Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine-Seljuk Relations

By Alexander D. Beihammer

Not a word of goodbye, not even a note
She gone with the man
In the long black coat.

(Bob Dylan, “Man in the Long Black Coat”)

An Islamic coffin discovered in the church of Maria Spilaiotissa near the old Seljuk capital of Konya in central Anatolia bears the following Greek inscription: “Here lies the descendant of men born in the purple, Michael Amiraslan, the grandson of the great-grandson of the blessed emperor born in the purple, Kyr John Komnenos Maurozomes, the son of the humble John Komnenos.”

This text, dated November 1, 6809 (A.D. 1297), can be characterized as a relic of a family tradition of Greek dignitaries at the Seljuk court who for generations had maintained their Christian faith and the memory of their imperial ancestry. Paul Wittek, who published and thoroughly examined the inscription in the 1930s, reconstructed a genealogical tree of the family, whose roots go back to the Byzantine aristocracy of the late twelfth century. But I am not concerned here with the validity of his arguments. More interesting at present is the fact that the inscription constitutes a monument in stone to a particular mode of political behavior that occurred with increasing frequency from the second half of the eleventh century until the end of the Nicaean Empire and that, therefore, can be deemed a typical feature of Byzantine-Seljuk relations during this period. I refer to the decision members of the Byzantine ruling class made from time to time to sever existing social bonds based on kinship, loyalty, as well as ethnic and religious attachments.

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gious identity and to join the Seljuk sultan of Rûm, the Danišmend emir, or other Muslim lords in Asia Minor in order to obtain their favor and protection. Similar patterns of behavior can be observed among members of the political elite in the Turkish states as well. Hence we can talk about a common phenomenon. Under certain circumstances, the political and religious archenemy, the morally and culturally inferior barbarian and infidel, could become an appreciated protector and ally against one's own relatives, coreligious, and compatriots. Sometimes refugees even found a new home at the court that had given them shelter, converted to their hosts’ religion, and stayed there for the rest of their lives, as was obviously the case with Michael Amiraslan’s forefathers.

Defection in Byzantine-Muslim Political Culture

In the collective memories of twentieth-century postwar generations the notion of “defection,” that is, the act of abandoning one’s allegiance to a state or a political entity in exchange for another, acquired an emotionally and morally charged connotation, eliciting manifold ethical judgments and legal considerations. A spontaneous train of thought might range from Adolf Hitler’s Fieldmarshal Friedrich Paulus, who, after his failure at Stalingrad, instead of committing suicide collaborated with the Soviets, to the Cold War period and the Berlin Wall as a symbol of East Germany’s coercive measures against Republiksflucht, to contemporary Muslim intellectuals persecuted by radical Islamic organizations.2 Are there any parallels between our modern experiences and medieval or, more specifically, Byzantine and Muslim standards of identity, allegiance, and loyalty? To judge from the evidence provided by legal texts, obviously there are. A glance at Justinian’s Digesta and the Byzantine corpus of legal codifications and treatises leaves no doubt that Roman law had developed a clear attitude in treating defectio (αὐτ/ομικρονλία) as a crime approaching high treason, which in all cases entailed the death penalty and, because of its seriousness, especially ignominious forms of execution. Only in the early tenth century did Emperor Leo the Wise introduce some modifications, arguing in one of his novels for milder penalties for defectors who were repentant of their deed.3 The religious-based legal system of the Islamic world considered defection primarily in terms of spiritual apostasy from Islam (ridda or irtidād), which, because of the theocratic character of Islamic state theories, implicitly included all forms of political defection from Muslim public authorities. Although pertinent statements in the Qur’ān are far from unambiguous, apostasy, from the earliest preserved collections of Islamic law onwards, came to be deemed as a “sin unto death,” even excluding the possibility of repentance (tawba), according to some opinions.4 However, the undisguised

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3 For “defection” in Byzantine law see Spyros Troianos, Ο “παναίλος” τον Εκλογαμόν: Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της εξέλεξιας του παναίλου διαμάντα από τον Corpus iuris civilis μέχρι την Βασιλείαν (Frankfurt am Main, 1980), pp. 21–23.
4 For Muslim attitudes toward apostasy in general, see Samuel M. Zwemer, The Law of Apostasy in Islam (New York, 1924), and the article of W. Heffening on “murtadd” in The Encyclopaedia of
condemnation of defection in both spheres’ moral and legal systems never prevented people involved in seditious movements from taking recourse to it, and, therefore, the history of Byzantine-Muslim contacts from the seventh century onwards provides a long list of prominent apostates, such as the Armenian general Saborius under Emperor Constans (641–69); the domestikos Manuel and the Persian rebel Naṣr-Theophobus during the reign of Theophilus (829–42); the Arab eunuch Samonas, for some years one of the most powerful men at the court of Leo VI; and Bardas Skleros, the legendary opponent of Emperor Basil II (976–1025). The Byzantine epic of the “twyborn” hero Digenis Akritas, son of an Arab emir and a Greek general’s daughter, perfectly illustrates how familiar a phenomenon such close interaction across the Anatolian border had become over the centuries.5

For the period following the emergence of the Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor, modern scholars have repeatedly noted and discussed the sudden increase of testimonies of refugees, apostates, and outlaws living somewhere in the space in between the political and cultural spheres. The two main authorities in the field, Claude Cahen and Speros Vryonis, have considered the phenomenon within the wider context of Christian-Muslim coexistence in the conquered regions of Asia Minor, namely, with respect to the Seljuk sultanate’s attitudes toward its Christian subjects and, especially, the integration of Christians into the Seljuk court life and administration.6 Both authors portray a society that, on the one hand,

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shows some awareness of traditional Islamic rules concerning the restrictions on non-Muslim subjects and, on the other, is surprisingly tolerant toward Christians, so that several sultans were born of Greek women and a considerable number of Byzantine aristocrats, both locals and refugees, became high-ranking officials at the court of Konya. Cahen even suggests that Byzantine and Seljuk refugees shared a special preference for each other, which was stronger than the ties with their respective coreligious in the Slavic lands or in Muslim Syria and assumes a common consciousness of belonging to one cultural entity, the “Roman land” (bilad al-Rum). Vryonis, whose view of the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor is overwhelmingly negative, presenting it as a process of decay of Christian Hellenism, at least admits that Christian officials and apostates at the Seljuk court formed a significant force for bridging the gap between the conquerors and the vanquished by offering opportunities to the Turks to become familiar with Christian society’s customs and habits.

Charles Brand has devoted an article to the opposite phenomenon, that is, the Turkish element in the Byzantine world in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He lists nineteen persons who either lived permanently at or visited the Byzantine imperial court, and he briefly discusses related issues such as the integration process through grants of titles and incomes, baptism and marriage, and the role of Turkish mercenaries in the Comnenian army. More recent studies of Alain Ducellier and Michel Balivet, which are concerned with general aspects of Byzantine-Turkish coexistence, acculturation, and mutual perception, further develop the positive perspective of Claude Cahen by stressing the manifold phenomena of cross-cultural contacts and permeation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: Turkish mercenaries offering their services to the imperial government, Turkish merchants living among other Muslim inhabitants of Constantinople and enjoying full religious freedom in the framework of their own mosque, an overwhelming majority of Greek-speaking subjects in the sultanate of Konya, a great number of Greek court officials including Greek notaries in the Seljuk chancery, and features of Byzantine imperial ideology incorporated into Seljuk cer-


Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, p. 211; idem, Formation, p. 130.

Vryonis, Decline, p. 205.


emonies of lordship. All these circumstances, their argument goes, point to a high
degree of "Greek-Turkish familiarity" and a relationship "that goes far beyond
occasional alliances."11 In this respect, the declarations Byzantine authors fre-
quently pronounce concerning the barbarian character of the Muslims, describ-
ing them as ferocious, cruel, unreliable, greedy, and, in general, much inferior to
the Romans,12 should not be taken at face value since they reflect inherited ste-
reotypes and literary conventions rather than everyday experiences and prevail-
ing attitudes. Hence, Balivet repeatedly underlines the historical importance of
the axis of exchange between Constantinople and Konya, even pointing to sym-
metrical features in the evolitional process of the states, such as the predomi-
nance of centrifugal dynamics in the later part of the twelfth century.13 The com-
ing and going of political and military leaders served as an additional means for
the transfer of cultural attitudes and knowledge to each other.14

The present study aims to show that the phenomenon of Byzantine-Turkish
defection encompasses much more ambivalence and complexity than hitherto ob-
served. No doubt, there actually existed a strong tendency toward acculturation
between Byzantine and Turkish elites in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but
the interpretative model of cross-cultural interaction by no means explains the
situation exhaustively. In what follows I will argue that defection was not just a
result of acculturative processes but, first and foremost, constituted an essential
element of Byzantine-Seljuk political culture. It was an important means of ex-
erting pressure in several directions, whether as an immediate expression of dis-
content or as a threat enabling political opponents to make their claims and to
reach compromises. Furthermore, defection was an effective weapon of political
propaganda that was frequently accompanied by a sequence of publicly per-
formed symbolic gestures and ritual acts and allowed a defector’s hosting court
to celebrate the event as a moral victory over the enemy.

A necessary prerequisite for an appropriate understanding of these forms of
political behavior is the reconstruction of their chronological development. For
example, the fact that cases of defection are mentioned even in the oldest reports
on the first Seljuk invasions into Byzantine territory clearly indicates that the phe-

omenon, at least at this early stage, could not have resulted from a sort of men-
tal proximity and common identity. It goes without saying that within a span of

11 Balivet, *Romanie byzantine*, pp. 52–53; Ducellier, *Chrétiens d’Orient*, p. 264: “Grecs et Turcs
. . . avaient fini par comprendre que leur destin était de vivre ensemble.” For similar views see Nevra
Necipoğlu, “Turks and Byzantines (Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries),” in *The Turkish Speaking Peo-
ple’s 2000 Years of Art and Culture from Inner Asia to the Balkans*, ed. Ergun Çağatay (Munich,
2006), pp. 255–65, at p. 255: “. . . bonds of solidarity . . . were formed between native Greeks and
the Turkish newcomers through neighbourly relations . . . , a high degree of coexistence and symbi-
osis, despite the ongoing Byzantine-Turkish wars.”
13 Balivet, *Romanie byzantine*, p. 46: “Les phénomènes sont rigoureusement symétriques à By-
zance et à Konya.”
14 Ibid, p. 47: “les multiples occasions de contacts micrasiatiques . . . finissent par engendrer des
cadres politiques et militaires presque ‘interchangeables.’ . . . [L’a] présence et les activités d’une élite
originale du monde adverse . . . joue dans le sens d’une meilleure connaissance de la société rivale et
d’une accentuation des échanges turco-byzantins.”
almost two centuries the motives of defectors changed according to the evolutionary framework of particular political and social circumstances. In addition, the intermediary role of the available narrative sources, on which we exclusively depend, compels us to shift the focus from the factual level of defection as historical event to the imaginative level of defection as a matter of historiographical discourse. The perceptive patterns of our source material are to a large extent conditioned by the retarding burden of literary traditions and inherited stereotypes. But there is also a close interplay between fact and memory, and in most cases historical events, especially when they touch upon highly sensitive points, such as political order and moral standards, become vehicles for expressing the views and interests of contemporary and later observers. Consequently, our informants describe the behavior of individual defectors and their hosts in accordance with the conceptual and ideological framework determining the narrative macrostructure and the chief arguments of their text. As will be shown below, an essential part of the historiographical discourse in question consists of narrative representations of mental conditions and emotional reactions related to the breaking and the reestablishment of bonds of allegiance. Another constantly occurring leitmotif concerns the ritualized behavior of all sorts that figures in official encounters, reception ceremonies, peace negotiations, and reconciliation scenes. Therefore, the primary focus of the following analysis revolves around

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emotions and rituals as key elements of the preserved narratives on the phenomenon of defection, interpreting shifts in the discursive approaches as indications of changing circumstances and attitudes in the historical process.

