



Summary :

The era under the rule of the so-called Macedonian dynasty (867-1056) was one of prosperity for the Byzantine Empire. The main characteristics of this dynasty were, among others, the restoration of the Byzantine power over the Balkans and the eastern parts of Asia Minor, the struggle of the emperors against the *dynatoi* and the evolution of the imperial ideology.

1. Dynasty's foundation: Basil I (867-886)

Founder of the Macedonian dynasty was [Basil I](#), who was born around 835 in the region of western Thrace (suburbs of Andrianople). Basil, known with the surname "the Macedonian" because of his origin (but he was also known as Kephalas), descended from a family of villagers. Thanks to his skills and his strength, when he came to Constantinople around 855-860, quickly attracted the attention of powerful men, gradually progressing from stableman - of the patrikios Theophilos - to a personal servant of the emperor [Michael III](#), whose became the [parakoimomenos](#) in 856. Basil helped Michael III to get rid of his uncle, [caesar Bardas](#), in 866, an event that led to his coronation as a co-emperor in the same year, while the emperor had previously married him to his ex-mistress Eudokia Ingerina. On the 24th of September 867, at the Saint Mammias palace at Pera, Basil the Macedonian's men (amongst them was also his brother Symbatios) murdered Michael III. After that Basil remained the sole emperor. As a means of confirmation of his new, absolute power, Basil was officially acclaimed as emperor on the church of [Hagia Sophia](#).

Basil I the Macedonian ruled the empire for 19 years (867-886). Active and ambitious, already from the seizure of power he had to confront many problems and was dedicated to their solution. He dethroned [patriarch Photios](#) (858-867, 877-886) and at his place he restored Ignatios (847-858, 867-877), trying that way to smooth away the clash with Rome (which Photios refused to acknowledge), as well as the internal quarrels within the church of Constantinople. That way, Basil gained Rome's valuable support, which would last for many years, until the moment emperor would reinstate patriarch Photios to the capital and the palace (around 873), appointing him as his sons' tutor. Soon after the seizure of power, Basil crowned his eldest son Constantine co-emperor (he was his son from his first - unknown to us - wife), whereas in 870 he crowned Leo (who was born in 866 from his marriage with Eudokia Ingerina). Basil's third son, Stephan porphyrogenetos, was born soon after his father's accession to the throne (possibly at the end of 867),¹ while his fourth son Alexander was born two years later and was crowned in 879, after the death of the eldest Constantine. Stephan, who was castrated, since he was intended to follow an ecclesiastical career, became patriarch of Constantinople right after his brother's Leo undertaking of power in 886. Basil got also four daughters who were made nuns (in the [St Euphemia](#) Monastery at Constantinople), because he did not want any ambitious son-in-law to threaten his succession by his own sons.

Basil I had a political agenda with bold ends, transpired by the idea of restoration regarding the post-Iconoclasm empire's strength, after Michael's III "weak" reign. His manifold activity was associated with Byzantium's great intellectual prosperity, the missionary successes of the previous years and the strong ideology of the new post-[Iconoclasm](#) era, proclaimed by patriarch Photios. Basil the Macedonian erected or restored more than [thirty churches or monasteries](#), all of them at Constantinople or in the suburbs, while his main foundation, [Nea Ekklesia](#) (New Church) at Great Palace, along with the Kainourgion palace laying nearby, constituted the most clear expression of this new idea of [Constantinople's](#) restoration, as well as of the entire empire's one. Nea Ekklesia formed a manifestation of the emperor's superiority over the spiritual power, while the date of inauguration, 1st of May (880) was established as the capital's new official celebration, strongly reminding the 11th of May, day of the city's [foundation in 330](#).

In the same spirit of profound reorganization (characterized also by a certain classicism), Basil was dedicated to the ambitious program of codification of the law. Basil managed to issue before his death only the *Eisagoge*, a codex of 40 chapters, the introduction of which concerned the place and the role of the emperor and the patriarch and was written by Photios, who had been restored to the patriarchal throne by Basil since 877. Basil's legislation included a number of provisions concerning the Jews, whose Christianization was one of the emperor's concerns, in ways that were not always beyond criticism.²

2. Leo VI (886-912)

Leo VI the Wise (886-912) was a complex personality, highly educated and ambitious, but easily manipulated: already since his reign's early days he was under the strong influence of Stylianos Zaoutzes, father of his mistress Zoe, for whom he even introduced the new title of [basileopator](#). Leo's biggest problem was that he could not get a son to succeed him: his first wife Theophano - future saint - died in 895/6 without giving birth to a son, just as Zoe Zaoutzes soon later. His third wife Anna gave him a son, who was named Basil; however he died soon after his birth along with his mother. Leo's new mistress, Zoe Karbonopsina, delivered a son to the emperor, who was named Constantine. Leo stood before a dilemma regarding the way he was going to secure legitimacy for his son. After an agreement with patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos (901-907, 912-925), the emperor was assured of Constantine's recognition as a legitimate son, yet he proceeded a step further and violated the agreement by getting married to Zoe. This way a dispute broke out around the issue of [tetragamy](#), of Leo's fourth illegal marriage, which disturbed the Byzantine society and brought back the old division between the adherents of Photios and Ignatios. Leo was forced to dethrone Nikolaos Mystikos, appointing Euthymios to the patriarchal throne (907), while he asked for Rome's help. Nevertheless, before his death he reinstated Nikolaos to the patriarchal throne as an act of repentance.

