

CONSTANTINE AKROPOLITES ON CONSTANTINE THE GREAT: MOTIVATIONS AND APPROACHES*

On 25th July 1261 byzantine forces from Nicaea recovered Constantinople bringing to an end the Latin occupation of fifty–seven years. Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261–1282), who had already been crowned emperor at Nicaea (1259)¹, did not hasten to enter the byzantine capital, but he chose to make his triumphal entrance to Constantinople, on the 15th of August, as the city’s real liberator². Historically it was a very significant day for the life of the byzantine capital, the day of celebrating the Dormition of Theotokos, the traditional protectress of Constantinople³. The glorious entrance of Michael was made according to byzantine ceremonial, reminiscent of the traditional imperial proclamation and entry of the byzantine emperor into the great city. The recovery of Constantinople in 1261 combined two basic elements: the link with the byzantine past⁴ and the divine

* An expanded form of this paper is presented in the forthcoming volume dedicated to prof. E. Chrysos.

¹ Akropolites (ed. A. Heisenberg, corr. P. Wirth, *Georgii Akropolitae Opera*, vol. I, Leipzig, 1903) (=Akropolites), §77, 159.6–18. Pachymeres (ed. A. Failler, *Georges Pachymères, Relations Historiques*, vol. I–V [CFHB 24/1–5], Paris 1984–2000), II.6: I, 139.21–28, 141.15–22. Gregoras (ed. L. Schopen, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* [CSHB], vol. I–II, Bonn 1829– vol. III, ed. E. Bekker, Bonn 1855), I, 78–79. See R. Macrides, *George Akropolites The History. Introduction, Translation and Commentary* [Oxford Studies in Byzantium], Norfolk 2007, 348.

² Akropolites, §88, 186–188. Pachymeres, II.31: I, 217.9–219.5. Gregoras, I, 83. See D. J. Geanakoplos, *The emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282. A Study in Byzantine–Latin Relations*, Cambridge, Mass. 1959, 92–115. V. Puech, La refondation religieuse de Constantinople par Michael VIII Paléologue (1259–1282): un acte politique, in: *Religion et société urbaine au Moyen–Âge. Études offertes à Jean–Louis Biget par ses anciens élèves*, ed. P. Boucheron – J. Chiffolleau [Publications de la Sorbonne. Histoire ancienne et médiévale 60], Paris 2000, 351–362, 358–359.

³ Akropolites, §88, 186–188. Pachymeres, II.31:I, 217.9–219.5. Gregoras, I, 83.

⁴ The emperor himself was frequently practiced in making reference to his predecessors. See for example his oration on the recovery of Constantinople: (Pachymeres, II, 30: I, 209.19–25) and on his triumphal entry to the just regained capital (Pachymeres, II,31: I, 217.11–16). Cf. R. Macrides, From the Comnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile, in: *New Constantines: the Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th centuries*. Papers from the Twenty – sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St.

intervention⁵. Current, both real and ideological, necessities absolutely needed the evocation of the past in all levels of byzantine political life in order to be the continuity of the byzantine tradition return to its former condition.

The first Christian emperor Constantine the Great (313–337), the founder of Byzantium undeniably typified this continuity. Constantine, according to his literary portrait drawn by Eusebius, the initiator of the theoretical principles of the byzantine imperial ideology⁶, was the first Christian emperor, the saintly Christian founder of the byzantine capital. He was the emperor who convened and presided over the first ecumenical council. Eusebius composed the *Life of Constantine*, a biographical account with high rhetorical elements⁷, thus formulating the model of the imperial portrayal. His successors on the byzantine throne invoked this

Andrews, March 1992 [Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, 2], ed. P. Magdalino, Aldershot 1994, 269–282, here 270. Generally the past played a fundamental role in formulating the political authority during the Middle Ages. Cf. the latest volume *Authorities in the Middle Ages. Influence, Legitimacy, and Power in Medieval Society*, eds. S. Kangas, M. Korpola, T. Ainonen [Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture 12], Berlin–Boston 2013, and specially the work by M. Kahlos, “But Our Customs are Older”: The Authority of Antiquity in Late Antique Debates (in the fourth and Fifth Centuries C.E.), 27–38.