As far as the general framework of power politics between Constantinople and the newly established Turkish lordships of Asia Minor is concerned, the overall situation after the first great wave of Seljuk invasions from the 1040s until the late 1070s and throughout the twelfth century, despite tendencies of cross-cultural permeation and assimilation on some levels, can be characterized as highly unstable and, in certain periods, even relentlessly hostile. Given the state of affairs following the destruction of the Turkish emirate of Nicaea and the reconquest of the western coastal regions in the wake of the passage of the First Crusade (1097), it is obvious that diplomatic contacts and peace treaties never led to a long-term stabilization of the border regions and that temporary alliances mainly aimed at taking advantage of internal conflicts among Turkish rivals without having positive effects on the general conditions of Byzantine-Turkish relations. After Alexios I fought his final battles with the sultanate of Konya in Bithynia and Phrygia (1112–13 and 1116), his son John II, either reacting to Turkish attacks or on his own initiative, undertook a series of seven campaigns within his reign of almost twenty-five years, which among other directions led him to Laodicea in the Meander valley, to Sozopolis in Pisidia (both 1119), to Kastamon and Gangra in Paphlagonia (1130 and 1134), into the valley of the Sangarios River (1138), to Neokaisareia in Cappadocia (1139), and to Lake Pusguse (Beys¸ehir Gölü) in Phrygia (1141). Manuel I, in the first years of his reign, managed to fortify the borderlands of Bithynia and undertook a large-scale campaign against the Seljuk sultanate, culminating in a number of military successes in Phrygia and the siege of Konya in 1146. The difficulties that the Second Crusade encountered during the march through southwestern Asia Minor, however, clearly indicate how strong a political and military factor the Seljuk Turks had become in the decades since Alexios I’s death. In the years of his European wars against the Normans and in Italy, Manuel took advantage of the ambitions of Sultan Mas’ud (1116–55) to expand his authority over Danis¸mend provinces and Frankish and Armenian regions in the southeast of Asia Minor. The peace treaty with Sultan Kilic Arslan II (1162) had no lasting effect, so that from 1165 onwards the situation was marked by an increasing number of Turkish incursions into Byzantine territory, against which Emperor Manuel fortified strongholds in the border region (Neokas-tra, Dorylaion, Subleon) and finally decided to launch a major offensive against Konya, leading to the catastrophe of Myriokephalon in 1176. The decay of the Byzantine imperial government in the last two decades of the twelfth century brought about a destructive interplay of local uprisings and Turkish incursions, which did not cause immediate losses of Byzantine provinces to the Seljuk sultanate, most likely only because of the succession wars following Kilic Arslan’s death in 1192.¹⁸ Hence, the words that Niketas Choniates put into the mouth of

¹⁸ For the events see Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 91–106; idem, Formation, pp. 7–33; Vryonis, Decline, pp. 103–18; and Paul Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180 (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), pp. 35–36, 42, 76–78, 95–98. The most comprehensive account of the events from the viewpoint of modern Turkish historiography is Osman Turan, Selçuklar zamanında Türkiye.
King Louis VII addressing his soldiers at the bank of the Meander River in 1147 appear as a programmatic statement on a major goal of Byzantine imperial policy in that period: “I do not know why the Romans, as if they were their sacrificial animals, bring up these wolves and shamefully fatten them with their blood. They should protect themselves and think reasonably so that they expel them from their lands and cities like wild animals from the herds.”\(^1\)

In a prayer inserted into his report on Emperor Manuel’s contacts with Kilic Arslan II, Choniates characterizes the Turks as “a silly and unwise people who are far from being full of pious praise and faith toward you,” as “crafty aliens,” and “our wicked neighbors,” against whom God should protect his heritage and recuperate the lands and cities of the Romans.\(^2\) Accordiingly, what “the ruler of the Turks,” Mas‘ūd, shared with his relatives are in fact “territories of the Romans,”\(^3\) and his death as an infidel leads to nothing short of a trip to hell.\(^4\)

Such statements, to which one could add many similar ones, leave no doubt that the official stance of the Byzantine political and ecclesiastical elite toward the Turks was overwhelmingly hostile. Decades of warfare, in which the empire had suffered major setbacks and had lost the greater part of its eastern provinces, made the traditional discourse on the “barbarian threat” an essential part of the Byzantine experience and perception of the Turkish foe. In other words, inherited stereotypes came to express prevailing attitudes and political concepts, which left hardly any room for justifications of crossing the border to the enemy’s camp, especially in cases where members of the political elite were involved.

Yet contemporary narratives still reveal some serious reasons why high-ranking individuals under certain circumstances were ready to ignore their scruples and viewed switching sides to the barbarians as a tempting choice. A case in point is one of Choniates’s comments on the political situation in the years of Alexios III (1195–1203), when he refers to the dangers that defectors posed for the safety of the provinces and the existence of the empire itself: “If there is a main reason that the state of the Romans fell to its knees, that lands and cities suffered subjugations, and, finally, that the state itself was destroyed, it is these people who broke away from the Comnenians, being eager to become emperors, because by

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\(^3\) Choniates, ed. van Dieten, p. 117, lines 8–9, trans. Magoulias, p. 66: τὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων σκηνομίατα.

becoming guests of nations that did not have friendly intentions toward the Romans they became their fatherland’s ruin, although, as long as they stayed with us, they were completely incompetent and the most useless and foolish of all people in handling, taking over, and controlling state affairs.”

Here defection appears as a highly effective instrument for expressing discontent and initiating revolts, something that undermines the existing political order by turning powerful opponents against the empire and, therefore, engenders disastrous consequences for the ruling elite’s stability. Equally noteworthy are the contemptuous and disdainful characterizations Choniates uses for members of the Byzantine aristocracy who sought to strengthen their position by securing the support of the empire’s enemies. Portraying them as feebleminded, incompetent, and foolish outsiders, Choniates presents them in an extremely negative light, which, instead of revealing to us their actual motives and intentions, reflects the court aristocracy’s precarious situation a few years before the final collapse of 1204. Contemporary observers like Choniates perceived the tensions and conflicts among the various factions of the ruling elite as dangerous results of the irrationality and excessive ambitions of certain individuals.

Another passage from the same author informs us that defection was also a powerful instrument of conflict resolution. During the peace negotiations between Emperor Isaac II Angelos and the former supporters of the rebel Alexios Branas, who in 1187 lost his life on the battlefield at the hands of Conrad of Montferrat,24 the emissaries threatened the emperor with going over to the enemy if he was not willing to grant them full amnesty: “... they will flee from the emperor’s face and seek their last residence with nations hostile to the Romans, and they will do against the Romans whatever is useful to the people they take refuge with, for it is nothing new if someone goes to his rival and flatters him as a friend, when he finds his relative as an enemy.”25 Obviously, in situations where rebels were caught in a hopeless impasse, the threat of defection could exert pressure on the other side, so that it prepared the ground for an acceptable compromise and ensured the opponents’ personal safety.

Another aspect of defection that has to be taken into account is the foreign ruler’s moral obligation to grant protection to refugees he has agreed to shelter at his court. This was not just a matter of diplomatic etiquette but a basic principle of righteous behavior toward a guest, the breach of which could have serious consequences for a ruler’s claim to legitimacy. An illustrative example is Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusrau’s decision in 1192/93 to hand over the Byzantine aristocrat Theodore Mangaphas to Emperor Isaac II in return for promises concerning the rebel’s security: “... his brothers, who had taken over their father’s


rule along with him, considered the sultan’s deed so repulsive that they would have raised weapons against him, for in return for gifts he seized and gave away to the emperor of the Romans a man who had come to him voluntarily, if he [the sultan] had not formulated a nice-sounding answer stating that he sent the man on the basis of agreements and by no means gave him away but rather, as the man was a vagrant, he led him back to his homeland so that he might stop pursuing or being pursued."26 Thus, treacherous behavior toward a guest not only damaged the ruler’s image, which was propagated in the framework of his contacts with the outside world, but also detracted from his overall moral standing in the eyes of his own relatives and subjects. But let us turn now to the very onset of Byzantine-Seljuk contacts in order to explore the grounds on which the aforementioned practices and attitudes were built.

**Turkish Warlords and Potentates**  
**Visiting the Imperial Court (ca. 1050–1118)**

The first known incidents of defection occurred in the years of the earliest Seljuk campaigns in the eastern provinces of Byzantium. Along with the increasing intrusion of Turkish tribes into Asia Minor and the creation of Turkish strongholds and local lordships from the 1070s onwards, the coming and going of high-ranking individuals from both sides became a more or less constant phenomenon, which engendered the development of new ideological attitudes and patterns of behavior. By the end of Alexios I’s reign one can talk about the existence of firmly established practices in the handling of defectors from either side.

Considering the overall picture provided by the sources, it appears that in this early period the Byzantine court was much more attractive for the Turkish invaders than Seljuk territories were for the Byzantines. In fact, the empire had an ancient tradition of enrolling barbarian forces into its army and of integrating former prisoners of war into its administrative and military apparatus, thereby enabling them to become members of the Byzantine court elite.27 From an ideological point of view, these practices were underpinned by a strong consciousness of cultural, political, and moral superiority.28 This attitude is most clearly expressed in idealized portrayals of contact situations, such as Michael Attaleiates’s description of the encounter between Sultan Toğrıl Beg and the Georgian prince Liparites, who was taken prisoner by İbrahim Inal’s forces during the battle of Kapetrou in 1048. Other sources inform us that the sultan released

Liparites from captivity without demanding a ransom in the course of the peace negotiations with Emperor Constantine IX in 1049. According to Attaleiates, however, the sultan's decision was due to his deep admiration for Liparites's Roman virtues, that is, his noble descent, his fame, his bravery, and his steadfastness. Attaleiates obviously intended to present the empire's military defeat as a moral victory over the Turkish barbarians, who, though superior on the battlefield, were still overwhelmed by Roman cultural values.

The same concept underlies John Skylitzes's account of the first recorded attempt of defection. Interestingly, according to this source the series of Turkish apostates starts with Tog˘rıl Beg’s famous cousin Kutlumuş, who through his son Sulaymān became the forefather of the Seljuk sultans of Rûm in Asia Minor. Skylitzes's highly confused account of the discord between the sultan and his favorite commander, which broke out in about 1057, does not deserve much credence. In particular, the detail that Kutlumuş sent a message to the Byzantine emperor asking him to grant him refuge so that he would become an “ally and friend of the Romans” cannot be confirmed by other sources. Yet the ideological framework of the story deserves our attention: the Seljuk family's seditious member is portrayed as a victim of the sultan's irrational anger, which induces Kutlumuş to acknowledge the Byzantine emperor’s superior sense of justice and the righteousness of his rule.

