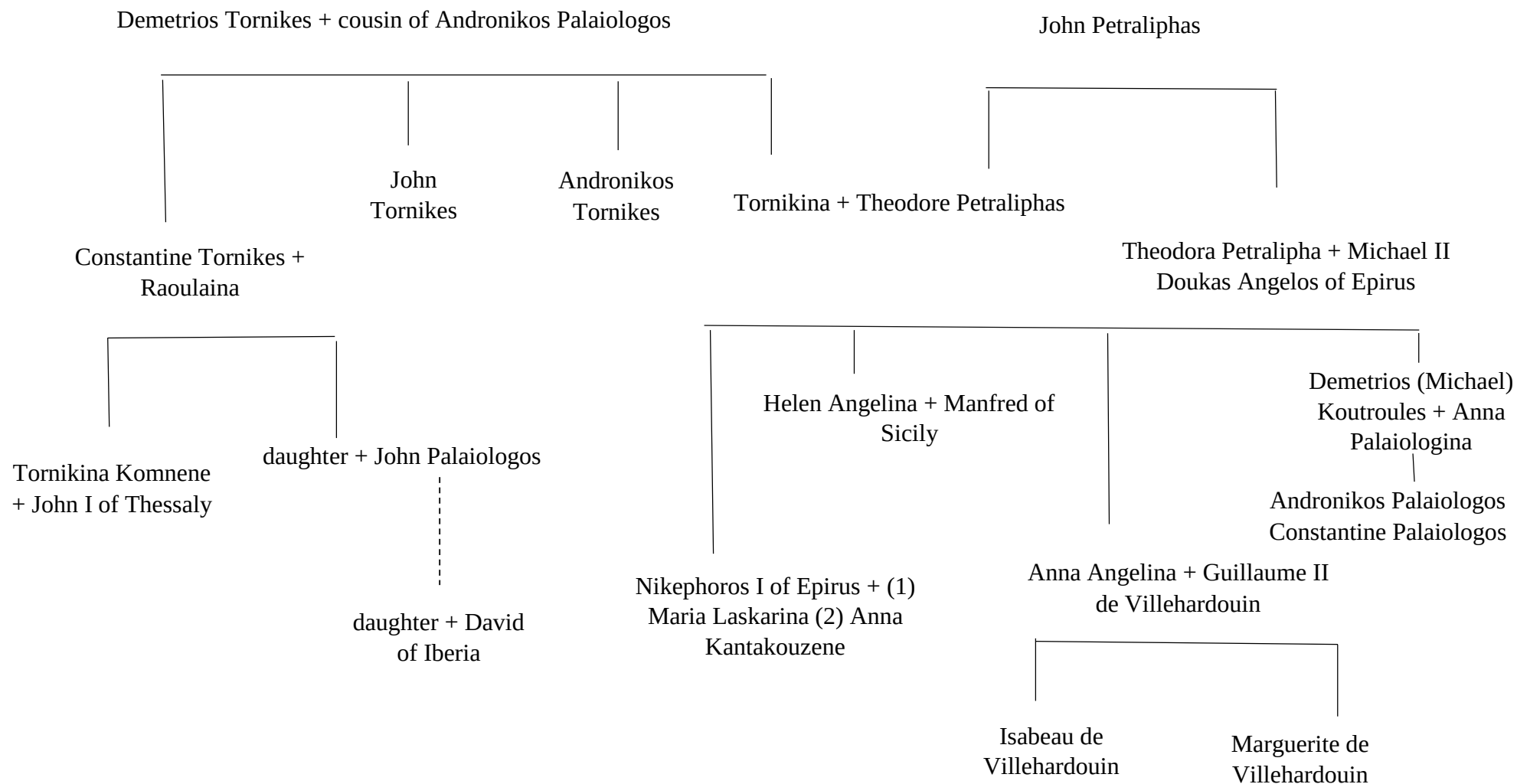


Table 6. Intermarriages of the Tornikioi, the Petraliphai and the Doukai-Angeloi of Epirus