⁵ Michael VIII himself repeatedly stressed the divine intervention in regaining the byzantine capital, as for instance in his *Autobiography* (ed. H. Grégoire, Imperatoris Michaelis Palaiologi De Vita Sua, *Byz.* 29–30 (1959–1960), 449, 453. Engl. transl. and comments on this text: G. Dennis, Kellibara I: Typikon of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrius of the Palaiologoi–Kellibara in Constantinople, in: *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of Surviving Founder’s Typika and Testaments*, ed. J. Thomas – A. Constantinides Hero, Washington 2000, III, 1237–1251. See also the characteristic narration of Pachymeres, II.30: I, 211.10–213.23.

⁶ Eusebius mainly penned the encomiastic image of Constantine in the *Life of Constantine* and his panegyric, entitled *Triakontaeterikos Logos*. For the *Life of Constantine*, see BHG 361x, ed. Fr. Winkelmann, *Eusebius Werke, Band I/1: Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller], Berlin 1975) (=Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*); engl. transl. by Av. Cameron–S. G. Hall, *Eusebius Life of Constantine. Introduction, translation, and commentary*, Oxford 1999 (=Cameron–Hall). Another edition: Eusebios. *Über das Leben des glückseligen Kaisers Konstantin (De vita Constantini)*, herausgegeben, übersetzt und kommentiert von P. Dräger [Bibliotheca classicorum 1], Oberhaid 2007 (=Dräger). The reprinted critical edition with German translation and commentary: *De vita Constantini. Über das Leben Konstantins*, eingeleitet von Br. Bleckmann, übersetzt und kommentiert von H. Schneider [Fontes Christiani, 83], Turnhout 2007 (=Bleckmann–Schneider). On Eusebius as a scholar and a writer, see T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, Mass. 1981, ch. 2. For *Triakontaeterikos Logos* (ed. I. A. Heikel, *Eusebius Werke, Band I*, 193–259). The bibliography on Eusebius and Constantine is vast. See for instance, N. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*, Oxford 1929, repr. 1972. G. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, transl. by J. Birrell, Cambridge – New York 2003, 131ff. S. Patoura–Spanou, *Χριστιανισμός και Παγκοσμιότητα στο πρώιμο Βυζάντιο. Από τη θεωρία στην πράξη* [Institute for Byzantine Research, Monographs 10], Athens 2008, 54 ff, 60–66. On Eusebius’s works with recent bibliography: V. Katsaros – G. A. Raptis, *Ευσέβιος Βίος Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου*, Thessaloniki 2011, 14–65.

⁷ A. Wilson, *Biographical Models: the Constantinian period and beyond*, in: *Constantine. History, Historiography and Legend*, ed. S. Lieu and D. Montserrat, London – New York 1998, 107–135, specially 112–113.

specific imperial prototype every time when political circumstances demanded a revival through a “New Constantine”⁸. On the other hand, for the Orthodox Church Constantine the Great was reckoned as a saint and equivalent to apostles⁹.

After the recapture of Constantinople, Michael VIII Palaiologos embarking on a new start for Byzantium deliberately used with particular emphasis the title “New Constantine” and introduced it in the system of the traditional imperial terminology¹⁰. Relying on the image of Constantine the Great, Michael VIII strengthened his imperial authority, mostly after the blinding of the legal successor of the throne John Lascaris¹¹. Michael VIII invoked the name New Constantine in all aspects of his political strategy¹². Andronicus II (1282–1328), his son and heir of throne, did the same. The first did that in order for his acts to appear morally right and acceptable, the second adopted the same focusing rather on the religious dimension of his policy. Andronicus II opposing the unionist views of his father Michael VIII displayed his passionate support to the traditional Orthodoxy¹³. He invalidated the decisions of the Council of Lyons (1274) for the Union of the Churches immediately after his accession to the throne. Therefore he was considered a champion of Orthodoxy, while his panegyrists called him as New Constantine. One of his panegyrists, George of Cyprus, called Andronicus II the “real son and heir of Constantine the Great” since they both followed the same path of living according to Godly tenets and the true Trinitarian doctrine¹⁴, while another one, Theodore Hyrtakenos closely associated Andronicus II with Constantine the Great in respect of the support to orthodox dogma, by saying that “you are another of the same mould” (ὁμοίος ὡν τηγάνεις ἐκεῖ, νοσ)¹⁵.