Kutlumuş’s alleged proposal to become the emperor’s subject might reflect later knowledge about his sons’ temporary alliance with Emperor Nikephoros III. But as it may, in the years between 1056 and 1078 we know about several military leaders who in fact took refuge with the Byzantine emperor. No matter what their original rank within the Seljuk hierarchy had been, they were all received with much honor and respect and subsequently served as commanders in the ranks of the imperial forces. A certain Ameritikes, who has been identified with a Turkish chief called Ibn Khān al-Turkumān, the amīr al-Ghuzz (leader of the Oghuz Turks), was received by Emperor Michael VI in about 1056/57 “with great friendliness.” Attaleiates calls him a “distinguished man,” but, as his military force after his entering the service of the Mirdāsid emirs of Aleppo in 1064 did not comprise more than five hundred warriors, he most likely was a man of mediocre standing.

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31 Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martín, p. 71, line 24: μεγάλων τυχόν τυχόν δεξιώσων.

32 On this person see Claude Cahen, “La première pénétration turque en Asie-Mineure (seconde moitié du Xle s.),” *Byzantion* 18 (1946–48), 5–67, at pp. 25–26, repr. in *Turcobyzantina*, no. 1. The main sources are Ghars al-Ni’mā, extensively quoted in the chronicle of Sibt b. al-Jawzi, *Mir’āt al-
In contrast, Arıṣghı (Erisgen) or Chrysoskoulos, who in 1070 fled to Romanos IV Diogenes, is designated by a contemporary Arabic source as “the husband of the sultan’s sister,” that is, Alp Arslan’s brother-in-law. Hence, he must have been one of the highest commanders in the Seljuk army. Both Byzantine and Arabic sources agree that his flight into Byzantine territory was due to his discord with the sultan, who had dispatched al-Afshı̇n, another famous military leader, to pursue him. After a decisive victory over the Byzantine forces of Manuel Komnenos, Arıṣghı̇ came to an agreement with the latter and followed him to Constantinople. On this occasion Attaleiates gives us the oldest extant description of an official reception ceremony held for a Turkish refugee during a gathering of the senate in the imperial palace’s throne hall, the Chrysotrikli-nos. On the one hand, the ceremony emphasized the cultural gap dividing the Roman-Christian and the barbarian worlds through a gesture of undisguised disrespect, namely, shouts of astonishment pronounced by the attending senators while the “ugly Scythian” was entering the hall. On the other hand, it projected the barbarian’s acceptance within the ranks of the Byzantine court hierarchy through the benevolence of the emperor, who bestowed the title of proedros upon him.

Eight years later, in early 1078, the sons of Kutlumuş presented themselves before Nikephoros III Botaneiates in Nicaea. Attaleiates describes them as Persian noblemen of royal descent who competed with the Seljuk overlord (Malik Shāh) for the sultanate. According to the highly encomiastic character of Attaleiates’s account of Botaneiates’s ascent to the throne, the event appears as one of the great successes of the newly acclaimed emperor. The author especially stresses the significance of the prostration that “these people of royal rank, who would not do this for any Persian king,” performed before the emperor, while the emperor “made them through his prudent words and gestures more decent and well disposed, induced them to submit themselves and to be faithful to him, and made them through his prudent words and gestures more decent and well disposed, induced them to submit themselves and to be faithful to him, and made

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them fervent supporters of his majesty."⁵⁷ Here Attaleiates uses the Turkish defectors’ submission as a means of reinforcing the future emperor’s claims to legitimacy. Consequently, in contrast to Arisghí’s case, where the narrative dwells on the classical motif of the barbarians’ inferiority, the predominant feature in the portrayal of the Kutlumuş brothers is their outstanding nobility, which causes them to deny recognition to their own sovereign but, nonetheless, does not prevent them from expressing their willingness to become subjects of the Byzantine emperor. Thus we see how incidents of defection, through the pen of one and the same historian, could be interpreted in totally different ways according to the conceptual matrix in which the event is embedded. As for the factual framework, we can safely assume that the submission of the Kutlumuş brothers was based on a balanced agreement that in return for their ritual humiliation guaranteed them important advantages and favors.

Alexios I’s rise to power marks not only a crucial turning point on the political scene of the empire but also the starting point of Anna Komnene’s independent narrative of her father’s reign, which for most events of this period is our only source.³⁸ During the series of upheavals between Nikephoros III’s march to Constantinople and Alexios’s coronation in early April 1081, the Turkish war¬riors of Sulayma¯n created a permanent stronghold in Nicaea of Bithynia, whence they undertook raids on the coastal areas. In most parts of Asia Minor the political situation was very unstable at that time. Central control had largely collapsed, and Byzantine rebels, local governors, and short-lived Turkish lordships were alternating quickly.³⁹ Facing the threat of the imminent Norman attack, in about June 1081 Alexios concluded a peace treaty with Emir Sulayma¯n, which for the first time in Byzantine-Seljuk relations included the recognition of a border within the empire’s territory and, thus, the acceptance of a status quo of Sel¬juk political authority in the region beyond the Drakon River.⁴⁰ Turkish auxil¬

⁵⁷ Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martín, p. 191, lines 14–19: Καὶ ὅπερ ἂν οὐδὲν βασιλεύς τῶν Περσῶν, γένους ἄντε βασιλεύοντι, οὔτε Ρωμαῖοι καταδέχονται πράξας, τούτο πρὸς αὐτῶν παραβάς ἀπέδειξαν γόνον τε κλίναντος . . . Οὕς δὲ καὶ λόγους καὶ τρόπους εὐσυνέταις κοιμώτερος καὶ εὐνοικικότατος ἀπεργασόμενος, οὕτως εἰς τὴν έωστον δούλους καὶ πίστιν διεθερμανέως καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ βασιλείας ἐραστῶς ἀπειργάσατο.

³⁸ For recent studies on Anna Komnene see the collective volume Anna Komnene and her Times, ed. Thalia Gouma-Peterson, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 2201, Garland Medieval Casebooks 29 (London, 2000).


Defection

Imperial forces continued to fight for the Byzantines in the wars against the Normans, but through the treaty of 1081 the former invaders had become much more than the emperor’s faithful ‘douloi’, who received generous rewards for their services; they had gained a new legal status as officially recognized holders of an autonomous lordship.

The image of the Anatolian Seljuk Turks as given in Anna Komnene’s Alexias in several aspects differs significantly from that of previous sources. The perspective of the early 1140s, when this text was written, entails not only a certain number of inaccuracies as far as persons and events are concerned but also different views and judgments about forms of political behavior and historical developments. The arrival of armed pilgrims waging a religiously motivated war against the infidels from 1096 onwards and the establishment of a Seljuk sultanate in Konya marked by a distinct Muslim character must have had a strong impact on Anna’s Gedankenwelt and in particular on her perception of Anatolian realities. Thus, she talks about a sultanikion, that is, “a sultan’s residence,” in Nicaea, which most probably merely reflects her knowledge about the sultanate of Konya. Likewise, Alexios’s efforts to draw Turkish rulers and dignitaries into his sphere of influence are ascribed to the emperor’s religious zeal, and baptism appears as one of the main goals of imperial policy toward the barbarians.

This new attitude is clearly illustrated by Anna’s depiction of two cases of defection during Alexios’s reign, namely, that of the Turkish emissary Siaous, who was sent to Constantinople by Sultan Malik Sha¯h in the period of his takeover in Syria in 1086, and that of the local ruler Elchanes, who in about 1092 ruled the coastal area around Apollonias and Kyzikos. Anna’s portrayal of Alexios’s

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44 On both men see Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, p. 81; idem, Formation, p. 10; Brand, “Turkish Element,” p. 4; Balivet, “Entre Byzance et Konya” (above, n. 10), pp. 51–52; and Necipog˘lu, “Turks and Byzantines,” p. 236. The Greek form ‘Efkátwν is usually explained as derivative of the Turkish title ılkhan; see Gyula Moravcsik, Byzantinoturcica, 2: Sprachreste der Türkvolker in den byzantinischen Quellen, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1983), p. 124. In Islamic and other Eastern sources, however, the
encounter with Siaous can be viewed as a counterpart of Toğrılı Beg’s meeting with Liparites described by Attaleiates. Here it is the Byzantine emperor who was impressed by his guest’s qualities, namely, his prudence and his mixed origin from a Georgian mother and a Turkish father. As a result, Alexios made every effort to persuade him to become a Christian and be baptized. The emperor, of course, was successful. On his behalf Siaous removed Turkish commanders from Sinope and other Anatolian cities and was rewarded with rich gifts and a post as dux of Anchialos. Likewise, Elchanes’s defection to the emperor was rewarded not only with rich gifts but also with “holy enlightenment.” Many of his relatives and companions, attracted by the emperor’s generosity, followed his example. Alexios took recourse in exactly the same practices his predecessors had employed so successfully with Turkish refugees over the previous decades. The only difference lies in the fact that the tightening of diplomatic contacts with Malik Shaḥ’s court and the increasing number of Turkish local lords in the western parts of Asia Minor enabled him to apply these methods more systematically. What actually changed is the retrospective interpretation of this strategy by Anna Komnene, who, most probably under the influence of experiences with the crusades, gave her father’s policy a religious dimension by presenting him as a preacher of the true faith.

From the first Byzantine-Seljuk exchange of emissaries in 1049 until Alexios I’s rise to power, the only representative of the Seljuk Turks whom the Byzantine government recognized as a holder of political authority was the dynasty’s supreme head and sultan in Persia and, from 1055 onwards, in Baghdad. Alexios I’s treaty of June 1081 with Emir Sulaymān marked the appearance of a new independent ruler representing the Seljuk dynasty’s Anatolian branch. As a result, cases in which these newly recognized sovereigns sought the emperor’s protection demanded a redefinition of their relationship with the imperial government according to the customs and rules of Byzantine diplomacy. Consequently,
the Seljuk rulers of Asia Minor obtained a higher status at the Byzantine court and came into closer contact with the imperial sphere. During Alexios I’s reign the Seljuk rulers of Asia Minor obtained a higher status at the Byzantine court and came into closer contact with the imperial sphere. During Alexios I’s reign the palace of Constantinople witnessed the arrival of two famous potentates, Abū l-Qāsim of Nicaea (1084/86–1092), lieutenant and successor of Sulaymān; and Sultan Shāhānshāh of Konya (1107–16), second son of Sultan Kīlíc Arslān I (1093–1107). Before their flight to the emperor, both had suffered severe military setbacks and were threatened by dangerous internal opponents: the first by the Seljuk commander Bursuq, who on behalf of Sultan Malik Shāh besieged Nicaea over several months, the second by his brother Mas’ūd, who was preparing a plot against Shāhānshāh. In each case the conclusion of a peace treaty with the emperor preceded the trip to Constantinople.

The main difficulty for an assessment of these contacts and their consequences is that Anna highlights different aspects of each event. Abū l-Qāsim’s reception in Constantinople is depicted as a successful ruse of the emperor, who was trying to divert the emir’s attention from his efforts to construct a stronghold in the vicinity of Nicomedia. The model she refers to is a maneuver used by the Athenian hero Alcibiades against the Spartans. The conceptual framework consists of the polarity between the barbarian’s mental inferiority and the Byzantines’ skillfulness. Anna mainly speaks of the splendid gifts and all sorts of amusements the imperial court offered, such as bathing, hunting, and horse racing. The luxuries and comforts of Constantinopolitan court life had a seductive impact on the barbarian’s mind and made him forget his caution in military affairs. In addition, the author interlaces the motif of the barbarian’s greed for Byzantine luxuries with allusions to the political situation, which was conditioned by Bursuq’s threat and the emperor’s support for Abū l-Qāsim’s cause. These factors, most likely, were the true reasons for the emir’s visit to Constantinople. Yet Anna still kept a crucial detail of Byzantine court ceremonies in her report, namely, the fact that Abū l-Qāsim was granted the title of sebastos. Given that this title had

50 On these potentates see Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 77, 78–80, 88–89, 91–93; idem, Formation, pp. 9–10, 13, 16–18; Turan, Türkiye, pp. 83–87, 153–58; Jonathan Shepard, “‘Father’ or ‘Scorpion’? Style and Substance in Alexios’s Diplomacy;” in Alexios I Komnenos: Papers of the Second Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, 14–16 April 1989, ed. Margaret Mullett and Dion Smythe (Belfast, 1996), pp. 66–132, at pp. 78–79, 83; and Necipoğlu, “Turks and Byzantines” (above, n. 11), p. 256.