Leo VI carried on his father's legislative activity: he issued a new code, the *Procheiron*,³ from which he took off the introduction of Photios, who was placing the patriarch above the king. It is to be noted that, as soon as he assumed power, Leo replaced Photios with his brother Stephan on the patriarchal throne (886-893). Besides *Procheiron*, he also issued a collection of 113 [Novels](#), which were mainly addressed to Stylianos Zaoutzes and patriarch Stephan, as well as a compilation of royal laws, the so-called *Basilika*, in 60 volumes, containing all the old provisions of the laws that were going to form the basis of the Byzantine juridical system until the end of the Empire. With his intention to promulgate the imperial majesty, Leo renovated at the capital a monastery dedicated to Saint Lazarus, and he also erected a bath complex which was adorned with mosaics depicting pagan motives. He even composed many orations which he delivered upon the occasion of consecration of churches founded by friends of his at Constantinople.

3. Romanos I Lakapenos (920-944)

After Leo's death on May 912 and the brief independent reign of his brother Alexander (died June 913), Leo's eight-year-old son Constantine remained the sole emperor. Byzantium entered a period of crisis, during which the influence of patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos alternated with that of queen mother Zoe and of powerful men from great families, while at the same time the wars against the Bulgarians and the effort of the Bulgarian ruler Symeon to win the imperial crown reached a point of fierce tense. After the defeat of the Byzantines by Symeon at Anchialos (20 August 917), the [drouggarios tou stolou Romanos Lakapenos](#) reached opposite Constantinople and, after an agreement with patriarch Nikolaos Mystikos, he took power, while he married his daughter Helen to Constantine Porphyrogenetos. Romanos Lakapenos received the title of basileopator, later on that of caesar and on December of 920 he was crowned king by Nikolaos Mystikos. Romanos' reign (920-944) is characterized by the Byzantine army's successes in the East under the leadership of the



domestikos ton scholon [John Kourkouas](#), by the concluding of peace with the Bulgarians after Symeon's death in 927,⁴ by the emperor's effort to put an end to the [aristocracy](#)'s strengthening through the establishment of the right of [protimesis](#)⁵ on the agrarian estates via the issuing of Novels (928 and 934),⁶ and finally, by the crowning of his sons Christopher, Stephan and Constantine.⁷

4. Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (913/945-959), Romanos II (959-963)

Constantine Porphyrogennetos succeeded in resuming the power at the expense of Stephan and Constantine Lakapenos on February 945, appointing right away members of the [Phokas family](#) on Byzantine army posts of the outmost importance. Next, the organization of the large historiographic and literary activity at Constantinople drawn his attention, thanks to which the period of his reign (until 959) was named an era of [encyclopedic movement](#).⁸ His son Romanos II reigned for only four years (959-963), during which Byzantium under the leadership of [Nikephoros Phokas](#) recaptured Crete (961) and went on with the victorious wars against the [Arabs](#) in the East.

5. Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969)

Nikephoros Phokas' glory contributed so that the successful general managed to prevail over the Constantinopolitan elite (August 963), led by the parakoimomenos Joseph Briggas, to get married to Romanos' widow Theophano and to become emperor; the Phokas family, thus, reached the climax of its influence. Nikephoros Phokas continued his successful eastern campaigns, bringing back Cyprus under the Byzantine dominion (965), while at the same time he applied a severe policy against the monasteries, by restricting the growth of their property.⁹ However, his relative and one of the best commanders of the Byzantine army [John Tzimiskes](#) had an affair with the empress Theophano, with whom he conspired against Nikephoros Phokas. At the end, Tzimiskes murdered Nikephoros I at the imperial palace on the 11th of December 969, only a few months after the Byzantine troops had brought [Antioch](#) back under the authority of Constantinople.

6. John I Tzimiskes (969-976)

Young emperor John Tzimiskes (969-976) was forced, after the demand of patriarch Polyeuktos (956-970), to evict the empress Theophano from the palace as an act of repentance for his predecessor's murder, appearing himself as protector of the young porphyrogenetoi princes, Romanos' II sons, Basil (born 958) and Constantine (born 960). John Tzimiskes went on with the wars in the East, but he was forced to turn his attention towards the Balkans. During the last years of his reign Nikephoros Phokas, not wanting to pay the money tribute that the Bulgarians demanded, he invited the Russian ruler Svjatoslav to attack them. Svjatoslav, however, claimed himself lord of Bulgaria, which as a consequence made Byzantium to confront the ambitious Russian ruler instead of a weak Bulgarian state. In 971, the emperor John Tzimiskes set out from Adrianople in charge of the Byzantine army, which after a long battle inflicted upon Svjatoslav a defeat at [Dorostolon](#) (Dristra). Tzimiskes took away from the Bulgarian tsar, Boris, the imperial crown, which after his triumph he placed into the Holy Sanctuary of Hagia Sophia, while on the ex-Bulgarian soil he established the Byzantine system of rule and founded a series of [themes](#).