⁸ Insightful comments on this issue by P. Magdalino, Introduction, in: *New Constantines*, 1–9, specially 7. Macrides, From the Comnenoi, 270.

⁹ Baynes, *Constantine*, 92–94. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 135–143.

¹⁰ A number of sources mention Michael VIII as the New Constantine. See for example a characteristic mention penned by Manouel Holobolos, ed. M. Treu, Manuelis Holoboli orationes. *Programm des königlichen Victoria-Gymnasiums*, 2. Potsdam 1907, II, 84.28–31: αἱ δὲ πράξεις αὐταὶ πρεσβεύσασαι πολλήν καὶ ἀναντίρρητον εἰσήνεγκαν τὴν πειθῶ καὶ νέον Κωνσταντῖνον ἠξίωσάν σε λαμπρῶς προσαγορεύεσθαι καὶ ἀναγορεύεσθαι. Analysis and comments on them by R. Macrides, The New Constantine and the New Constantinople—1261?, *BMGS* 6 (1980), 13–41 and by D. Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium (1204–1330)*, Cambridge – New York 2007, 44–45. However, this title seems to be under question by his opponents: Eleonora Kountoura–Galake, Constantine V Kopronymos Or Michael VIII Paleologos the New Constantine? The Anonymous Encomium of Saint Theodosia, *Symmeikta* 15 (2002), 183–194.

¹¹ Pachymeres, III.10: I, 255.23–259.5.

¹² Even during the discussions over the Union of the Churches. See his *chrysobull logos* written by George of Cyprus and dated to 1273, ed. V. Laurent – J. Darrouzès, *Dossier grec de l’Union de Lyon (1273–1277)* [Archives de l’Orient chrétien 16], Paris 1976, 317.13–16.

¹³ Pachymeres, VII,2: III, 23.1–31. Gregoras, I, 160 ff. A. E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II 1282–1328*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1972, 32ff.

¹⁴ Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Κυρὸν Ἀνδρόνικον τὸν Παλαιολόγον, ed. J. Fr. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca e codicibus regiis*, Paris 1929, repr. Hildesheim 1962, vol. I, 384.

¹⁵ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ὑρτακηνοῦ πρὸς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Προσφώνημα, ed. Boissonade, *Anecdota Graeca*, vol. I, 252. On Theodore Hyrtakenos: *PLP* 29507. For the context of

The paramount significance of the idea of continuity through references to Constantine the Great was further advanced by literary production.

Constantine Akropolites (1250–1321/4), the most prolific hagiographer of the time, tried his hand to create an oration in honour of the saintly founder of Byzantium. Constantine Akropolites was the son of George Akropolites, the well known historian of the period¹⁶, the prominent scholar and statesman during the reign of Michael VIII. His son Constantine was also involved both in scholarly affairs and in politics, since he had received the high offices of the “logothetes tou genikou” and of the “great logothetes” during the reign of Andronicus II¹⁷. However, unlike his father, he was a fervent opponent of the Union of the Churches¹⁸. Constantine Akropolites simultaneously with his political activity promoted his political and religious views through his writings, letters and hagiographical pieces.

He particularly referred to his homonymous first Christian emperor not only with respect and admiration, but also with a critical eye to the political issues of his time. In his narration on the *Life of Metrophanes*, the bishop of Constantinople (306–314) when the city was transformed as the new imperial capital, Akropolites called the emperor Constantine as “the great founder of the city and protector of all the Christian generation”¹⁹; in another of his hagiographical works penned on the noble roman senator Zotikos, the first orphanotrophos of Constantinople, stressed that “God sent Constantine and anointed him king for our salvation”²⁰. Constantine Akropolites has not failed to make encomiastic mention to the great emperor in another hagiographical text, the *Life of Theodosia*²¹. Certainly his admiration of and respect for his homonymous emperor was illustrated in his lengthy encomiastic piece in honour of St

panegyrics, see Angelov, *Imperial ideology*, 70–71, 76, 88–90.