51 Turan, Türkiye, pp. 85, 158; Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 80, 92; idem, Formation, pp. 10, 18; Dölger and Wirth, Regesten, no. 1163 (letter of Alexios I to Abū l-Qāsim concerning the treaty), no. 1269 (erroneously mentions Sultan Malik Shāh as the emperor’s treaty partner).


53 For this concept and its antique prototype see Yves Albert Dauge, Le barbare: Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation (Brussels, 1981).


been created by Alexios I for close relatives of the emperor, its bestowal upon the Seljuk ruler of Nicaea signaled his symbolic integration into the imperial family. Considering that until the middle of the eleventh century even the most important Muslim allies of the empire hardly reached titles higher than magistros, with the exception only of two proedroi, Emir Thimāl of Aleppo and the aforementioned Arı¯sghı¯ (Chrysoskoulos) in 1051/52 and 1070 respectively, the impressive upgrading of Seljuk lords within the system of the Byzantine court hierarchy becomes all the more significant.

Concerning Sultan Shāhānshāh, Anna gives a detailed description of his first encounter with Emperor Alexios on a plain near Akroinon in 1116, but she completely omits the sultan’s subsequent sojourn in Constantinople, which we can derive only from other sources. The focus lies on the peace negotiations following the campaign of 1116, and, therefore, rituals and gestures play a central role in the description. What matters, above all, is the public spectacle projecting the relationship between the two rulers in the framework of a carefully choreographed sequence of ritual acts performed in the presence of a large crowd of court officials, military commanders, and common soldiers. While the members of Shāhānshāh’s entourage prostrated themselves before the emperor in the customary way, several times Alexios prevented the sultan himself from getting off his horse in order to follow his companions’ example. Eventually, the sultan demonstrated his deference by kissing the emperor’s foot. In return, Alexios took him by the hand and ordered him to mount one of his dignitaries’ horses. While the sultan and the emperor were riding side by side, Alexios took his cape and threw it on the sultan’s shoulders.

What at first sight might appear as a spontaneous performance conveys messages that are too complicated to be the result of mere coincidence. The whole scene obviously aimed at propagating a new hierarchical relationship between the Byzantine emperor and the Seljuk sultan, which was to be confirmed formally by the subsequent conclusion of a peace treaty. The emperor rewarded the sultan’s gesture of humiliation with symbolic acts of graciousness, displaying signs

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57 For the significance of the title, which in Alexios’s early years was limited to a rather small group of dignitaries related to the emperor by blood or marriage, see Lucien Stiernon, “Notes de titulaire et de prosopographie byzantine: Sébaste et gambros,” *Revue des études byzantines* 23 (1965), 222–43; Magdalino, *Manuel Komnenos*, pp. 181–83; Stauros G. Georgiou, “Omikronί τίµητικ/omikronι τίτλι/omikronι επί Κ/omikronµνηνών (1081–1185)” (Ph.D. thesis, Thessalonica, 2005), pp. 110–38 (until the end of the twelfth century only about 10 percent of the known sebastoi were foreigners).

58 For court titles bestowed upon Muslim rulers see Franz Dölger and Andreas E. Müller, with Alexander Beihammer, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, 1/2: Regesten von 867–1025 (Munich, 2003), nos. 758b, 790c, 793a, 801b, 801c; and Felix, *Byzanz und die islamische Welt*, pp. 113, 117, 121.


of proximity and intimacy to the sultan. The Seljuk lord, who acknowledged the emperor’s superiority by kissing Alexios’s foot, has become a fully recognized sovereign and friend of the emperor.

In summary, a clear line of development can be observed from the first Turkish apostates, who from the 1050s onwards were accepted in Constantinople as the emperor’s allies for military purposes, to Turkish local rulers and dignitaries, who in return for their voluntary surrender were granted incomes, posts, and senatorial titles, to Seljuk chiefs, who from the treaty of 1081 onwards were de facto recognized as independent rulers and on the occasion of meetings with the emperor were granted titles reserved for the dynasty’s inner circle and symbols of friendship. Moreover, Anna Komnene ex eventu interpreted her father’s attitudes toward Turkish apostates in terms of religious zeal aiming at the barbarians’ conversion and baptism.

Christian Frontier Lords Turning to Islam (ca. 1050–1118)

As regards the first known incidents of Christian defectors who took refuge with the Turks in the early period of Byzantine-Seljuk contacts, we do not know of any member of the empire’s court elite who took this action. As will be shown below, this phenomenon appears for the first time during the reign of John II (1118–43).

The well-known episode of Emperor Romanos IV’s one-week captivity in Sultan Alp Arslan’s camp following the battle of Mantzikert (August 1071) resulted in a face-to-face meeting of the supreme heads of both empires. Later works of Muslim historiography celebrate this event as a major triumph of Islam in general and the Seljuk sultan in particular over the most powerful representative of the Christian world, portraying the latter as a humiliated subject full of gratitude for the sultan’s generosity and leniency. Byzantine sources agree with the Muslim authors on the sultan’s magnanimous and respectful behavior toward the emperor. Both traditions, along with the peace treaty, refer to a series of ritual acts projecting the new relationship between the rulers, such as gestures of compassion, common meals, and the bestowal of honorary clothes. On his way back


63 The main source, on which almost all later Byzantine accounts are based, is Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martín, pp. 121–23, for example, p. 122, lines 4–5: ἐνθαμνητὸς καὶ νουμήδος τὸ προτέρμα τῆς νίκης ὑφ’ Τούρνου ἐδέξατο, μήπε μεγαλοφυγίας, and p. 122, lines 18–22: ὁμόδοξον κατὰ τὴν τιμὴν ποληρόν μέτα, μηδὲ μέχρι καὶ βαρεμέτων λόγων πρὸς τού τοῦτον ἐμπεριφοράτου. The most important Syrian and Armenian sources are Michael the Syrian 15.3, ed. Chabot, 3:169–70 (trans.),
home Romanos IV wore “a Turkish dress,” and Muslim sources maintain that he was accompanied by Turkish guards holding Islamic flags. Henceforth this event served as a precedent for Muslim attitudes toward defeated Christian opponents and as a model case for idealized presentations of contact situations between victorious Seljuk lords and Byzantine men of rank.

Leading personalities of the imperial entourage in the 1070s, such as Alexios’s brothers Manuel and Isaac Komnenos and Caesar John Doukas, were taken captive during their expeditions against the Turks, but none of them seems to have been tempted to switch sides in that period. Things were different among the local aristocracy in the eastern border region, mainly Armenian noblemen, who in the general disorder of the 1060s and 1070s were acting as independent commanders or local lords. Unfortunately, there is no extant Muslim source of that period revealing early Turkish attitudes toward Christian defectors and their mechanisms of integrating them into their ranks. Our knowledge, therefore, is based exclusively on Byzantine or Oriental Christian (Syrian or Armenian) authors, who primarily treat these people as traitors against their compatriots and faith. While Turkish refugees could be presented as symbols of the empire’s moral strength, Christian defectors would prove the opposite and, therefore, had to be brought into disrepute. Moreover, historians relating the fate of these men were forced to find sound explanations for their deviation from commonly accepted norms of behavior. Generally speaking, the immediate threat to life, rank, and property was considered a reasonable justification for attempts to come to terms with the enemy, but it did not excuse defection or conversion to Islam.

A case in point is a diplomatic maneuver of the Bagratid king of Kars, Gagik-Abas II, who shortly before his abdication in 1064 received an envoy of Sultan

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64 Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martín, pp. 106 and 123, line 21: μετά τ/ομικρούρκης της τσιτράης. Sibt b. al-Jawzá’, ed. Sevim, p. 151, mentions a qaba’ (an Islamic dress) and a qalansuwa (a hat worn by Muslim dignitaries).

65 Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martín, pp. 104–5, 106 (Manuel Komnenos is taken captive in the battle of Sebastia, 1070), 136; Bryennios 2.5, ed. Gautier, pp. 149–51 (Isaac Komnenos is taken captive in a battle near Kaisareia); Attaleiates, ed. Pérez Martín, pp. 140–41; Bryennios 2.18, ed. Gautier, pp. 179–81 (John Doukas and Rouselios are taken captive).
Alp Arslan, to whom he demonstrated his grief for Sultan Toğrul Beg’s death by being “dressed up in a black garment of mourning.”66 Deeply impressed by this gesture, the sultan “offered Gagik his friendship,” which was confirmed by an exchange of gifts and a rich banquet. Matthew of Edessa presents this ritual act, by which the king expressed emotional commitment and deference to the Seljuk dynasty, as a clever ruse creating the basis for a peaceful relationship with the sultan. In this way the author praises King Gagik’s sagacious handling of the Turkish threat but by no means criticizes him for his appeasing attitude.

Offended honor was another motive that in the eyes of contemporaries might offer a reasonable explanation for collaboration with the enemy. The Armenian nobleman George Shirakats’i of Ani, for example, was severely maltreated and insulted by the people of Antioch. As a result he allied himself with a group of five hundred Turkish warriors, ravaged the territory of Antioch, and slaughtered his captives in front of the city’s gate. Matthew of Edessa, instead of condemning this behavior, rebuked the townspeople for doing injustice to the nobleman.67

Military defeat, under certain circumstances, might result in forced conversion to Islam, as we learn from an incident recorded by Bar Hebraeus. In a.h. 460 (November 11, 1067–October 30, 1068), while on patrol, the Armenian patriarch Aristakis and his two hundred soldiers were attacked by the Seljuk emir Shîr-wân Shah.68 In an attempt to save their lives, the Armenians declared that they were on the way to the sultan in order to become Muslims. Thus, against their will they were received with honor at the sultan’s court and circumcised, and the patriarch was awarded an annual income of twenty thousand dinars. Eventually they managed to escape and return to their Christian faith. Defection and conversion are presented here as acts of despair, which subsequently were corrected. Even high honors and rich grants could not keep them from returning to their paternal faith, so that their initial failure is excused.

The most renowned defector of this period, no doubt, was the Armenian lord Philaretos Brachamios, who had been appointed domestikos by Romanos IV.69 Following the overthrow of his former lord, he rose up against the regime of Michael VII and created a short-lived lordship in Cilicia and northern Syria comprising major urban centers such as Mar‘ash, Edessa, Melitene, and, in 1078, even Antioch. All sources are very ill disposed toward him, and they agree on the fact that, because of the increasing pressure exerted by the Seljuk leaders in the Syrian border region, in about 1085 Philaretos decided to submit to Sultan Malik Shâh and convert to Islam, something that eventually caused the collapse of his lordship.

Matthew of Edessa connects his fate with the deplorable state of affairs in his hometown during the period of Philaretos’s rule, thus calling him an “impious and most wicked chief,” “the very offspring of Satan,” and a “perfidious man, who indeed was a precursor of the abominable Antichrist.”