7. Basil II (976-1025)

After Tzimiskes' death because of typhus on January 976, typically the power at the empire passed into the hands of the young emperors [Basil II](#) (976-1025) and Constantine VIII (he reigned independently 1025-1028), yet the most powerful man of the empire until 985 was parakoimomenos Basil, Romanos Lakapenos' illegitimate son. At the same time, inside the empire broke out uprisings by the military commanders [Bardas Phokas](#) and [Bardas Skleros](#) (which would lead in a series of civil wars until 988), while the Bulgarians broke out in a revolt headed by Samuel, who captured within a short period of time the territories from the banks of Danube until Macedonia and Albania.

Basil II was one of the most powerful Byzantine emperors. He dedicated his entire life at strengthening the imperial prestige and at waging wars on all the frontiers of the empire. After his final prevalence on the civil wars with the aid of the ruler of Kiev Vladimir,¹⁰ Basil managed to crash Samuel's state through his continuous campaigns until the last years of the 10th century. At the decisive battle at Kleidion (1014) he utterly defeated the Bulgarian army and blinded 13-14.000 Bulgarians;¹¹ Samuel sustained apoplexy when he faced his blinded soldiers and passed away. Basil II subjugated in 1018 the entire Bulgarian state and reinstated his empire's borders to the rivers Sabbas and Danube; furthermore, he founded the archbishopric of Ohrid and established the theme system over the entire area of the Balkans. During the following years, Byzantium reached the climax of its territorial expansion after the Justinianic era, when Basil II annexed to the empire parts of the vassal [Armenian sovereignties](#). According to his policy, Basil II tried to confine the power of [Asia Minor](#)'s great aristocratic families and tried to carry on Romanos Lakapenos' policy, by retaining the tax revenues within state hands and by applying the [allelengyon](#), which the rich people paid on behalf of the poor villagers.

8. The period from 1025 to 1042

8.1. Constantine VIII (1025-1028)

The short-lived reign of Basil's brother, Constantine VIII, brought about the final victory of the aristocracy, whereas the choice of Romanos Argyros (1028-1034) as successor and husband of Constantine's daughter Zoe just confirmed the supremacy of the powerful families over central authority.

8.2. Romanos III (1028- 1034)

With Romanos III started the period of the struggle among the members of the Byzantine aristocracy to win the favor of Constantine's VIII porphyrogenetoi daughters, Zoe and Theodora. Until 1056, at the beginning Zoe and later on Theodora, provided, thanks to their lineage with the Macedonian dynasty, the legitimacy to all the emperors, through marriage or adoption. Zoe got married for the second time on the 11th of April 1034 to [Michael IV Paphlagon](#) (1034-1041), who together with his elder brother, the eunuch [John Orphanotrophos](#), strangled Romanos Argyros inside the palace baths.

8.3. The emperors Michael IV (1034-1041) and Michael V (1041-1042), and empresses Zoe and Theodora

In contrast to the rich aristocrat Romanos Argyros, who already from the beginning of his reign had abolished the allelengyon that dissatisfied Byzantine lay and ecclesiastical landowners, Michael IV Paphlagon stemmed from the middle classes. Surrounded by his four brothers, whom he placed in the most significant offices, the period of his reign was the beginning of a new, domestic way of governing with the help of an interlaced network of relatives, which during the following decades would be strengthened, while it would become the dominant form of reigning since the period of ascendance of [Alexios I Komnenos](#) to power (1081). Michael IV, according to Michael Psellos' estimation, was a good ruler and an



honest man, but under the negative influence of his brothers.¹² Michael's IV disease (epilepsy) and the interfamilial discord that broke out caused the collapse of the Paphlagon family after the short reign of [Michael V Kalaphates](#) (son of Michael's IV sister). The empress Zoe adopted Michael V, yet he ordered her expulsion from Constantinople, an event that led on the April 1042 to an uprising of the people of Constantinople against him. After that, Zoe's sister, Theodora, returned from the monastery and was crowned empress. After Zoe's return from Princes' Islands, the two sisters ruled together for the following four months, however Zoe proceeded to a third marriage with Constantine Monomachos, who was crowned emperor (1042-1055). It was a time during which the conscience regarding the claim upon the imperial crown and the legitimacy of the last representatives of the Macedonian dynasty was at its peak, foremost at the Byzantine capital. During that period, the fact that the purpleborn daughters of Constantine's VIII descended from a series of five emperors was considered the strongest argument for their right to bear the imperial crown and to rule the empire.

9. Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055)

Just as its predecessors, Constantine Monomachos was covered under the legitimacy of empress Zoe, even after her death in 1050. Nevertheless, Zoe, right after Monomachos' coronation, was fully displaced and replaced by the emperor's mistresses, especially by the famous Sklerina, for the sake of whom a private royal house was built near the Great Palace. The short-lived intellectual prosperity at the beginnings of Monomachos' reign, the foundation of a "University", in charge of which Michael Psellos was appointed as the [hypatos ton philosophon](#) and John Xiphilinos as [nomophylax](#), had nothing in common with the other last representatives of the Macedonian dynasty, just as the ecclesiastical breach between Constantinople and Rome in 1054, which at Byzantium passed completely unnoticed.

10. Theodora (1055-1056): The end of the dynasty

The well-established legitimacy of the Macedonian dynasty contributed so that after Monomachos' death, and because of the fact that the emperor had not got a successor, the empress Theodora held the throne (1055-1056). Ruling with the aid of a small cycle of close collaborators, among whom the most powerful were Leo Paraspondylos and the later emperor Michael VI Stratiotikos (1056) the brief independent reign of Theodora constituted the end of an entire era and the forerunner of a new one in which some new families would struggle for the establishment of their own power's legitimacy and of their right upon the imperial crown. By Theodora's death in 1056 was erased the last representative of the family of Basil the Macedonian, of the most long-lived dynasty that the Byzantine history has encountered until then.

11. The borders

The Byzantine Empire during the long-lived period of the Macedonian dynasty reached gradually the climax of its territorial expansion for the centuries to come after the Justinianic reconquest. Particularly in the East the main concern was the stabilization of the inner region of the Euphrates with the campaigns of Basil I at Tephrike, at [Melitene](#) and at [Samosata](#) (9th c.), as well as with the campaigns of John Kourkoua in the Euphrates (early 10th c.), while Byzantium under the emperors Constantine VII, Nikephoros II and John I expanded towards [Cilicia](#) and northern Syria. This expansion continued at the beginnings of the 11th century, as much through warfare as through diplomatic practices: thus, [Edessa](#) (1031), Kars (after 1000), Vaspurakan (1021) and Ani (1045) were taken, expanding largely the borders eastwards.¹³

In the Balkans the evolutions are related with the wars against the Bulgarians, as well as with [sklaviniiai](#). As far as the latter ones are concerned, two events took place: the [sklaviniiai](#) were either integrated into Byzantium or Bulgaria, or gradually evolved into semi-state unions and finally into little states. Thus, at the beginnings of Basil's I reign the theme of Delmatia on the Dalmatian shores was formed, since the Slavs that were settled on the mountainous areas had acknowledged the Byzantine suzerainty.

The Christianized (865/6) Bulgarian kingdom under the leadership of Symeon constituted one of the most serious threats against Byzantium. From 913 onwards, the Byzantines were occupied with a hopeless struggle against Symeon, who upon his effort to seize the imperial crown reached until Thessalonica, Durrhachion and Corinth, while he twice attempted to capture Constantinople (913 and 924). Symeon's death marked the start of a peaceful period, which ended up with the dissolution of the first Bulgarian state by Nikephoros II Phokas, thanks also to the help of the Rus. However, the Russian prince Svjatoslav made an attempt to appropriate Bulgarian soil, but John I Tzimiskes forced him to sign a treaty after the battle at Dorostolon (971). In 976, as a consequence of the revolt of Kometopouloi (of the sons of comes Nikolaos), a western Bulgarian state was founded, at first place with Prespa as its capital and later on with Ohrid. This state's greater expansion was marked under Samuel, from the Adriatic to Danube and as far as central Greece to the south. At the end, after a long war this state was dissolved by Basil II and on the Bulgarian territories were created the themes of Paristrion (Paradounavis) and of Sirmion.¹⁴

In Italy and Sicily the Byzantines had to confront the Arabs and, after 962, the ambitions of the Western Roman Empire, as well as the papal policy. In the 9th century, the Arabs conquered some lands, yet in 876 the Byzantines recaptured Bari. Under Basil II the Byzantine possessions in southern Italy were stabilized, while during the years of his successors the western coast of Sicily was regained.

As far as the administrative organization is concerned, from the 10th century onwards the theme were shrinking, leading to a union of some new themes (mainly of frontier regions) into superior military units under the leadership of a [dux](#) or [katepano](#). As an example, during the last third of the 10th century the [themes](#) of the eastern borders were under the dux of [Antioch](#), Mesopotamia and [Chaldia](#), while in the Balkans there were the dux of Thessalonica, Adrianople and the mouth of river Danube.¹⁵

12. Evaluation

Byzantium during the period of the Macedonian dynasty evolved into a centralized state with a rigid structure, into what in other words could call the Byzantine state in its "classical" form, governed by a strictly hierarchical imperial court and the administrative mechanisms of Constantinople.¹⁶

As far as the foreign affairs are concerned, the leadership of capable emperors allowed the empire to hold back the Arab attacks and to counterattack, to erase the Bulgarian menace for a long period of time and to make the Rus allies. Thus, the Byzantine empire under the Macedonians formed a powerful state that had expanded in a large degree compared to its past.