¹⁶ *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* [Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft. Abteilung 1: Byzantinisches Handbuch, 5], I, 447–453. Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 5 ff.

¹⁷ Pachymeres, VI.26: II, 625.15–22 D. Nicol, Constantine Akropolites. A Prosopographical Note, *DOP* 19 (1965), 249–256. R. Romano, *Costantino Acropolita: Epistole*, Napoli 1991, 18–19.

¹⁸ Nicol, Constantine Akropolites, 249. M. Hinterberger, Hagiographische Metaphrasen. Ein möglicher Weg der Annäherung an die Literarästhetik der frühen Palaiologenzeit, στο: *Imitatio – Aemulatio – Variatio. Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur (Wien, 22.–25. Oktober 2008)*, herausg. von A. Rhoby–E. Schiffer [Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 21], Wien 2010, 137–151, specially 146–148.

¹⁹ *Life of Metrophanes*, ed. Fr. Winkelmann, Die Metrophanes Vita des Konstantinos Akropolites, BHG1278z, in *Studia Byzantina. Beiträge aus der byzantinistischen Forschung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zum XIII. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongress in Oxford 1966*, ed. J. Irmscher, Halle 1966, 79–102), 96.24–25: ὄλου τοῦ κατὰ Χριστόν τοῦ γένους πατήρ.

²⁰ *Life of Zotikos*, ed. T. S. Miller, The legend of saint Zotikos according to Constantine Akropolites, *AB* 112 (1994), 4.10–11, p. 350.

²¹ Akropolites, *Life of Theodosia*, ed. S. Kotzabassi, *Das hagiographische Dossier der heiligen Theodosia von Konstantinopel* [Byzantisches Archiv 21], Berlin–New York 2009), 124.6–9, 124.34.

Constantine *Είς τόν άγιον και θεόστεπτον Βασιλέα Κωνσταντίνον τόν Μέγαν*²². It is worth noting that this hagiographical work was preserved in 18 manuscripts, an evidence of its wide dissemination, a fact which also denotes the particular interest in Constantine the Great during the late Byzantine period, as a model which established a perfect link with the glorious byzantine past. Akropolites himself commented on his frequent references to the great emperor in his autograph supplement of the code²³, which contains many of his works and was copied under his own supervision. In the same manuscript is also preserved a poem in honour of his namesake emperor and saint, whom Akropolites regarded as his own protector²⁴. Writing on him Constantine Akropolites was fully aware that he was presenting a great political and religious physiognomy, clearly seen already by the title of his rhetorical text.

The Life of Constantine by Akropolites contains all the achievements of the great emperor coexisted with allusions to corresponding ideological aspects. Speaking with pride on his specific rhetorical text in two untitled letters, Constantine Akropolites appears to make a kind of promotion to it. In one of these letters had asked the addressee, who probably was the well known historian and high ecclesiastical official George Pachymeres, to arrange for his literary work to be delivered as a sermon in the Church of St. Sophia on the saint's memory day (21st May)²⁵.

Although he confessed that this work did not add anything new concerning the first Christian emperor²⁶, he recited all the visions and myths surrounding crucial turning points of his historical life and he enumerated Constantine's military exploits²⁷. The hagiographer highlighted all references related to the foundation of Constantinople insisting even on the emperor's active involve-

²² BHG368: http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/rech_oeuvre/resultOeuvre/filter_auteur/2871/filter_oeuvre/60 (22/12/2010). For this research we have used the edition by C. Simonides, *The panegyric of that holy apostolic and heaven crowned king Constantine the Great composed by his head logothetes Constantine Acropolitis*, London 1853, 1–37 (=Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*). Although the aforementioned editor was condemned for forgery (A. Papadopoulos–Keramaeus, *ίεροσολυμιτική βιβλιοθήκη: ήτοι κατάλογος τών έν ταις βιβλιοθήκαις τοδ άγιωτάτου άποστολικου τε και καθολικουδ όρθοδοξου πατριαρχικουθ θρόνου τών ίεροσολύμων και πάσης Παλαιστίνης άποκειμένων έλληνικων κωδικων*, Sankt Peterburg 1897, repr. Bruxelles 1963, vol. I, 122), we checked one of the manuscripts (Docheiariou 69 (2743), ff. 265–290) and we have not found any alteration in the text.