According to Matthew’s version, Philaretos first sought Sultan Malik Shah’s benevolence; but when the sultan became angry because of Edessa’s decay, Philaretos fell into complete despair: “At that moment [he] abjured his Christian religion, renouncing the faith of Christ . . . for by so doing, he thought he would be honored by the Persians, but this was not the case . . . and he came to be cursed and despised by both God and men.”

Hence, conversion to Islam appears as a self-destructive act of surrender to treacherous forces that eventually leads to material and moral downfall. Michael the Syrian arrives at a similar conclusion, stating that Philaretos, having returned from his trip to Baghdad and Khurasan, found all his territories in Turkish hands: “When he gave up his faith for his lordship, he was deprived of his lordship as well.” Anna Komnene establishes a direct causal link between Philaretos’s defection and the ruin of Antioch. Philaretos’s son, she tells us, failed to dissuade his father from his decision to become a Muslim. Hence he fled to Emir Sulayman of Nicaea to offer him rule over Antioch.

The sequence of events as presented by Anna is highly illogical, but the conceptual framework of the story is much the same as in the versions of Matthew and Michael. Defection and conversion are patterns of behavior that characterize people who have lost self-control and are led into a state of despair. Their decision, unavoidably, has destructive results for both themselves and the people depending on them.

By the beginning of the twelfth century defection had become a common experience for both sides. Contemporary and later chroniclers had developed interpretative patterns and conceptual frameworks, on the basis of which these experiences were transformed into discursive events and narratives. The ideological background was provided by the ancient model of barbarism, by questions of legitimacy and lawfulness, and by moral judgments.

**Comnenian Aristocrats and Court Officials**

Wandering about Anatolia (1118–1260)

In the following sections of this essay I will examine the phenomenon of Byzantine-Seljuk defection from Alexios I’s death in 1118 until ca. 1260, which can be considered a logical turning point inasmuch as the Mongol protectorate over the Seljuk sultanate of Rûm and Michael VIII Palaiologos’s rise to power in the Empire of Nicaea brought about a totally new political equilibrium in Asia Minor. The available source material resembles that of the previous period in that we depend mainly on Byzantine historians, most essentially Niketas Choniates.

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For Philaretos’s struggle with the Seljuk Turks see Dédeyan, *Les arméniens*, 1:338–43, 346–49.
and George Akropolites, while Oriental authors, whether Christian or Muslim, provide us only a few glimpses of the phenomenon of defection. Our perspective, therefore, remains to a certain extent biased and unbalanced. Only the chronicle *Al-Awāmir al-ʿalāʾiya fī l-umūr al-ʿalāʾiya*, written in about 1281 by Ibn Bibi, the first historical work exclusively devoted to the Seljuk sultanate of Rûm, gives us more substantial information in this respect.

Like the sources discussed above, whenever twelfth-century narratives refer to incidents of defection, they are mainly concerned with aspects of political ideology and offer moralizing interpretations. Niketas Choniates, as will be shown below, also introduces innovative features into the description of these events, placing special emphasis on the role of emotions as motives for action and forms of behavior. While leaving aside or intentionally ignoring matters of internal strife, power politics, and military conflicts, he highlights spontaneous irrational reactions and emotional conditions dominating the actions of men, like fear and envy, as the main factors causing people to disregard their natural bonds and take refuge with the enemy. Thus, Niketas’s approach, though not very helpful for providing a look behind the scenes, reveals a new form of perception that embeds apostasy and defection into a context of mental conditions. Interestingly, this approach is by no means applied uniformly; the quality of emotions and the degree of an individual’s irrationality vary according to his social status and his proximity to the empire’s inner circle of power.

In addition one has to take into account the intrinsic logic and thought structure on which a given work’s historiographical discourse is based. Choniates’s admiration for Emperor John II, for instance, necessarily makes his brother Isaac appear as a disturbing dissonance within a perfect political harmony, whereas George Akropolites’s hatred for Theodore II Lascaris shows Michael Palaiologos in the light of a righteous opponent of a tyrannical regime.

On account of these parameters we might distinguish several types of Byzantine defectors during the period in question. (See the Appendix below for a synopsis of the instances of defection considered in this essay.) Undoubtedly, the most prominent defectors were members of the ruling dynasty and close relatives of the emperor. In fact, this series of defections starts with members of the Comnenian family, namely, John II’s brother, the *sebastokrator* Isaac, and his two sons John and Andronikos. Choniates repeatedly underlines Isaac’s love for and devotion to his brother and stresses the decisive role he played in the establishment of John’s rule during the succession crisis of 1118. As a sign of honor John con-


75 For these two cases see the discussion below, pp. 619–21 and 627–29.

76 For a biographical sketch see Konstantinos Varzos, *Η γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών* [The genealogy of the Comnenians], 2 vols. (Thessalonica, 1984), 1:238–54, no. 36.
ceded to his brother a place of equal rank on the imperial throne and at the imperial table.\textsuperscript{79} Nevertheless, some years later—from Michael the Syrian’s account the incident can be dated to the summer of 1130, during Emperor John’s campaign against the Danismands in Kastamon\textsuperscript{80}—“Isaac broke off relations with his brother and departed from the land of the Romans, taking with him John, his eldest son, as companion and fellow wanderer.”\textsuperscript{81}

Choniates and other Byzantine authors, reflecting the imperial court’s viewpoint, solved the problem of giving a reasonable explanation for Isaac’s behavior by keeping silent about the true causes for the brothers’ discord and by minimizing its real dimensions. These can only be discerned through reports from outside the empire, namely, through Michael the Syrian, who explicitly refers to a “conspiracy” of Isaac and some magnates.\textsuperscript{82} Obviously, the emperor’s brother was the leader of an unsuccessful coup d’état supported by elements of the Constantinopolitan ruling elite. Whether they were motivated by personal ambition or by political aims, there must have been a deep-rooted rivalry between Alexios I’s two sons. This conflict most probably took shape long before its outbreak in 1130, so that Choniates’s insistence on the brothers’ equality in rank seems to reveal the deeper causes of a serious dynastic problem. When Isaac eventually was forced to leave the empire, he consequently chose to take refuge with Emperor John’s most dangerous eastern enemy at that time, Gümüştekin Ghâzî (1104–34), son and successor of Danismand. Thus, for the first time a member of the Constantinopolitan elite adopted a practice that until then had been employed only by Seljuk apostates fleeing in the opposite direction from Asia Minor to the imperial court.\textsuperscript{83}

Byzantine accounts, in their attempt to downplay the extent of the discord, restrict themselves to elusive hints. Choniates talks about a “futile grief,”\textsuperscript{84} and in one of his poems Theodore Prodromos refers to the fateful power of envy (φθόνος),\textsuperscript{85} without going into further detail. Instead they focus on the reconcil-

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\item \textsuperscript{79} Choniates, ed. van Dieten, p. 6, trans. Magoulias, pp. 6–7.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Choniates, ed. van Dieten, p. 32, lines 33–36, trans. Magoulias, p. 19: τὸ ὦμογνὸν διαζυγηθεὶς καὶ φυγὼς ἀπόδος ἐκ τῆς Ὀρομίων, συνεκδημον καὶ συμπλανήτην ἔχον τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν τῶν παιδῶν πρῶτὸν ἐνδοκόποιν.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Choniates, ed. van Dieten, p. 32, line 33: κατὰ γὰρ µικρὸν λυπίαν.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Theodore Prodromos, \textit{Historische Gedichte}, ed. Wolfram Hörandner, \textit{Wiener Byzantinistische Studien} 11 (Vienna, 1974), 41, lines 10–12: ἀλλ’ ὦ τοῦς κόλανδος, ὦ τροχός βίου, ἐπὶ ἐπίθεμεν ἱσχύν καὶ κατ’ ἠμῶν ὦ φθόνος / καὶ φεῦ διέλευ θην βίου συµψηφίζον. For other allusions to the event see ibid. 2, line 26, and 40, lines 53–54 (Isaac’s return).
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iation that took place in 1138/39, perhaps shortly after John II’s stay in Anti-
och.86 The rejoicing over the reestablished peace turns the previous hostility into a temporary misfortune, the reasons for which have no further significance. This attitude seemingly reflects propagandistic efforts that celebrated Isaac’s return and the reestablished dynastic order as part of the emperor’s triumphal entrance in Constantinople. Thus, the inhabitants of the Byzantine capital not only hailed the emperor’s military exploits but also expressed their joy at Isaac’s arrival.87

Because of the sources’ elusiveness it remains unclear to what extent Isaac’s exile in Asia Minor had an impact on the political situation in the region. Yet housing a guest who was second in rank to the emperor no doubt was an event of the highest significance for the sovereigns in the East. Michael the Syrian states that Gümüştekin Ghazı “was very glad of his presence and honored him magnificently,” 88 and accordingly Choniates observes that Isaac “was treated with respect, for he was most imperial in bearing and very noble because of his family.” 89 His high standing also allowed him to come into contact with other Christian and Muslim lords of Asia Minor who had a common hostility against Constantinople. 90 Isaac visited Constantine Gabras of Trebizond, an ally of the Danismend emir, and spent the winter together with Gümüştekin and his son-in-law, Sultan Masʿud of Konya, in Melitene. His next stop was the court of Leo of Cilicia, who at that time was a tributary of the Danismends. An alliance based on a marriage between Leo’s daughter and Isaac’s son failed on account of a disagreement between the two potentates, so Isaac went back to Sultan Masʿud. Choniates’s statement that “he was planning to make attacks against Roman territories and to become Satan for John” 91 suggests that Isaac constantly endeavored to pursue his conspiratorial plans and to create a network of adversaries against his brother, but we do not know how active a role he was in fact able to play within the existing political equilibrium.

From the perspective of Byzantine imperial propaganda the power and prestige that Emperor John II had gained on account of his military exploits posed too dangerous a threat for the eastern lords to offer any effective support to their guest. On the other hand, the fact that Isaac stayed nearly a decade in Asia Minor seems to reveal a certain inability on the part of the emperor to prevail upon his opponents. Consequently, the reconciliation between the brothers coincided chronologically with the culmination of John’s expansionist policy toward Antioch and the Crusader States. The event was preceded by a pilgrimage by Isaac to the Holy Sepulchre, on the occasion of which he financed the construction of an

90 Varzos, Γενεαλογία, 1:240–42.
aqueduct for the monastery of John the Baptist on the Jordan River. These were most likely preparatory measures that can be interpreted as both gestures of penitence and signs of agreement with the aims of Byzantine imperial policy, namely, the emperor’s ascendancy over the holy places. In this way Isaac purified himself from the stigma of having mingled with Muslims for almost a decade and restored his image as an Orthodox Christian and member of the imperial family. Especially noteworthy is Choniates’s focus on emotional aspects, which in his narrative constitute causal links in a sequence of decisions and actions. Grief leads to hatred, which is finally overcome by the inborn feeling of love between the two brothers, which, in turn, is celebrated with their subjects’ overwhelming joy.

The reconciliation of 1138/39, however, did not result in a lasting peace between the two branches of the Comnenian family. Already the following year, during the siege of Neokaisarea, another incident occurred. This time it was Isaac’s son John who, shortly before the battle with the Danismand forces began, switched sides in the framework of an exciting spectacle: “He mounted another horse and full of annoyance he took the lance under his arm and rushed in the direction of the enemies’ ranks. After advancing a short distance, he turned the short lance to the rear, placing it on his shoulder and, removing the helmet from his head, he defected to the Persians.” Once more, Choniates’s argument goes, it was an insignificant occasion that triggered an excessive emotional reaction: the emperor had asked for John’s horse, to hand over to a horseless Frankish mercenary. What followed was due to John’s “unreasonable and self-willed vanity and his wholly uncontrollable passion,” “his obstinacy and excessive arrogance.”