As far as the domestic affairs are concerned, the empire was equally vigorous. The economy presented an upturn, with the growth of cities in size and number, as well as of the population, leading to the rise of commercial activities. To this fact also contributed the restoration of Byzantine control over the maritime routes, especially after the reconquest of Crete from the Arabs (961). The state gathered its resources under the form of taxes from the agrarian population and thus tried to protect the free farmers and to limit the expansion of big land property, which formed both the Church and the aristocracy. The imperial power was strengthened against the Church during that period, while it temporarily managed to assert itself upon the power of the aristocratic families, restricting their expansiveness with measures such as the principle of [protimesis](#). However, the emperors' policy in this domain



was inconsistent and eventually the resistance of the free agrarian population yielded to the pressure of the big land property.¹⁷ The aristocratic families were used to serve the emperor faithfully and their descendants as generals were in a large degree responsible for the significant victories of that period. This fact is due, among other things, to the fact that, at least in the beginning, the administrative and military dignitaries owned their place and their financial strength to the undisputable center of the state, the emperor. Even when they rebelled, they sought the support of Constantinople and the seizure of the throne and not the foundation of an independent hegemony.

Regarding the intellectual domain big progress was marked, particularly perceptible in the domain of the revival of the law. At the same time, special emphasis was given to the sense of justice on taxation and transactions, as well as on the protection of the weak, a trend that the fiscal reforms also reflected (e.g. confinements on the highest rate of interest).

Everything that was sketched out so far promulgates the strength, the prosperity and the well-being that the Byzantine state joined during the times the Macedonian dynasty was ruling.

1. For a long period of time it was assumed that Stephan is the youngest son, foremost because of the legend about the prophecy ΒΕΚΛΑΣ (which had to contain the names of Basil, of Eudokia, of Constantine, of Leo, of Alexander and of Stephan); however later researches proved that Stephan was Basil's I third son. See X. Αγγελίδη, Ο βίος του οσίου Βασιλείου του νέου, (Ioannina 1980), p. 112 ff.; cf. Jenkins, R. J. H., "The Chronological Accuracy of the 'Logothete' for the Years A.D. 867-913", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 19 (1965), pp. 91-112 (= *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th Centuries* (London, Variorum Reprints, 1970), III).
2. Dagron, G., "Le traité de Grégoire de Nicée sur le baptême des Juifs", *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), pp. 314-357.
3. Schminck, A., *Studien zu mittelbyzantinischen Rechtsbüchern* (Frankfurt am Main 1986).
4. Σταυρίδου-Ζαφράκα, Α., "Ο ανώνυμος λόγος 'Επί τη των Βουλγάρων συμβάσει'", *Βυζαντινά* 8 (1976), pp. 343-407; I. Dujčev, "On the Treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978), pp. 219-295.
5. For protimesis see Παπαγιάννη, Ε., "Η βυζαντινή προτίμησης", in Λαΐου, Α. Ε. (editor-in-chief.), *Οικονομική ιστορία του Βυζαντίου: Από τον 7ο έως τον 15ο αιώνα* (Athens 2006), pp. 267-281.
6. Svoronos, N., *Les nouvelles des empereurs de la dynastie Macédoine* (Paris 1994).
7. Today it has been proven that Constantine Porphyrogenetos occupied the third place in the « proedreion » of the emperors, after Romanos and Christopher Lakapenos, while Romanos' youngest sons were inferior to Constantine regarding hierarchy, and not his superiors as it was believed earlier. See Kresten, O. – Müller, A., *Samtherrschaft, Legitimationsprinzip, und kaiserlicher Urkundentitel in Byzanz in der ersten Hälfte des 10. Jahrhunderts* (Wien 1995).
8. Lemerle, P., *Le premier humanisme byzantin* (Paris 1971) (The first Byzantine Humanism).
9. It seems that Nikephoros Phokas never issued a Novel through which he supposedly tripled the value of the military estates, as it was believed for a long time. See Κόλιας, Τ., *Νικηφόρος Φωκάς (963-969). Ο στρατηγός αυτοκράτωρ και το μεταρρυθμιστικό του έργο* (Athens 1993).
10. Basil was forced to give his sister Anna to Vladimir as his wife; however the Rus under Vladimir were converted to Christianity and were under Constantinople's strong influence.
11. Ioannis Scylitzae, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn (Berolini et Novi Eboraci 1973).
12. Michael Psellos owed gratitude to this emperor because he was accepted to the imperial secretariat. However, he knew that his positive view about Michael IV opposed to the negative disposal of most of the Byzantines about this particular emperor, Michele Psello, *Imperatori di Bisanzio* (Cronografia), ed. S. Impellizzeri, (Vicenza 1984), I, 160; Michaelis Pselli *Orationes panegyricae*, ed. G. T. Dennis (Stuttgartiae et Lipsiae 1994), no. 2, pp. 29-32.
13. Koder, J., *Το Βυζάντιο ως χώρας. Εισαγωγή στην ιστορική γεωγραφία της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου στη βυζαντινή εποχή*, trans. Δ. Χ. Σταθακόπουλος (Thessalonica 2005), pp. 126-127.
14. Koder, J., *Το Βυζάντιο ως χώρας. Εισαγωγή στην ιστορική γεωγραφία της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου στη βυζαντινή εποχή*, trans. Δ. Χ. Σταθακόπουλος (Thessalonica 2005), pp. 127-128.
15. Koder, J., *Το Βυζάντιο ως χώρας. Εισαγωγή στην ιστορική γεωγραφία της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου στη βυζαντινή εποχή*, trans. Δ. Χ. Σταθακόπουλος (Thessalonica 2005), p. 131.
16. Kazhdan, Cf. A. P. – Epstein, A. W., *Αλλαγές στον Βυζαντινό πολιτισμό κατά τον 11ο και 12ο αιώνα* (Athens 1997), pp. 57-58.
17. See Λαΐου, Α. Ε., "Επισκόπηση της βυζαντινής οικονομίας", in eadem (editor-in-chief.), *Οικονομική ιστορία του Βυζαντίου: Από τον 7ο έως τον 15ο αιώνα* (Athens 2006), pp. 361-389.