²³ Papadopoulos–Kerameus, *ίεροσολυμιτική βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. I, 122–123.

²⁴ Papadopoulos–Kerameus, *ίεροσολυμιτική βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. I, 122.

²⁵ *Letters* 14 and 40 (ed. Romano, *Acropolita*), 115, 138–139. Βλ. C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and early Fourteenth Centuries (1204–ca.1310)*, Nicosia 1982, 40. S. Lampakis, *Γεώργιος Παχυμέρης Πρωτέκδικος και Δικαιοφύλαξ. Είσαγωγικό Δοκίμιο* [Institute for Byzantine Research, Monographs, 5]. Athens 2004, 23, specially 36 note 88.

²⁶ S. Paschalides, 'Ο ιδεώδης Αύτοκράτορας. 'Ο Μέγας Κωνσταντίνος στη μεσοβυζαντινή άγιολογική γραμματεία και πολιτική ιδεολογία, in *Niš i Bizantija/Niš & Byzantium. Symposium V* (Niš, 3–5 June 2006), [Zbornik Radova V], Niš 2007, 39–49: <http://www.ni.rs/byzantium/doc/zbornik5/PDF-V/Simeon%20Pashalides.pdf>.

²⁷ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 33–34.

ment in the design of the city²⁸. Such references by Akropolites, who as a young man had experienced the Latin occupation of Constantinople, aimed at consolidating the concept that the Byzantines through Constantine the Great were the authentic heirs, the rightful owners of the byzantine capital²⁹.

The *Life of Constantine* by Akropolites written according to the conventions of an imperial encomium, includes all the appropriate rhetorical and not only issues: the emperor's homeland³⁰, family and the extraordinary circumstances of his birth with the relevant fictional points (e.g. appearance of sun during the night)³¹, reference to his physical well being³², to his nurture and education³³. Akropolites presents Constantine's deeds in war, which in combination with the divine insignia made the great emperor the unquestionable ruler throughout the entire world (oikoumene)³⁴. A significant point showing that our hagiographer approached with critical thinking his sources is his comment on the great variety of myths involved with the name of Constantine the Great³⁵. However he did not fail to include in his account all the characteristic virtues that embellish the imperial image: bravery³⁶, justice³⁷, philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία)³⁸, sympathy and mildness towards his subjects³⁹. A key element in the imperial portrayal was the close relationship of the emperor with God. Following this Akropolites presented the emperor as the imitator of God⁴⁰, as

²⁸ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 28: κατά τόν δειχθέντα τούτῳ τύπον, περιέγραψεν, ἐσημίτισε, καί πολυτελῶς οἰκοδομήσαι προσέταξεν.

²⁹ The Byzantines considered that Constantinople was a “bastard homeland” for the Latins: Gregoras I/1, 86.

³⁰ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 4. On the myths relating to the emperor's birth place: A. P. Kazhdan, “Constantin imaginaire” Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great, *Byz 57* (1987), 196–250, here at 212–215. S. Lieu, From History to Legend and Legend to History, in *Constantine. History, Historiography and Legend*, ed. S. Lieu and D. Montserrat, London – New York 1998, 158.

³¹ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 7. Concerning the particular concept of Sun in the political ideology of Constantine the Great: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 43. See N. H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church*, London 1929, repr Oxford 1972, 95–103. J. Straub, Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike [Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geschichte 18], Stuttgart 1939, repr. Darmstadt 1964, 129–134. This tradition also passed to his successors: H. Hunger, *Prooimion: Elemente der byzantinischen Kaiseridee in den Arengen der Urkunden* [Wiener byzantinische Studien 1], Wien 1964, 75–83.

³² Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 8–9, as also portrayed by Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 19–20. See Cameron–Hall, 197–198. Dräger, 317. Bleckmann–Schneider, 172–174.

³³ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 7–8.

³⁴ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 9, 10, 14–15, 19, 20. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 28. See Bleckmann–Schneider, 96–106

³⁵ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 5: διὰ τόν πολλόν ἐν λόγοις αὐτοῦ θρόλλον.

³⁶ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 6, 14, 29, 34.

³⁷ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 23. Cf. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II, 37–40.

³⁸ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 16. Cf. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II, 20. See Cameron–Hall, 153–154. Bleckmann–Schneider, 76.

³⁹ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 16. Cf. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, II, 22.

⁴⁰ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 27, 30. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 5. See Hunger, *Prooimion*, 58–61. P. Agapetos, χ εἰκόνα τοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Βασιλείου Α΄ στή

specially marked out and selected by God to obtain the empire⁴¹, divinely authorized, as being on friendly terms with God⁴², while the divine providence supported all his deeds⁴³. Akropolites in order to present the excellent qualities of Constantine the Great used the rhetorical model of comparison with known historical and biblical personalities bearing similar properties⁴⁴. Needless to say that the first byzantine emperor was superior to all. However it might be perceived as an indirect message alluding to Michael VIII's not very really legal accession to the throne.⁴⁵

Akropolites focused much of his attention on painting the great emperor in an extremely Christian light. He underlined Constantine's building holy sites, as well as the religious problems he faced. The hagiographer concentrated, already from his prologue, on the absolute praise of emperor's piety (eusebeia), by saying that "he could not laud highly any other for the pious zeal only the Emperor Constantine"⁴⁶. Following the model of Eusebius, who linked the first Christian emperor with the utmost piety⁴⁷, Constantine Akropolites spoke repeatedly about this specific feature of the emperor by labeling him as: "fervent fighter for piety"⁴⁸, "the solid ground of piety", "the mainstay of the faith"⁴⁹, "the most pious king", "pious king"⁵⁰, "loving God and loved by God"⁵¹. Furthermore, due to Constantine's efforts to eradicate heretical beliefs and to support Orthodoxy called him "the general of Christ"⁵². Piety along with the divine power and the close relations with God are the most visible virtues of

φιλομακεδονική γραμματεία 867–959, *Hellenica* 40 (1989), 285–323, here 293.

⁴¹ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 7: θελον ὄν ἀληθῶς καὶ διὰ Θεοῦ σημανθέν, τὴν εὐσάφους τοῦ γεννησομένου σαφῶς προδεικνύον λαμπρότητα, καὶ λάμπριν τοῦδε παγκόσμιον. See also pp. 11, 12, 17, 20, 21, 26, 27, 36. Cf. Hunger, *Prooimion*, 49–58.

⁴² Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 29. *Life of Zotikos*, 10.4, σ. 356.

⁴³ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 13, 14, 21, 22.

⁴⁴ Akropolites compared specific virtues of the emperor *Constantine* with those of Cyrus, Alexander, Octavius (sic) Augustus and from the Old Testament of Moses, king David, Solomon: *Life of Constantine*, 34–35. Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine* had also used the same rhetorical system of "synkrisis". Discussion over the figures under comparison in Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*: Cameron–Hall, 31–32. Wilson, *Biographical Models*, 109 ff. Patoura–Spanou, *Χριστιανισμός και Παγκοσμιότητα*, 60–66.

⁴⁵ See above

⁴⁶ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 1.

⁴⁷ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 4: διδασκαλίαν θεοσεβούς ὑποδείγματος τὸν ἀνδρα τῷ θνητῷ γένει προβεβλημένος; I, 5; I, 39; IV.14. See Cameron–Hall, 69–71, 216–219. Patoura–Spanou, *Χριστιανισμός και Παγκοσμιότητα*, 56–60.

⁴⁸ *Life of Zotikos*, 4.12, p. 350. *Life of Metrophanes*, 99.

⁴⁹ Akropolites, *Life of Theodosia*, 124.33–34.

