



Summary :

Half brother of emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos and third son of *mezas domestikos* Andronikos Palaiologos, he was born around 1230. He made a career as a general and his brother granted him the title of *caesar* in 1259 and later the title of *sebastokrator*. He took part in the battle of Pelagonia (in 1259) and in the re-establishment of the Byzantine authority over Peloponnesus from 1262. He died as monk Kallinikos, probably around 1275.

Other Names

Constantine Palaiologos Doukas Angelos Komnenos, monk Kallinikos

Date and Place of Birth

around 1230

Date and Place of Death

before 1275

Main Role

military official, *sebastokrator*

1. General Information

Son of *mezas domestikos* Andronikos Palaiologos from his second marriage, half brother of Emperor [Michael VIII Palaiologos](#) (1261-1282). He was born around 1230.¹ Constantine, along with his half brother [John Palaiologos](#) stood by the side of their brother Michael (later Michael VIII), particularly during the turbulent events in the summer of 1258. The younger brothers, without having received any noble title but following Michael's wish, joined the group around the young emperor [John IV Laskaris](#); eventually their brother managed to assume power in the [Byzantine Empire of Nicaea](#).

When in the beginning of 1259 Michael VIII Palaiologos was crowned emperor, he granted some of his relatives and closest associates noble titles. So, he took the opportunity to award Constantine Palaiologos the title of *caesar*. Furthermore, wishing to strengthen his position with intermarriages, the new emperor wed his half brother to Eirene, the daughter of general Branas. Constantine had five children with Eirene: Michael, Andronikos, Maria, Theodora and another daughter, whose name has not been recorded, but we know that she married the czar of Bulgaria Smilec (1292-1298).

2. Military career

In the same year, 1259, the newly appointed *caesar* with his half brother John Palaiologos took part in the battle of Pelagonia, where the army of Nicaea defeated the numerous but heterogeneous army of the prince of Achaia, Guillaume II de Villehardouin, the king of Sicily Manfred and the *despotes* of Epirus Michael II Angelus.² This great and of decisive importance success was followed by new recognitions and honors bestowed to those in charge of the army of Nicaea. Constantine Palaiologos received the title of *sebastokrator*, who in the hierarchy of titles came immediately after the emperor and the *despotes*. At the same time, the title of *caesar* was given to [Constantine Tornikios](#), but, as mentioned by [George Akropolites](#), the brother of the emperor had yet another emblem that distinguished him: he wore blue shoes with golden eagles, while Tornikios doesn't seem to have received similar insignia.³

The next mention to Constantine Palaiologos is dated from the period after the [restoration of the Byzantine Empire](#). As [George Pachymeres](#) says, Michael VIII sent his half brother with Genovese ships to Monemvasia together with an army of Turkoman mercenaries and Byzantines from [Asia Minor](#). This campaign took place in 1262⁴ and was an important step in the Byzantine efforts to regain the Peloponnese. With Constantine Palaiologos they had also sent *mezas domestikos* Alexios Philes and John Makrenos. The *sebastokrator* quickly subdued the Slavic population on Mount Taigetos, built several fortresses and besieged Sparta. He later abandoned the siege and left for Andravida, capital of the hegemony of Achaia. However, a Latin battalion surprised the numerous



army of Constantine and defeated him.⁵The remains of his army gathered in Mystras, where the *sebastokrator* managed to regroup his forces.

Later, probably in the summer of 1263, Constantine Palaiologos repeated his campaign in the Peloponnese and tried to occupy Andravida once again. First, he besieged the fortress of Nikli. However, the Muslim mercenaries of his army, who had not received payment for several months, abandoned him and joined forces with Guillaume II de Villehardouin. Constantine withdrew from the campaign and on the pretext of illness returned to [Constantinople](#), relinquishing command to Alexios Philes and John Makrenos. After these two were defeated and captured, the Byzantine military operations degraded into border skirmishes.

The sources do not mention anything about the late career of Constantine Palaiologos, though it is known that Manuel Philes dedicated two poems to him. Nevertheless it seems that Constantine died relatively young (before 1275), as monk Kallinikos, and the same probably holds true for his wife Eirene, who as a nun had taken the name Maria.⁶ In the *typonikon* of the Monastery of the Vevaia Elpis (the Certain Hope), which was founded by their daughter Theodora, the day for the commemoration of Constantine is the 25th of October.

1. Papadopulos, A., *Versuch einer Genealogie der Palaiologen, 1259-1453* (München 1938; repr. Amsterdam 1962), no. 5, p. 6: Constantine Palaiologos was supposedly born after 1226. In the *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* IX (Wien 1989), no. 21498, p. 98, the date of his birth is estimated around 1230. Taking under consideration that his older half brother John was born after 1225, it is impossible to estimate the date of his birth more accurately.

2. One of the last studies on the battle of Pelagonia, written by Ациевски К. *Пелагонија во средниот век (од доаѓањето на Словените до паѓањето под турска власт)* (Скопје 1994), pp. 154-160, cites all relevant sources and bibliography.

3. *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg, (Stuttgart 1978), p. 173.

4. In older literature, the date of the campaign was usually considered to be 1263; however, Failler, A., "Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymérès", *Revue des études byzantines* 38 (1980), pp. 85-103, dates the Byzantine military operations in 1262.

5. *Chronicle of the Morea*, ed. J. Schmitt (London 1904), v. 4706-4855.

6. Delehay, H., *Deux typica byzantins de l'époque des Paléologues*. Mémoires de l'Académie de Belgique, Classe des lettres, Ser. II (1921), pp. 13-4. See also Spatharakis, I., *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Byzantina Neerlandica, Leiden 1976), pp. 192-193.

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Glossary :

	caesar
In the Roman Empire the title of Caesar was given to the Emperor. From the reign of Diocletian (284-305) on this title was conferred on the young co-emperor. This was also the highest title on the hierarchy of the Byzantine court. In the 8th c. the title of Caesar was usually given to the successor of	



the throne. In the late 11th c. this office was downgraded and from the 14th c. on it was mainly conferred on foreign princes.

despotes

Title introduced in the 12th century. In administrative hierarchy, the office of despotes was under the emperor and the co-emperor. From the 14th century onwards, the title was given to the governors of the Byzantine Peloponnese.

megas domestikos

Supreme military commander of the imperial army. High-ranking title which was generally given to close relatives of the emperor.

sebastokrator

Honorary title of the Byzantine court. The office was established in 1081 by Alexios I Komnenos for his elder brother Isaac, equivalent to the one of regent

typikon

Foundation document of a monastery compiling the rules regarding its administrative organization and liturgic rituals, as well as the comportment inside a cenobitic monastery.

The monastic typika could also include the biography (vita) of the monastery founder along with a catalogue of the movable or immovable property of the monastery. They constitute an important source for the study of the monastic life, while at the same time they shed light on many aspects of the Byzantine society.

The liturgical typika were calendars with instructions for each day's services, liturgical books with rules arranging the celebration rituals.

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Chronological Table

around 1230: Birth of Constantine Palaiologos

1259: Constantine receives the title of caesar

1259: Marriage with Eirene, daughter of general Branas

1259: Battle of Pelagonia; he receives the title of *sebatokrator*

1262: Operations of Constantine as head of the Byzantine army in Peloponnese

before 1275: Constantine dies as a monk with the name Kallinikos