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Glossary :

allelengyon

Byzantine fiscal term, designating the collective responsibility of a fiscal unit to pay a certain amount of taxes.

basileopator

A high honorary title in the Byzantine court. It was introduced in late 9th c. by E. Leo VI for Stylianos Zaoutzes and it was reserved for the father-in-law of the Byzantine emperor. It does not occur after the 10th c.

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.

domestikos ton scholon

Commander of the regiment of *scholae*. The first officer with this title appears in 767/8. In the 10th C the domesticos became very powerful among the army of the *themata*; in mid-10th C the office was divided in two, *domestikoi ton scholon* of the East and those of the West, commanders in chief of the eastern and the western provinces' army respectively.

doukas (lat. dux)

Antiquity: Roman military commander who, in some provinces, combined military and civil functions.

Byzantium: a higher military officer. From the second half of the 10th c. the title indicates the military commander of a larger district. After the 12th c., doukes were called the governors of small themes.

hypatos ton philosophon

(consul of the philosophers) Byzantine official and scholar responsible for the public schools of philosophy. The first one was Michael Psellos (11th C.), whose successors were John Italos and Theodore of Smyrna etc.

katepano

(from "epano", "above") Governor of a katepania. Title that from the end of the 10th century characterized the commanders of large provinces as Italy or Mesopotamia and from the 11th century, it was used also in the regions of Bulgaria, Antioch etc.

nomophylax

Officer responsible for the guard of law and the publication of the resolutions. Quite often the holder of the office undertook the costs himself. In Byzantium he was the *nomodidakalos* (*nomikos*), the appointed dignitary in charge of the function of the Law School.

novel (novella)

Term meaning ad verbum "new decree" and used since around the 4th century in order to denote the provisions of the emperors as separate from the organized codes. They were written mainly in Greek and used extensively in the Middle Byzantine Era. Since the days of Komnenoi and after, they were replaced by other more specialized terms and they are very rare in the Late Byzantine era

parakoimomenos

The guardian of the imperial private chambers. This high office was given usually to eunuchs that were persons of confidence, since they could not ascend to the throne. From the 9th and up to the 11th century, this office assumed a great importance and there were *παρακοιμώμενοι* that played important roles in the course of the empire, such as Joseph Bringa.

protimesis (preemption)

The right of certain categories of persons to preemption in cases of the sale of property. According to a novel of Romanos I (934), the poor peasants who sold their land when in need, could by right of protimesis buy their land back in no high a price. This right of the small landowners was abolished under Nikephoros II Phokas.

sklavinia

Slav (*Scлавeni*) settlements, which had the form of autonomous communities. Sclaviniae were initially developed in the region around Danube and they gradually expanded in the entire Balkanic peninsula.

tetragamy

A political and ecclesiastical controversy that followed the fourth marriage of emperor Leo VI (886-912). Since his only male heir had been a product of this marriage, it was of vital importance to Leo to have the marriage recognised, whereas to the Church this was unacceptable. The issue was finally resolved in the Council of Constantinople in 920.

theme

A Byzantine term that signifies wide military and administrative units under the administration of a strategos (general). The institution was consolidated in the 7th century and was characteristic for the organization and the division of Byzantine Empire at the Middle Byzantine period. The term applies also to the army unit that resided in each administrative unit and was staffed by farmer-soldiers. The thematic system was maintained until the end of Byzantine period. However, in the Later Byzantine period it was used in order to declare mostly tax units.

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Quotations



The prophetic dreams of the mother of the future emperor Basil the Macedonian convinced her to encourage her son to seek his glorious future at Constantinople.