⁵⁰ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 19.

⁵¹ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 29. *Life of Zotikos*, 10.4, p. 356. Cf. G. Bonamente, *Apoteosi e imperatori cristiani*, in *I cristiani e l'impero nel IV secolo*, G. Bonamente – A. Nestori (eds.), Macerata 1988, 107–142.

⁵² Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 14: στρατηγός οὗτος, ἢ ἀποστράτηγος· ἐὼ γὰρ λέγειν ὡς καὶ συνεστρατήγει τοῦτῳ Θεός. The term «ἀποστράτηγος» (=retired general, Lampe, s.v) seems to be used under the metaphorical notion that Constantine had retired from the army administration while God had undertaken its responsibility.

Constantine the Great stressed by our hagiographer. Closely interwoven with piety is the adherence to the orthodox doctrine, two main features of the imperial ideology, which established the good governance⁵³. In this concept, Akropolites declared that the most important achievement done by Constantine was neither his victorious campaigns, nor his heavenly signs, but his “brilliant feat” was the “antiparataxis”, that is his confrontation of Arius’s heretical teaching⁵⁴. By using this warlike terminology and a strong language against the dogmatic disputes, Akropolites, who himself was steadfast of the traditional Orthodoxy, declared his firm stand for the orthodox doctrine to be maintained. Besides, it was a particular method to express his warm approval and admiration of the religious policy of the emperor Andronicus II, due to which he was praised as a “New Constantine”⁵⁵.

Furthermore, Akropolites gave too much emphasis on fully speaking about Constantine’s significant role to settle peacefully the heretical opinions during the Council at Nicaea (325)⁵⁶. For this reason, the hagiographer compared the Great emperor with Moses⁵⁷, the biblical lawgiver, saying that Constantine by convoking the Council in Nicaea put the good ground on which the true dogma was based⁵⁸. The author turning then his narration on Constantine’s relations with the ecclesiastical authority made reference to their intimate relations, while he portrayed the emperor as the “founder of the church”⁵⁹. The Great emperor is presented as a mediator to reconcile the disputants⁶⁰.

Constantine Akropolites, as a well educated high scholar of the period, paid close attention to his rhetorical work and wrote the *Life of Constantine* within a literary as well as a political framework. As it appears, the hagiographer used the *Life of Constantine* to engage relevant religious concerns of his own times. The impulse behind his narration was highly political and particularly connected with his own days, as the time of creating this text coincided

⁵³ A telling reference to this concept in Akropolites, *Life of Zoticos*, 10.10–11, p. 356. Cf. K. Pitsakis, Sainteté et empire. A propos de la sainteté impériale: formes de sainteté “d’office” et de sainteté collective dans l’Empire d’Orient?, *Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi, Serie seconda*, 3 (2001), 155–227, specially 183ff.

⁵⁴ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 28–29.

⁵⁵ See above, p.

⁵⁶ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 28–30.

⁵⁷ Wilson, Biographical Models, 109 ff. Cf. Rapp, Imperial Ideology in the making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as ‘Bishop’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 49/2 (1998), 687 ff.

⁵⁸ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 30.

⁵⁹ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 36: ταίς αὐτοῦ πράξεισι τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τεθεμελίωται τῷ Χριστῷ. Here Akropolites seems to echo the famous testimony of Eusebius (IV.24) on the status of Constantine as common bishop. Cf. J. A. Straub, Constantine as Κοινός Ἐπίσκοπος: Tradition and Innovation in the Representation of the First Christian Emperor’s Majesty, *DOP* 21 (1967), 37–55. D. de Decker – G. Dupuis–Masay, L’“episcopat” de l’empereur Constantin, *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 118–157. Cf. Rapp, *Holy bishops in late antiquity: the nature of Christian leadership in an age of transition* [The transformation of the classical heritage 37], London 2005, 236–240. Dräger, 353–4,

⁶⁰ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 30: Εἰρηνεύειν πρὸς ἑλλήλους Ἰκαστον δυσωπεῖ, κα... τ±ς κατ’ ἑλλήλων διαφορ±ς παριδέν.

with the reestablishment of Orthodoxy by Andronicus II in 1282⁶¹. Thus, all his verbose discussion on the true dogma through the connection with Constantine the Great⁶² appeared quite relevant.