(2) Constanza of Hohenstaufen + John III Doukas Batatzes + (1) Eirene Laskarina

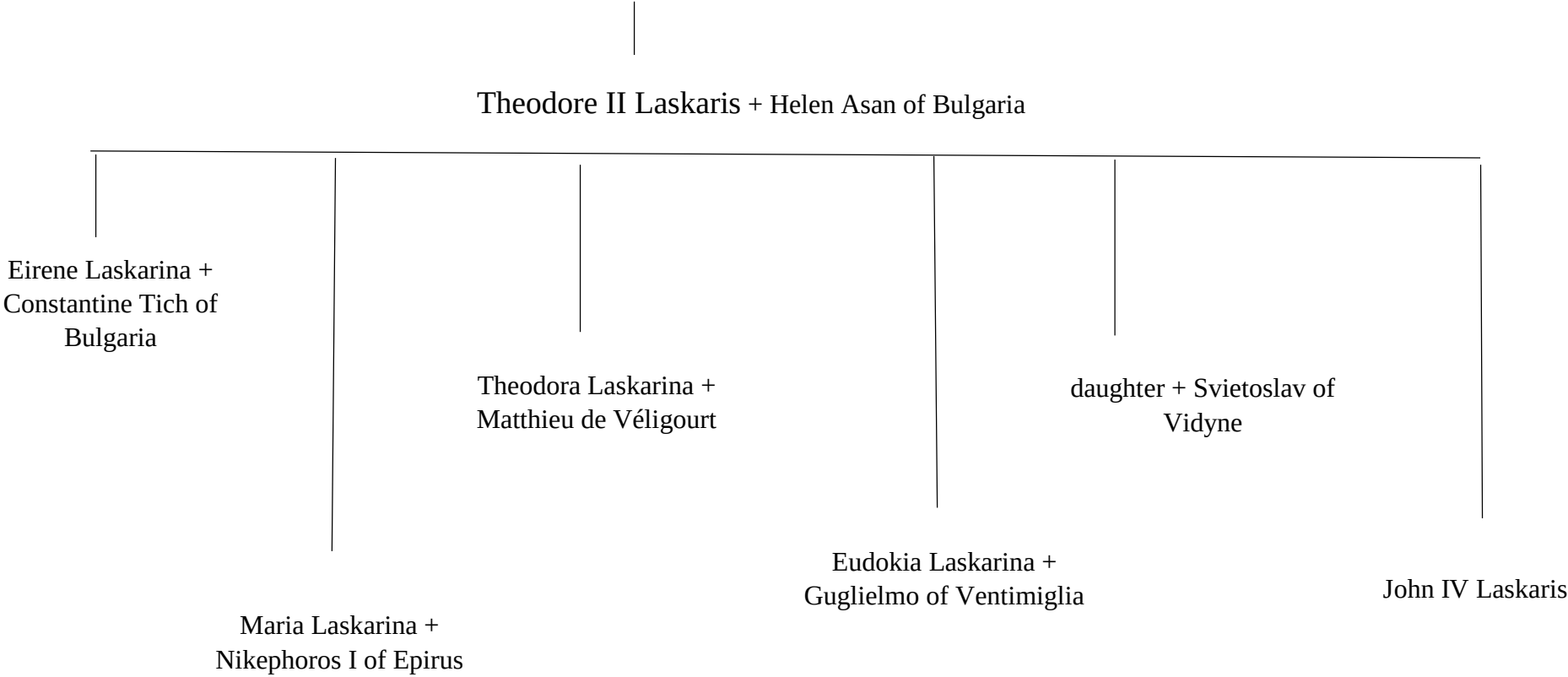


Table 7. Intermarriages of the Laskareis