Ἐπει δὲ κυριώτεράν ἔδει τὴν θείαν γενέσθαι βουλὴν καὶ τοῦτον πρὸς ὅπερ ἀφώριστο κατὰ μικρὸν ὁδῷ βαδίζοντα ἀνελεῖν, ὄνειράτων ὄψεις πείθουσι τὴν μητέρα ὑπενδύουσαι αὐτῷ καὶ ὑπέιξαι τῆς πρὸς τὴν πόλιν ὁρμῆς, μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὴν ἐκείνην παρορμησαὶ αὐτὸν καὶ προτρέψασθαι τὴν βασιλεύουσαν πόλιν καταλαβεῖν καὶ ἐπιδείξασθαι τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς Λειμῶνα καὶ τὰ τοῦ γενναίου φρονήματος προτερήματα. ἔδοξε γάρ ποτε ὄναρ ἡ μήτηρ ὄραν μέγιστον ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀναβλαστῆσαι φυτὸν, ὡς ἡ Κύρου μήτηρ εἶδε τὴν ἄμπλον, καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας αὐτῆς ἐστάναι ἀνθεοῖ τε κομῶν καὶ καρπῷ βοῖθον, χρυσοῦν τε εἶναι τὸ ἀπὸ γῆς τούτου μέγα στέλεχος, καὶ τὰ κλάδος καὶ τὰ φύλλα χρυσοειδῆ. τοῦτο δὲ πρὸς τινὰ τῶν συνήθων καὶ περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα κατευστοχέιν δοκούντων διηγησαμένη ἐπὶ λαμπρᾶς καὶ μεγάλης τύχης ἐσεσθαι δηλοῦν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς ἤκουσε. καὶ αὐτὴ δὲ μετὰ τινὰ χρόνον ὀλίγον ὄρα κατὰ τοὺς ὑπνοὺς ἄνδρα τινὰ γηραιόν, οὐ πῦρ ἐξῆι ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος, διαρρήθην λέγοντα πρὸς αὐτὴν ὅτι ὁ ἀγαπώμενος ὑπὸ σοῦ ὁ υἱός σου Βασίλειος τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων βασιλείας παρὰ θεοῦ τὰ σκήπτρα ἐγχειρισθήσεται, καὶ δεῖ σε προτρέψασθαι τοῦτον πρὸς τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν εἰσελθεῖν. ἡ δὲ πρὸς τὴν χαρμόσυνον ταύτην ἀγγελίαν διαχυθεῖσα καὶ πλήρης γενομένη χαρμῶσιν αὐτὴν ἀγγελίαν διαχυθεῖσα καὶ πλήρης γενομένη χαρᾶς προσεκύνησέ τε τὸν γηραιὸν ἐκείνον καὶ “τίς εἶ” εἶπεν αὐτῷ, “ὦ κύριε μου, ὁ μὴ ἀπαξιώσας ἐποφθῆναι τῇ δούλῃ σου, ἀλλ’ οὕτως εὐφρόσυνα εὐαγγέλια προσκομίσας μοι” ὁ δὲ “Ἡλίας” φησὶν “ὁ Θεοβίτης εἰμί,” καὶ ἀπέπτῃ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν. διυπνισθεῖσα οὖν ἐκείνη, καὶ ταῖς δεξιαῖς ταύταις ὄψεσι, μᾶλλον δὲ θείαις ἀποκαλύψεσιν οἷον ἀναπτρωθεῖσα καὶ ζωπυρήσασα, προθύμως αὐτὴ παρῶμα καὶ ἐξέπεμπε τὸν υἱὸν πρὸς τὴν βασιλεύουσαν, καὶ οἷα μήτηρ ἐνουθετεῖ καὶ παρακάλει τὸν τε θεῖον φόβον διηνεκῶς ἔχειν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ νομίζειν ἀεὶ τὸν τῆς προνοίας ὀφθαλμὸν πάσαν πράξιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶν νόημα ἐφορᾶν καὶ μηδὲν ἀνάξιον τῆς τοιαύτης ἐφορείας σπουδάζειν, ἀλλὰ τῷ προσήκοντι καταστήματι τὰς οἰκείας ἀρετὰς ἐπιδείξασθαι καὶ ἐν μηδενὶ τὴν προγονικὴν καταισχύουσαι εὐγένειαν.

Vita Basilii, ed. I. Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus* (CSHB, Bonn 1838), pp. 221.19-223.1.

Extract from a Novel (934) of Romanos I Lakapenos, which enforced the principle of protimesis, aiming at the protection of the small land property against the greedy wills of the powerful ones.