On the other hand Akropolites's arguments on peace in Church consisted a very appropriate theme also matching properly with his contemporary time. They reflected

Andronicus's decisions and measures related to the provoked struggles and disagreements within the Church. First, the replacement of the unionist Patriarch John Beccos (1275–1282) with Joseph I, who earlier occupied the patriarchal throne, aroused strong hostility. Although Joseph I had anti-unionist sentiments, he was considered by a party of the clergy, that is the Arsenites, as usurper, because of his illegal ascension⁶³. Another reason of disruption within the Byzantine Church was the refusal of some churchmen to accept those clerics who had taken the oath to the pope⁶⁴. Thus, the peaceful restoration of Orthodoxy by Andronicus was rather a dream, as Pachymeres says,⁶⁵ and the beginning of a complicating time. The sources of the time reflect perfectly the lack of unity in the church⁶⁶. Akropolites appears to echo this atmosphere in the epilogue of his work on the great emperor, as at this point commented on problems of his own time sometimes openly, sometimes hinting, but always embittered. The hagiographer in his final stage addressed Constantine the Great using the first person and asking him “to keep dogma unchanged so as to not leave place for disputes”. The hagiographer having a marked style intended to create a particular emotional effect and launched an appeal to the first Christian emperor “for peace and love one to another”⁶⁷. In the same train of thought he continued asking God through the offices of saint Constantine “to move away from us and to throw in deep oblivion the anomaly of the times and the prevailing confusion”. The context of the abovementioned requests in any case match to a typical closing of a hagiographical text. They simultaneously correspond to the particular means of the reign of Andronicus II, when the new regime intended for a smooth transition from the pro-unionist policy to Orthodoxy with full peace among the opponent parties. For Akropolites emperor Constantine symbolized the ideal emperor in all his glory, who through peaceful means and harmony in his relation with the Church exceeded doctrinal problems. Akropolites couched his ideas rather as a politician than a scholar considering that Andronicus II as “New Constantine” should imitate the real model.

⁶¹ See above note,

⁶² Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 36–37.

⁶³ A. Riebe, *Rom in Gemeinschaft mit Konstantinopel: Patriarch Johannes XI Bekkos als Verteidiger der Kirchenunion von Lyon (1274)* [Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik 8] Wiesbaden 2005, 101ff.

⁶⁴ A. Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium. The Filioque Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283–1289)*, Revised edition, Crestwood 1997, 83–105.

⁶⁵ Pachymeres, VII.11: III, 47.20–21.

⁶⁶ Pachymeres, VII.9: III, 43.22–45.7; VII.15: III, 59.30–61.4; VII.16: III, 61.12. See Lampakis, *Pachymeres*, 100–102.

⁶⁷ Akropolites, *Life of Constantine*, 36–37.

Елеонора Кунтура Галаки
КОНСТАНТИН АКРОПОЛИТА О КОНСТАНТИНУ ВЕЛИКОМ: МОТИВАЦИЈЕ
И ПРИСТУПИ

Живописац је својим изражајним стилем намеравао да створи посебан емотивни утисак и упуту молбу првом хришћанском цару „за мир и узајамну љубав“. У истом мисаоном низу наставио је да моли Бога кроз своје обраћање Светом Константину „да уклони од нас и баца у далеки заборав све аномалије ових времена и преовлађујућу конфузију“. Контекст горе поменутих молби у сваком случају одговара типичном завршетку текста житија. Оне истовремено одговарају одређеним средствима владавине Андроника II, када је нови режим намеравао да спроведе лагану транзицију од проунионистичке политике према православљу уз потпуни мир међу противничким странама. За цара Акрополита, Константин је симболизовао идеал цара у свој својој слави, који је мирним и усклађеним путем у свом односу са Црквом превазишао проблеме доктрине. Акрополит је формулисао своје идеје пре као политичар него као учењак обзиром да је Андроник II као „нови Константин“ требало да имитира прави модел.