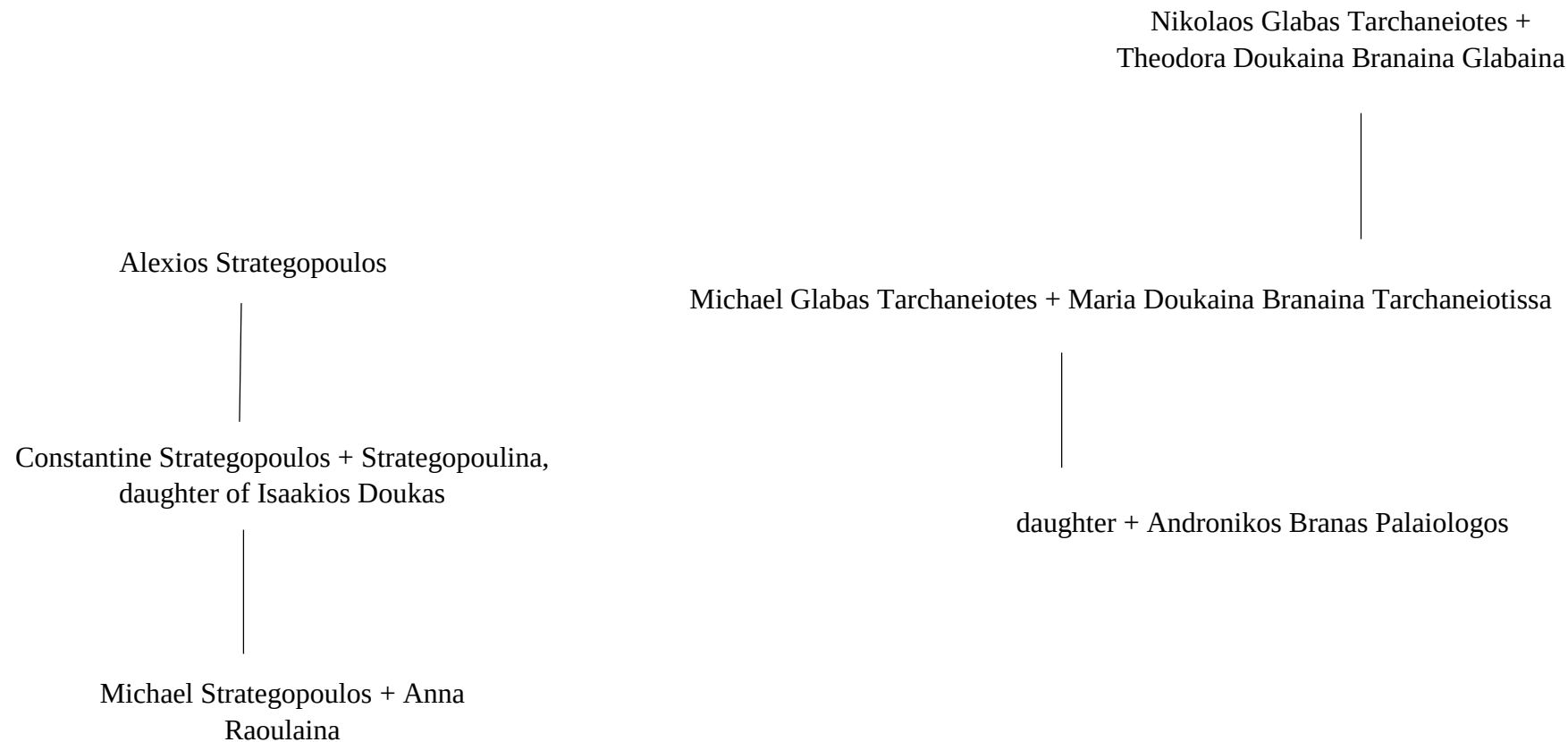


Table 8. Intermarriages of the Strategopouloi and the Glabades

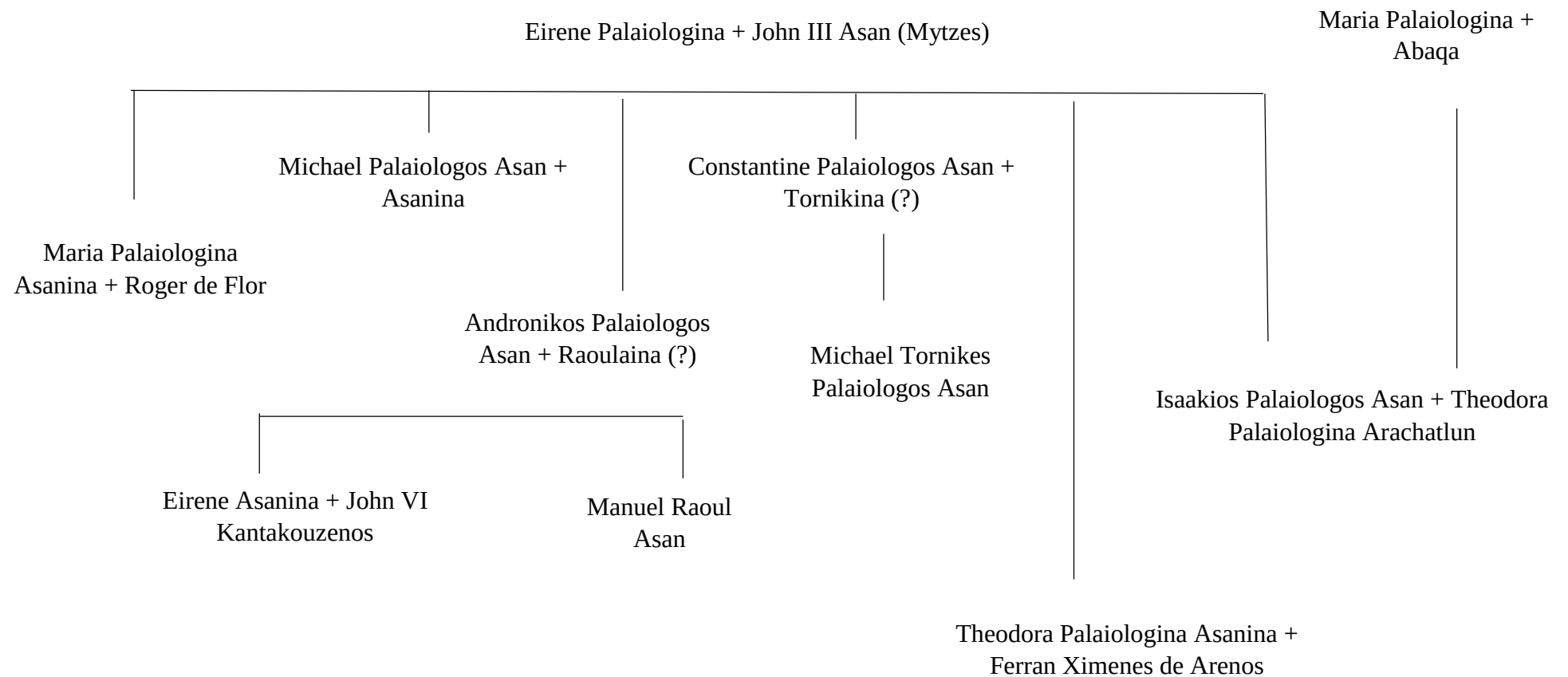


Table 9. Intermarriages of the Asan