Θεσπίζομεν τοιγαροῦν τοὺς ἐν πάσῃ χώρᾳ καὶ πολιτείᾳ, ἦν μετὰ θεὸν ἡ ὑφ’ ἡμᾶς διέπει ἀρχή, διάγοντας ἐλευθέρων καὶ ἀνενόχλητον τὴν λαχοῦσαν ἔχειν κατοικήσιν. Ἄλλ’ εἰ μὲν τοῦτο μένει φυλάττων ὁ χρόνος, ἔστω τῆς τῶν τέκνων ἡ συγγενῶν κληροδοσίας τὸ ἐπίκτημα, ἡ τῆς τοῦ κατέχοντος προαιρέσεως τὸ βούλημα συμπληρούμενον. Εἰ δὲ, οἷα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης βιώσεως καὶ τῆς τοῦ χρόνου παλιθρόοιας, ἀνάγκης ἐπικειμένης ἡ καὶ θελήσεως τυχόν μόνης ὑποτιθεμένης, τὴν τῶν οἰκείων τόπων ὑπεισάγει ἡ μερικῶς ἡ καθόλου ἐκποίηση, τοῖς τῶν αὐτῶν ἡ καὶ τῶν ὁμοροῦντων ἀγρῶν ἡ χωρίων οἰκήτορσιν ἡ ἐξώνησις προκεισθῶ. Οὐ μίσει δὲ καὶ φθόνῳ τῶν ἰσχυροτέρων ταῦτα θεομοθετούμεν, ἀλλ’ εὐνοία καὶ προστασία τῶν πενήτων καὶ κοινῇ σωτηρίᾳ τοῦτο διοριζόμεθα. Ἄνθ’ ὧν γὰρ ἐχρῆν τοὺς ἄρχην ἐκ θεοῦ λαχόντας, τοὺς δόξῃ καὶ πλούτῳ τῶν πολλῶν ὑπερανεστηκότας, περὶ πολλοῦ τὴν τῶν πενήτων ποιείσθαι προμήθειαν, οὗτοι κατάβρωμα τούτους ἔχοντες, ὅτι μὴ τάχιον ταῦτα κατέχουσι δυσχεραίνουσι. Εἰ δὲ καὶ μὴ πάντων τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀνοσιοῦργημα, ἀλλ’ ἔστω πᾶσι κοινὸν τὸ τοῦ νόμου συντήρημα, ὡς ἂν μὴ λάθῃ τῷ σίτῳ συνεισφερόμενον τὸ ζιζάνιον.

Romanos' I Novel (934), ed. N. Svoronos – P. Gounaridis, *Les Nouvelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athènes 1994), pp. 83.33-84.49.

The conception of Constantine VII about the imperial power

Καὶ σου ὁ Παντοκράτωρ ὑπερασπιεῖ, καὶ συνετιεῖ σε ὁ πλάσας σε· κατευθυεῖ σου τὰ διαβήματα, καὶ ἐδράσει σε ἐπὶ βᾶσιν ἀσάλευτον. Ὁ θρόνος σου ὡς ὁ ἥλιος ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ, καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται βλέποντες ἐπὶ σε, καὶ οὐδὲν οὐ μὴ ἀψηταῖ σου τῶν χαλεπῶν, καθότι αὐτός σε ἐξελέξατο καὶ ἀπὸ μητρὸς ἀφώρισεν, καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ βασιλείαν ὡς ἀγαθῷ ὑπὲρ πάντας σοὶ ἔδωκεν, καὶ τέθεικεν ὡς σκέπη ἐπὶ βουνοῦ καὶ ὡς χρυσοῦν ἀνδριάντα ἐφ’ ὑψηλοῦ, καὶ ὡς πόλιν ἐπ’ ὄρους ἀνύψωσεν, ὥστε δωροφορεῖσθαι ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν καὶ προσκυνεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κατοικούντων τὴν γῆν. Ἀλλὰ σύ, Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου, οὐ ἡ βασιλεία αἰώνιος καὶ ἀνώλεθρος, εἶς κατευδῶν τὸν διὰ σοῦ ἐξ ἐμοῦ γεννηθέντα, καὶ ἔστω ἡ ἐπισκοπὴ τοῦ προσώπου σου ἐπ’ αὐτόν, καὶ τὸ οὖς σου ἐπικλινέσθω ταῖς τούτου δεήσεσιν. Σκεπασάτω αὐτὸν ἡ χεὶρ σου, καὶ βασιλευέτω ἔνεκεν ἀληθείας, καὶ ὀδηγήσει αὐτὸν ἡ δεξιά σου· κατευθυνθήσονται αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ ἐνώπιόν σου τοῦ φυλάξασθαι τὰ δικαίωμάτα σου. Πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ πεσοῦνται πολέμοι, καὶ λείξουσι χοῦν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ. Κατασκιασθῆτὶ τὸ στέλεχος τοῦ γένους αὐτοῦ πολυγονίας φύλλοις, καὶ ἡ σκιά τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ ἐπικαλύψαι ὄρη βασιλεία, ὅτι διὰ σοῦ βασιλεύουσι βασιλεῖς δοξάζοντες σε εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

G. Moravcsik (ed.), R. J. H. Jenkins (English transl), *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando imperio* (CFHB 1, Washington, D.C. 1967), p. 46.

Basil's II visit to Athens after his victory over the Bulgarians (1019) and his votive offering at the Parthenon

ἐν Ἀθήναις δὲ γενόμενος [= Βασίλειος Β'], καὶ τῆ θεοτόκῳ τὰ τῆς νίκης εὐχαριστήρια δούς καὶ ἀναθήμασι λαμπροῖς καὶ πολυτελεῖσι κοσμήσας τὸν ναόν, ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν.

John Skylitzes, ed. I. Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berolini - Novi Eboraci 1973), p. 364.80-83.