Without doubt the incident shows that the reconciliation of the preceding year was built on fragile foundations and that, during their stay in Konya and other Muslim centers, Isaac and his son had developed close ties with their hosts. John’s defection seems to have been provoked by an offense against his personal feeling of honor, while it remains unclear whether the emperor insulted his nephew on purpose or not. Obviously, Choniates tried to conceal the persisting dynastic tensions by ascribing the incident to John’s personal deficiencies. John’s estrangement from his family and his advanced assimilation into the Muslim-Turkish milieu are evidenced by the fact that, in contrast to his father Isaac, John broke with his past forever and eventually converted to Islam, marrying the Seljuk sultan’s daughter. For the first time in the history of Byzantine-Seljuk relations a member of the ruling dynasty became a permanent resident and fully integrated

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92 Varzos, Γενεαλογία, 1:242–43 (with a different interpretation of the event).
93 For a biographical sketch see Varzos, Γενεαλογία, 1:480–85.
dignitary of the sultan’s court in Konya. Accordingly, Choniates’s emphasis on emotional aspects in comparison to Isaac’s case is here even stronger.

Irrationality and uncontrollable passion appear as the predominant motives for action for other Comnenian defectors as well. No less spectacular an event than John’s flight is that of his younger brother, the enfant terrible Andronikos Komnenos,97 who, after an adventurous life full of conspiracy, imprisonment, and exile, became reconciled with his cousin Manuel I in 1166 and was appointed governor in Cilicia. It comes as no surprise that this crucial position, which gave him control over the revenues of Cyprus and enabled him to pursue his own political ambitions with respect to Thoros of Cilicia and the principality of Antioch, very soon led him to a new clash with the emperor, which compelled him once more to flee from the emperor’s wrath, first to the Kingdom of Jerusalem and subsequently to several eastern lords, eventually ending up at the court of the Turkish emir Saltuk of Erzurum, where he stayed until shortly before Manuel’s death in 1180.98

The extant narratives on these events, written by William of Tyre,99 John Kinnamos,100 and Niketas Choniates,101 pass over in silence all political aspects and focus exclusively on Andronikos’s love affairs with Philippa, sister of Bohemond III of Antioch and Manuel’s wife Maria, and with Theodora, daughter of Andronikos’s cousin Isaac and widow of King Baldwin III of Jerusalem. While William contents himself with underlining the fraudulent and shameless nature of Andronikos’s deeds,102 the Byzantine reports blame the impulse of erotic passion and sexual licentiousness, which made Andronikos forget decency, lawfulness, and loyalty, so that he rose up against his brother’s will. According to Choniates, Andronikos, facing defeat at the hands of the Armenian lord Thoros, forgot about warfare and devoted himself to the orgies of Aphrodite, being “love-smitten by hearsay” and behaving himself “as a horse in heat covering mare after mare beyond reason.”103


98 For the events see Varzos, Γενεαλογία, 1:518–28. For a thorough discussion of the political background and possible Byzantine reactions to Andronikos’s reception by King Amalric, who enfeoffed his guest with Beirut, see Lilie, Byzantium and the Crusader States, pp. 193–95.


101 Choniates, ed. van Dieten, pp. 137–42.


Meanwhile, Manuel is presented as growing more and more enraged at his cousin’s indecent and unlawful liaisons, so that he made every possible effort to capture and punish him. The emperor’s wrath, in turn, made Andronikos fear for his safety, so he left Antioch for Jerusalem, where he became involved in a new affair with Theodora. An imperial letter signed with red ink, ordering the lords of the kingdom to imprison and blind his cousin,104 horrified Andronikos to such an extent that he made the decision to desert to the empire’s enemies. But even under these precarious circumstances he still demonstrated his deceitfulness, seducing Theodora to follow him as companion and fellow wanderer.105 The rest of the story is quite reminiscent of sebastokrator Isaac’s exile in the 1130s. Andronikos was received and greatly honored at many courts; if we trust Kinnamos, from Saltuk’s realm he undertook a series of incursions into Byzantine territory, for which he was excommunicated by the church of Constantinople.106

Seemingly, just like his father, for some years Andronikos attempted to exert pressure on the imperial government in order to force the emperor to make concessions or to recognize his rights as a member of the ruling dynasty. Be this historical truth or sensational fiction, the fact is that, in his presentation of Andronikos’s defection to the Turks, Choniates draws clear parallels with his father Isaac and his brother John, adding to the emotional conditions that motivated the behavior of the latter, that is, extreme sensitivity and youthful arrogance, a combination of sexual passion and craftiness. Andronikos possesses the worst of a whole series of negatively connoted characteristics. Going against the principles of righteous rule, they exclude a person exhibiting them from a share in imperial power.

Andronikos’s return fourteen years later, once more, was motivated by emotions and realized through a skillfully choreographed sequence of ritual acts. Andronikos’s love for his mistress and their children drove him to seek the emperor’s pardon after Theodora had been kidnapped and brought to Constantinople with the aid of the governor of Trebizond. An embassy asking the emperor for...
amnesty prepared his restoration to his former position.107 Afterwards, Andronikos appeared before Manuel carrying a heavy iron chain around his neck that reached down to his feet, stretched himself out on the floor, and, shedding tears, begged forgiveness. In the end he even insisted on being dragged by the chain before the throne.108 Andronikos, drawing on gestures and symbols pertaining to the sphere of slaves and prisoners of war, demonstrated his unconditional subjugation and extreme humility before the imperial court. This enabled the emperor to show mercy and grant a pardon without undermining his prestige as head of the dynasty.109

For Choniates, who constantly interprets Andronikos’s deeds in the light of his subsequent insurrection against the dynasty’s legitimate heirs, the whole scene is nothing but another example of Andronikos’s cunning and hypocrisy.110 Given that in the summer of 1180, perhaps apart from the emperor’s imminent death, the future state of affairs was not yet foreseeable, this opinion seems highly doubtful. In all likelihood, the sequence of ritual acts described, in all its details, was agreed upon in the course of the preliminary talks as a precondition for the defector’s reintegration into the court and the imperial family. While in 1139 the restoration of dynastic peace could be publicly celebrated through the emperor’s triumphal entrance into the capital, in 1180 Manuel I had no political success to commemorate. An honorable reconciliation could be achieved only through a gesture of humiliation, projecting the emperor’s clemency toward his penitent relative.111


109 For Western parallels of public demonstrations of humility from the ninth century onwards see Geoffrey Koziol, Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992); Gerd Althoff, “Das Privileg der deditio: Formen gutlicher Konfliktbeendigung in der mittelalterlichen Adelsgesellschaft,” in Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter (above, n. 17), pp. 99–125. The rope around the neck was a commonly understood symbol of captivity used during tortures and executions; see, for example, an eleventh-century depiction of Christ on the way to Calvary preserved in Elmali Kilise in Cappadocian Goreme (Catherine Jolivet-Lévy, La Cappadoce médiévale: Images et spiritualité [Paris, 2001], plate 141) and the portrayal of the flagellation and blinding of the rebel Lampros in Skylitzes Matritenses, fol. 225v, miniature 530 (Vasiliki Tsamakda, The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid [Leiden, 2002], p. 250, fig. 534). I am especially grateful to Dr. Maria Parani (University of Cyprus) for these references to the field of Byzantine iconography.


Two other cases of defection among members of the ruling dynasty are attested in the years of the Angeloi emperors. Isaac Komnenos, grandson of Manuel's brother Isaac and ex-ruler of Cyprus,\textsuperscript{112} after his release from Frankish captivity in Palestine, probably in late 1195, fled to the court of Sultan Ghiyâth al-Dîn Kayhusrau of Konya.\textsuperscript{113} Likewise, in about 1200 Michael Angelos-Doukas, dux of the thema Mylassa and bastard son of the sebastokrator John Doukas and, therefore, Alexios III's cousin, fled to Kayhusrau's brother Rukn al-Dîn after his rebellion had failed and imperial troops defeated him in battle.\textsuperscript{114}

In Choniates's narrative the behavior of the two rebels is molded on exactly the same model as that of the sebastokrator Isaac and his sons: Isaac Komnenos's decision resulted from his excessive lust for power. We are told that he became very annoyed at letters of Emperor Alexios III recalling him to Constantinople: “I have learned to rule,” he angrily responded, according to Choniates, “not to be ruled, and to lead, not to obey others.”\textsuperscript{115} His attempts failed, however, for neither the sultan nor other Turkish lords in Anatolia were prepared to support him. Likewise, the arrogance of his youth led Michael to sedition and defection.\textsuperscript{116} Yet, since his flight coincided with a serious estrangement between Constantinople and Konya, including an attempt on Rukn al-Dîn's life, Michael was much more successful in gaining the sultan's military support and undertook a series of raids against the towns in the Meander valley, “proving himself an even more pitiless murderer than the barbarians.”\textsuperscript{117} There is a clear parallel between Isaac's elder son John and Michael, who were both accused of excessive arrogance resulting from their youthful impetuosity.

Before proceeding to a further interpretation of the aforementioned incidents, a second group of Byzantine apostates, consisting of military commanders and court officials who fell from grace, should be considered. The most prominent cases are the protostrator Alexios Axouch, whom Emperor Manuel discharged from his post in 1167,\textsuperscript{118} and the megas kontostablos Michael Palaiologos, who


\textsuperscript{117} Choniates, ed. van Dieten, p. 529, lines 23–24, trans. Magoulias, p. 290: χείρων τῶν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ νησιτέτειρος ἀνδρόφόνος δειευκενός.

\textsuperscript{118} Alexios was the son of the Great Domestic John Axouch, a former Turkish prisoner of war, who grew up at the imperial court and held the supreme military command under John II. Alexios was married to Maria, a daughter of Manuel's elder brother Isaac. For Alexios Axouch's role at Manuel's court see Brand, “Turkish Element” (above, n. 9), pp. 5–6, 8–10; Magdalino, \textit{Manuel Komnenos}, pp. 6, 7, 19, 61–62, 107, 218–19, 224; Cheynet, \textit{Pouvoir}, pp. 109, no. 148, and 415–16;
in 1256 came into conflict with Emperor Theodore II Laskaris. In spite of the chronological distance of nearly a century, there are some remarkable similarities between the two incidents. Both Alexios and Michael were members of highly esteemed families, enjoyed an important position among the military leaders of the empire, and were related to the ruling dynasty through marriage. Both were suspected of seditious plans against the emperor. As a result they lost his favor and were seriously threatened in their social and political position.

The basic motif of the historiographical narrative in both cases is the breach of allegiance and the question of guilt resulting from it: does the responsibility lie with the emperor or with his official? As for Alexios Axouch, it is John Kinnamos who talks about secret contacts with and a sort of ideological defection to the Seljuk sultan, whereas Niketas Choniates suggests that the reason for the conflict was the emperor’s envy of individuals who distinguished themselves by their personal abilities. Manuel could not stand Alexios’s respectability and the high esteem he enjoyed among the soldiers and military commanders. Besides, he had an eye on Alexios’s wealth. Therefore the emperor gave the or-

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Balivet, “Entre Byzance et Konya” (above, n. 10), pp. 54–55; and Necipoğlu, “Turks and Byzantines” (above, n. 11), p. 257.


der to take Alexios into custody, charging him with sorcery, although Alexios had always maintained his deference and loyalty toward Manuel. On the contrary, Kinnamos suggests that for a long time Alexios had been thinking of apostasy. Therefore, when he was entrusted with an expedition against Cilicia, he deliberately visited the sultan of Konya in order to win him over to his conspiracy. Moreover, in one of his palaces outside Constantinople Alexios ordered some frescoes to be painted that, instead of depicting hunting scenes or the emperor’s military exploits, showed victorious campaigns of the sultan, “foolishly making public in painting in his residence what should have been concealed in darkness.” Regardless of whether the episode can claim any historical authenticity, it is clearly based on the idea that Alexios, though a faithful member of the imperial entourage and a man of Christian Roman identity in the second generation, still could be suspected of having a certain proclivity to the world of his barbarian ancestors and thus of being susceptible to any kind of temptation offered by the Turkish-Muslim enemy to the detriment of the empire.

