



Summary :

Member of the famous aristocratic family of the Tarchaneiotai. During the reign of John III Vatatzes (1222-1254), he played a very active part in the defence of the Empire of Nicaea against external dangers. He was honoured with the titles of *epi tes trapezes* and *mezas domestikos*. He died before 1258.

Date and Place of Birth

second half of 12th c. - first half of 13th c.

Date and Place of Death

before 1258

Main Role

Epi tes trapezes, mezas domestikos

1. Biography

Scion of the aristocratic family of the [Tarchaneiotai](#), Nikephoros Tarchaneiotes had been twice married. His first marriage, unknown when, was with the daughter of the [protostrator Andronikos Doukas Aprenos](#);¹ they had a daughter, the nun Nostongissa Tarchaneiotissa. Around 1237 he married [Maria Palaiologonina](#), daughter of the [mezas domestikos](#) Andronikos [Palaiologos](#) and older sister of the later Emperor [Michael VIII Palaiologos](#) (1259-1282); together they had three sons, Andronikos, Michael and John, and a daughter, Theodora. His actions and career take place during the reign of [John III Vatatzes](#) (1222-1254).

2. Activity

Nikephoros Tarchaneiotes was a supporter of the policy of John III Vatatzes (1222-1254) and played a very important role to the defence of the [Empire of Nicaea](#), against its external dangers. In 1237, while he held the title of [epi tes trapezes](#), he was also commander of the Byzantine guard in Tzouroulon, one of the most crucial Nicaean fortresses in Thrace. During that time, he was attacked from the united forces of the Latins, Bulgars and Cumans, an attack which at first he managed to deflect successfully. The siege of Tzouroulon by the Bulgar tsar John II Asan, with the support of the Latin government of [Constantinople](#) was soon abandoned, due to external factors; it was sealed with the signing of a peace treaty between the two parts.²

In 1243, Nikephoros Tarchaneiotes appears to be thought among the officials, who followed the Byzantine emperor of Nicaea to his first military campaign against the ruler of Thessaloniki, John Angelos (the other officials were: Demetrios [Tornikes](#), Andronikos Palaiologos, [Alexios Raoul](#) and John Petraleiphas).³ Shortly afterwards, in 1247, after the death of his father-in-law, Andronikos Palaiologos, Nikephoros received the office of the [mezas domestikos](#). Under this capacity, he participated, for the period 1251-52, to the military expeditions against the [despotes](#) of Epiros Michael II Doukas (1231-1267).⁴

Not much evidence exists on his further activities. He died some time before 1258.

1. According to D. Polemis the daughter of Andronikos Doukas Aprenos married the [mezas domestikos](#) Michael Tarchaneiotes. See Polemis, D., *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London 1968), p. 103.

2. On the alliance between the tsar of the Bulgars John II Asan and the Latin government of Constantinople see Nicol, D. M., "Από την άλωση ως την ανάκτηση της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως", in D. Zakythinis et al. (eds.), *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους Θ'* (Athens 1980), pp. 76-96, esp. 84-87.

3. This expedition was prematurely stopped because of the invasion of the Mongols to Asia Minor; however, its outcome was important. The ruler of



Thessalonike surrendered his imperial insignia and recognised the dominion of the emperor of Nicaea, who in turn gave him the title of *despotes*. See Ostrogorsky, G., *Geschichte des Byzantinischen Staates* (Munich 1963) [*Ιστορία του Βυζαντινού κράτους* 3, Greek trans. I. Παναγόπουλος, ed. Ευ. Χρυσός (Αθήνα 1997), p. 126].

4. For the military expeditions of the Byzantine Emperor John III Vatatzes against the Despot of Epiros Michael II Doukas, see Nicol, D. M., *The Despotate of Epiros* (Oxford 1957), pp. 151-153.

Bibliography :

	Polemis D. , <i>The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography</i> , London 1968, University of London Historical Studies 22
	Ahrweiler H. , "L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317), particulièrement au XIII ^e siècle", <i>Travaux et Mémoires</i> , 1, 1965, 1-204
	Langdon J.S. , <i>John III Ducas Vatatzes' Byzantine Imperium in Anatolian Exile, 1222-1254: The Legacy of his Diplomatic, Military and Internal program for the Restitutio Orbis</i> , UCLA 1978, (ανέκδοτη διδακτορική διατριβή)
	Nicol D.M. , <i>The Despotate of Epiros</i> , Oxford 1957
	Papadopoulos A. , <i>Versuch einer Genealogie der Palaiologen: 1259-1453</i> , Amsterdam 1962
	Leontiadis I.G. , <i>Die Tarchaneiotai. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie</i> , Θεσσαλονίκη 1998, Βυζαντινά κείμενα και Μελέται αρ. 27
	Guiland R. , "Le grand domesticat à Byzance", <i>Échos d' Orient</i> , 37, 1938, 53-64
	Guiland R. , "Fonctions et dignités des eunuques, III) Le maître d'hotel de l'empereur; IV) L'echanson; V) Le concierge du Palais", <i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i> , 3, 1945, 179-210
	Θεοχαρίδης Γ. Ι. , "Μιχαήλ Δούκας Γλαβάς Ταρχανειώτης", <i>Επιστημονική Επετηρίς της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης</i> , 7, 1957, 161-214
	Nicol D.M. , "Από την άλωση ως την ανάκτηση της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως", Δ. Ζακυθινός, <i>Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους Θ'</i> , Αθήνα 1980, 76-106
	Kazhdan A. , "Tarchaneiotas", Kazhdan, A. (ed.), <i>The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> , 3, Oxford – New York 1991, 2011-2012

Glossary :

	despotes
Title introduced in the 12th century. In administrative hierarchy, the office of despotes was under the emperor and the co-emperor. From the 14 th century onwards, the title was given to the governors of the Byzantine Peloponnese.	
	epi tes trapezes
Imperial official in charge of imperial banquets. It was considered a high dignity and it was conferred on aristocrats.	



megas domestikos

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

protostrator

A Byzantine military office, accorded to the chief of imperial *stratores* or *hippokomoi* («grooms»). The title is first mentioned in the 8th century. In the 9th and 10th century, his major duty was to accompany the Emperor while on horseback. In the 12th century he was one of the highest officials of the Byzantine court and he also commanded troops.

Sources

Γεώργιος Ακροπολίτης, *Χρονική συγγραφή*, Heisenberg, A. (ed.) - Wirth, P. (corr.), *Georgii Acropolitae, Opera* 1 (Leipzig 1903) [BSGRT, Stuttgart 1978], p. 32.

Γεώργιος Παχυμέρης, *Georges Pachymères, Relations historiques 1: Livres I-III; 2: Livres IV-VI*. Édition, introduction et notes par A. Failler, traduction française par V. Laurent (CFHB 24/1-2, Paris 1984).

Miklosich, F. – Müller, J., *Acta et diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi sacra et profana* 4 (Wien 1871).