One can observe a very similar argumentation with respect to Michael Palaiologos. All sources agree that Theodore II Lascaris constantly threatened him with his anger and severity. In his autobiographical account Michael gives us his own interpretation of the incident: “When the empire of the Romans passed to his son [Theodore II], along with many others who tried them, we, too, had to endure the arrows of envy. But how did God keep us undamaged in this situation and how did he lead us from this grief to success? In summary, he offered us refuge with the Persians. Here, too, he holds my right hand and gloriously cares about me.” Michael appears as the victim of envy, which, in turn, forms part of a divine plan, on the account of which Michael is led to the imperial throne. The historiographical sources on Michael’s flight unanimously stress his great fear of the emperor’s imminent punishment. Yet they give different ex-

122 Choniates, ed. van Dieten, p. 144, trans. Magoulias, p. 82.
126 Magdalino, Manuel Komnenos, p. 219, quite imprecisely talks about an “ethnic factor” in Alexios Axouch’s party.
128 For Michael VIII’s “autobiography,” a sort of introduction to a monastic foundation document, see Martin Hinterberger, Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz, Wiener byzantinistische Studien 22 (Vienna, 1999), pp. 46, 60–61, 127–29, 134–37, 188–90, 266–76 (in general Michael perceives his role as a mere instrument of the wonderful deeds of God). For the motif of envy and emotion-based interpretative models in Byzantine literature see the studies of Martin Hinterberger, cited above, nn. 16 and 121.
planations for Theodore’s anger. According to George Akropolites, who embedded the discussion of the reasons of Michael’s flight into a dialogue between himself and the emperor, Theodore II had frequently threatened Michael and openly expressed his wish to blind him. Nikephoros Gregoras, like Michael himself, makes use of the motif of envy: “When he realized how envy everywhere got stronger and stronger, how insidious words secretly came to his ears, and how the emperor started to think of and faintly talk about punishments that normally would be imposed only on barbarian enemies, he could no longer get any peace.” The severity and irascibility of the emperor along with the malicious conspiracies of insidious people caused Michael to set off for the Seljuk court. Only George Pachymeres hints at the possibility of disloyal behavior on the part of the ambitious commander, since suspicions openly spoken against him put him in a state of permanent fear. When his uncle, the megas chartularios Michael, was taken into custody for a careless word, he decided to leave the country.

Byzantine authors juxtapose rulers’ envy and uncontrollable anger with their seditious subjects’ irrationality and greed. Unhinged emotions can dominate actions and forms of behavior on either side. Drawing a comparison between the two categories of apostates, members of the dynasty versus high-ranking officials, one comes across very similar motifs, such as the destructive force of envy (the sebastokrator Isaac, Michael Palaiologos), fear of the emperor’s punishment (Andronikos Komnenos, again Michael Palaiologos), and lust for power (Isaac Komnenos, Alexios Axouch). There are, however, remarkable differences with respect to their function. The members of the imperial dynasty formed the backbone of the state’s stability. This holds true especially for the Comnenian system of government, which was based on the practice of conferring the most important offices and military posts on the emperor’s relatives and in-laws, thereby giving them a significant share in imperial power.

The defection of persons pertaining to the empire’s inner circle was inevitably viewed as an extremely dangerous threat to the very existence of the state. As a result, these individuals were portrayed in a manner that actually disqualified them from imperial ranks. They had lost their minds and turned out to be completely

131 Gregoras, ed. Schopen, p. 58, lines 5–15, trans. van Dieten, p. 92: ἐδεδίει γὰρ τὸ τού βασιλέως πρὸς τὰς τιμωρίας ἀπόστομον τε καὶ ἀπηνές καὶ διείρισθην ... καὶ μεγάλας διαβολάς ... ἀς οἱ φθονοῦντες καὶ αὐτοῦ συνεκύκησαν καὶ τὰς τοῦ βασιλέως ἀκοὰς ἐμπεπλήρασαν ... φυγή τὴν αὐτήν περιέζωσα βέλτων πάσης ἔπεις βασιλῆς.
133 For the Comnenian system and the court hierarchy from Alexios I’s reign onwards see Lilie, “Macht und Ohnmacht” (above, n. 83), pp. 11–58; Magdalino, Manuel Komnenos, pp. 180–201; Cheynet, Pouvoir, pp. 249–301; and Michael Angold, Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Eng., 2000), pp. 15–41 (concerning the changing relationship between the emperor and the church until Alexios I’s rise to power).
incapable of participating in the imperial government. Only genuine penitence expressed through publicly performed gestures of humiliation and the emperor’s clemency could restore them to their former status. On the contrary, high-ranking officials, in a system that depended largely on personal loyalty, had to live under the constant threat of opponents who were able to influence the emperor and win him over for their own ambitions. Byzantine society did not provide the securities of the Western feudal system, where the lord was obliged to protect his vassal and the latter, in case of a breach of allegiance, had a legal right to resist his lord. In Byzantium, oaths of allegiance were normally one-sided, from the official to the emperor. It comes as no surprise that the idea of the emperor’s wrath was especially horrifying and could even be employed as a reasonable justification for apostasy. In this case, defection seems to have been, if not a legal, then at least an understandable form of reaction to a threat to one’s position. Of course, this model worked only if a rebel’s undertaking was crowned by success, as was the case with Michael Palaiologos, the future emperor and “New Constantine.” If he failed, as did Alexios Axouch, who ended his life as a monk, the rebel’s deeds were either ascribed to his insanity or deliberately concealed.

To judge from Akropolites’s account, Michael’s attempt to seek the sultan’s protection was by no means an isolated case in the years of the so-called empire in exile but forms part of a general pattern of behavior among Byzantine aristocrats fleeing the emperor’s wrath. Andronikos Nestongos, a member of an influential family at the court of Nicæa and head of a failed conspiracy against Emperor John III Vatatzes in 1224/25, managed to escape from the fortress of Magnesia by running off to Muslim territory, where he spent the rest of his life. When in 1237 the blinded ex-emperor Theodoros Angelos returned from his Bulgarian captivity to Thessalonica, he exiled his brother, the despotes Manuel Angelos, to Attaleia, where he was treated with clemency by the local Seljuk authorities and, according to his wish, sent to Emperor John III. In 1259 an opponent of Michael VIII’s ascent to the imperial throne, the protovestiarites Theodore Karyanites, also tried to take flight to the sultanate. Yet he was less fortunate than his predecessors, for on his way he was captured, robbed, and killed by a band of Turcomans.


Akropolites’s judgment on these cases follows the same principles as the incidents discussed above, clearly reflecting the author’s personal stance toward political developments and contesting factions. While the rebel Nestongos, having disregarded kinship and bonds of friendship with the emperor, simply lost his right to be considered a Byzantine aristocrat, the despotes Manuel appears as a victim of his brother’s wrath, being saved by the Turks’ and John III’s clemency. The author accuses Theodore Karyanites of having murdered the Mouzalon brothers, so that his own death at the Turks’ hand is but just punishment. We will never learn whether the true reasons for Karyanites’s violent death lay elsewhere, perhaps in the especially cordial relations between Michael VIII and Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwūs II, which a few years later would prepare the sultan’s own flight to the imperial court.

Local Rebels Collaborating with the Enemy (1118–1260)

Another category of defectors consists of local lords in the Anatolian border regions of the empire, mainly in the Pontus and in the Upper Meander valley. Their vicinity to Muslim areas brought about increased contacts with Turkish populations and tendencies of mutual acculturation. Naturally, this situation sometimes resulted in various forms of political cooperation and even defection. “Thus, custom, reinforced by time, is stronger than race and religion,” Choniates asserts with respect to the Greek inhabitants of the Lake Pousgouse region (Beyşehir Gölü), who by mingling with the Turks of Konya had strengthened their mutual friendship and their commercial ties to such an extent that they regarded the Byzantines as their enemies. Similar phenomena can be observed among the lords of the Pontus region, such as Constantine Gabras of Trebizond, who in the years 1126–40 governed the region as an independent ruler, simultaneously maintaining close contacts with the Danışmand emir Gümüştekin Ghażî, or the local ruler Kassianos, who in 1130 submitted to the same emir, delivering to him his fortresses in the coastal region of the Pontus. These phenomena became more frequent in the years between Andronikos I’s seizure of power (1182/83) and the fall of Constantinople in 1204. As is generally known, this period is characterized by the decay of central authority and the appearance of independent rulers in the provinces. Individuals who, under these sociopolitical circum-

138 See below, pp. 643–47.
141 For this process see Jürgen Hoffmann, Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im byzantinischen Reich (1071–1210): Untersuchungen über Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Kaiser und
stances, defected to the Turks either were members of the provincial aristocracy or attempted to obtain the backing of the provincial population. Flight to the Seljuk neighbors could be motivated by the desire to muster military support in order to initiate an insurrection against the central government. In other cases apostates were compelled to seek refuge with the Turks because they had lost the support of the local Byzantine population.

That was the case with Manuel and Alexios, the sons of the megas domestikos John Vatatzes, who in Phrygian Philadelphia in 1182 resisted the usurpation of Andronikos I. After John’s sudden death, the inhabitants of the city decided to recognize the new regime in Constantinople, so that the two brothers, facing the pressure of the townspeople, had no choice other than to flee to the court of Sultan Kilic Arslan. The Vatatzes brothers, however, did not pursue any plans for further resistance. In contrast, in the following years, some new leaders of local insurrections aimed at military cooperation with the neighboring Turks.

The “ex-emperor” Theodore Mangaphas of Philadelphia in 1191, despite the guarantees of Isaac II, was forced by the dux of Thrakesion, Basil Vatatzes, to seek refuge in Konya. The two Pseudo-Alexioi, in 1191 and 1195 respectively, pretended to be Manuel’s murdered son and legitimate emperor Alexios II. All three of them convinced Turkish lords to support their cause, if not with regular troops, then at least with the permission to recruit warriors from the Turcoman nomads who were settling along the frontier regions of the Seljuk sultan-
ate. While Mangaphas can be regarded as an exponent of the provincial aristocracy, aiming at political autonomy on a local scale, the two Alexioi were descendants of obscure origin from Constantinople and Cilicia respectively. The particularity of their undertaking lies in the fact that they presented themselves before both the Byzantine provincial population and the Turkish sovereigns with insidiously obtained claims for legitimate rights to the imperial throne. “He [the first of the two Pseudo-Alexioi] embodied the hero of the drama so perfectly,” Choniates remarks, “and imitated the appearance of Emperor Alexios so skillfully that he even dressed his blond hair in the same way as he did and simulated the lisp of the imperial child’s tongue.” Apart from creating local strongholds in the Meander valley or the border regions around Ankyra, it remains unclear whether the two pretenders were actually trying to seize power in Constantinople as well. At least there were some court officials who were attracted by the rebels.

Be that as it may, Choniates judges these defectors quite differently from the aforementioned categories of apostates. They are not blamed for their disloyalty to the ruling dynasty or the central government, for it was the excessive cruelty of Andronikos I and the incapacity of the Angeloi emperors that had provoked the disintegration of the empire. What discredits them is their malicious misbehavior against their fellow countrymen and coreligionists. Outbursts of cruelty during their raids on Byzantine territory make them even worse than their Turkish allies. With respect to Theodore Mangaphas, Choniates talks about the unrestrained burning and pillaging that destroyed the livelihood of the peasantry in the Meander valley. The rebel insulted Turks who took pity on Christian people, delivered Christian captives into the hands of barbarians, and even allowed the famous church of the Archangel Michael in Chonai to be burned to the ground by Turkish raiders. It is no longer the act of defection itself that is criticized but rather the behavior ensuing from it. With his actions, this type of apostate goes against basic principles of what in Byzantine eyes constitute divinely ordained harmony and social order, that is, philanthropy and piety, and, therefore, he has severed his ties with the Christian-Roman moral sphere.


Let us now pick up the thread we left with Shahanshah’s reception by Alexios I in 1116 and follow the sequence of Seljuk defectors who in the course of the twelfth century sought refuge at the Byzantine imperial court. Interestingly, while Byzantine aristocrats were increasingly tempted to try their luck with powerful Anatolian Turkish lords, Sultan Shahanshah, too, seems to have set an enticing precedent for his successors. Michael the Syrian—the main source for the internal situation of many Turkish emirates during the twelfth century—tells us that this development was mainly due to the civil strife among Kilic Arslan I’s surviving sons, Mas’ud, ‘Arab, and Toğrul Arslan, a conflict that also involved Mas’ud’s father-in-law, Gümüştekin Ghazi, and other local lords in the Upper Euphrates region.153 “All these things happened among the Turks,” Michael concludes, “who because of the anger they nurtured against each other fled to the Christians.”

Ghazi’s seizure of Melitene from Toğrul Arslan’s and his mother’s hands (December 10, 1124) triggered the fraternal discord. On the pretext of taking revenge against his brother’s treacherous behavior toward the family, ‘Arab attacked Mas’ud with a huge military force, compelling him to flee to Emperor John. With the support of Byzantine money, Mas’ud, along with his ally Gümüştekin Ghazi, took up the war against his brother ‘Arab. In the summer of 1127, together with Turkish and Armenian allies, ‘Arab fought a series of fierce battles against Ghazi and his sons and, after having suffered several defeats, was forced to take flight to Byzantium. Michael the Syrian, mainly focusing on the situation in eastern Asia Minor, devotes no more than a few words to the Seljuk lord’s stay in Constantinople. That “Emperor John received Mas’ud joyfully”155 might hint at an official ceremony celebrating the guest’s arrival in the framework of imperial propaganda, as had been the case during the meeting with his deceased brother Shahanshah, but there is no way to make further inferences about the ceremony’s form and contents. In ‘Arab’s case we cannot even be sure that he was actually received at the imperial court, for Michael mentions only his flight “to the Greeks” and his subsequent death.156 In any event, the fact that the Byzantine emperor granted sanctuary to three of Kilic Arslan’s four sons within a decade of internal disorder demonstrates how important an instrument of political practice defection had become for both the refugees and the hosts. Perhaps the frequent arrival of Seljuk opponents in Constantinople was an additional factor inducing the sebastokrator Isaac to set off in the opposite direction three years later.

153 For the political situation see Chalandon, Les Comnène, pp. 42–46, 77–81; Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 92–94; idem, Formation, pp. 15–20; and Turan, Türkiye, pp. 167–70.


Almost three decades passed before another Seljuk ruler—this time Sultan Mas'ud's son and successor Kılıç Arslan II (1155–92)—showed up for a visit in the Byzantine capital. The circumstances of his flight resemble the state of affairs prevailing in 1125–27 in Asia Minor, but with the difference that in about 1160 the empire's expansionist policy in the East had reached its apogee. Manuel's winter–spring campaign of 1158–59 to Cilicia and Antioch resulted in the recognition of his supremacy by Reynald of Châtillon, King Baldwin III of Jerusalem, and the Armenian lord Thoros, as well as in a peace treaty with Nūr al-Dīn of Mosul and Aleppo. Since September 1158 Baldwin III had been married to Manuel's niece Theodora. The negotiations over Manuel's marriage with Constance of Antioch's daughter Maria were well under way. In short, the emperor had managed to establish a network of alliances with the most powerful lordships on Anatolia's southeastern fringe, and his position was impressively strong when he got involved in Seljuk affairs. Fortunately, in this case the available source material is relatively rich and detailed, so that we get a rather clear and manifold insight into the political setting, ideological dimensions, and contemporary perceptions of Kılıç Arslan's reception at the imperial court.

The most thoughtful observer, Niketas Choniates, presents the sultan's arrival as an event of major significance in the framework of a detailed report on Byzantine-Seljuk affairs covering the period from Sultan Mas'ud's death in 1155 until the eve of the battle of Myriokephalon in 1176. After referring to the divisions of Anatolian territories among Seljuk and Danişmend princes ensuing from the death of Gümüştekin Ghāzī's son and successor Muḥammad (ca. 1134–ca. 1141), the author mainly dwells on the conflict between Kılıç Arslan and Muḥammad's brother Yağ-basan (Ἰαγ/ομικρονυπασάν; d. 1164), who is described as lord of Amaseia, Ankyra, and the province of Cappadocia. Emperor Manuel appears as a cunning diplomat striving for the downfall of both potentates and instigating them through secret messages to wage war against each other. As a result of this conflict the sultan undertook his trip to Constantinople. Despite the peace treaty that was concluded during his stay and the enormous amounts of money and gifts he received from the emperor, the sultan turned out to be a traitor in that he continued to pursue his expansionist plans against his relatives.

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157 For the political background see Chalandon, Les Comnène, pp. 442–55; Lilie, Byzantium and the Crusader States, pp. 176–83; Magdalino, Manuel Komnenos, pp. 70–71; and Necipoğlu, “Turks and Byzantines,” pp. 261–62. For the diplomatic contacts and agreements concluded at this occasion see Dolger and Wirth, Regesten, nos. 1428–32 (dating the treaty with Nūr al-Dīn to May 1159) and nos. 1435–36.
158 Lilie, Byzantium and the Crusader States, pp. 175–76, 184–87; Magdalino, Manuel Komnenos, pp. 69–70, 72.
and the Danışmends. He managed to extend his power significantly, expelling mighty lords such as Yağlı-basan, Muhammad's son Dhu l-Nun (Δαθδοῦνης), and his own brother Shāhānshāh and seizing important cities in eastern Asia Minor such as Amaseia (1171), Sebasteia (1174), and Melitene (1177). Very soon, he also neglected the commitments made in his treaty with the empire, so that the Byzantine-Seljuk border region underwent a new period of incessant raids and counterattacks.

Interestingly, Choniates, apart from a faint allusion to the sultanate’s internal instability, does not explain why the sultan actually decided to go to Constantinople. Nor does the second main witness, John Kinnamos, who restricts himself to the laconic observation that “the sultan came to Byzantium as a defector in order to petition the emperor regarding matters advantageous to him.” Only Michael the Syrian explicitly refers to a conspiracy of Yağlı-basan and other emirs in favor of the sultan’s brother Shāhānshāh, so that the sultan was compelled to seek the emperor’s backing.

In accordance with the event’s highly official character, the narratives on Kılıç Arslan’s visit are structured along the sequence of publicly performed ceremonial acts projecting various ideological and propagandistic aspects, such as both rulers’ status and honor, the newly established hierarchical relationship between them, gestures of devotion and benevolence, and other current practices of Byzantine diplomacy. We get additional insights via a panegyric composed by the court rhetorician Euthymios Malakes on the occasion of Manuel’s triumphal entrance in 1162, an intriguing text that embeds the Seljuk sultan’s arrival into

162 For the details see Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 101–4; idem, Formation, pp. 26–32; and Turan, Türkiye, pp. 202–5.
164 Kinnamos 5.3, ed. Meineke, pp. 204, line 22–205, line 1, trans. Brand, p. 156: Κλίταιεσθλὰν συντὰν ἐς Βυστάντινα αὐτομπολοῦσα ἑπτὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ συμμορίων βασιλεὰς δεησόμενος. The translation of Brand, Deeds, p. 156, renders αὐτομπολοῦσα as “voluntarily,” but since the term is constantly used for persons who shift to the enemy’s side, it is clear that the Byzantine authors use the term in its modern sense: “defector.”
166 Kazhdan, “Byzantine Diplomacy” (above, n. 28). For a useful summary of Byzantine theoretical concepts of the empire’s relationship with the outside world see Evangelos Chrysos, “Το Βυζαντίου και η διεθνής κοινωνία του μοιούντα” [Byzantium and the medieval international community], in Byzantium as Oecumene, ed. idem, Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposia 16 (Athens, 2005), pp. 59–78.
the conceptual matrix of classical imperial encomia. On the basis of this material the main steps of the ceremonial procedure can be summarized as follows:

1. Preliminary negotiations conducted by the sultan's chancellor Christopher, which resulted in an oath sworn by the emperor on the sultan's safe-conduct (Michael the Syrian, Armenian version, p. 355)

2. Planned triumphal entrance with the emperor and the sultan standing together on the imperial chariot—the plan failed because of an earthquake (Kinnamos, pp. 206, line 12–207, line 2; Choniates, pp. 118, line 38–119, line 54)

3. Solemn audience granted to the sultan in the imperial palace (Kinnamos, pp. 205, line 5–206, line 11):
   - self-presentation of the imperial family in a prokypsis ceremony
   - the sultan's prostration before the emperor (Malakes, p. 165, lines 15–23)
   - the sultan's taking a seat on a lower throne beside the emperor (Malakes, p. 167, lines 18–20; Kinnamos, p. 206, lines 9–10)
   - the sultan's adoption as the emperor's spiritual son (Malakes, p. 167, lines 9–12; Kinnamos, p. 208, lines 7–8; Choniates, p. 123, lines 76–78)

4. Opulent meals, gifts, and every sort of kind treatment (Kinnamos, p. 207, lines 9–11; Michael the Syrian, Armenian version, p. 355)

5. Games in the hippodrome (Kinnamos, p. 207, lines 11–14; Choniates, pp. 119, line 55–120, line 81)

6. Conclusion of a peace treaty (Kinnamos, pp. 207, line 15–208, line 5)

7. The sultan's reconciliation with emissaries of other Eastern potentates (Kinnamos, p. 208, lines 6–16)

8. Farewell reception, on the occasion of which the sultan received huge amounts of money and gifts (Choniates, pp. 120, line 90–121, line 22)

A close examination of the three versions written from the Constantinopolitan perspective reveals that the event underwent a successive reinterpretation, distorting the idealized image of imperial rhetoric into a harsh criticism of the emperor's attitudes and decisions. Euthymios Malakes's panegyric shows many similarities with Attaleiates's presentation of Nikephoros III's encounter with the Kutlumuş brothers. In order to depict Kılıç Arslan's arrival as a major success of Manuel's policy, Malakes exalts the sultan's royal prestige, placing him in one lineage with the ancient kings of Persia Darius and Xerxes. Accordingly, Malakes especially highlights the symbolic value of the sultan's prostration as a sign of his voluntary humiliation and reduction to the status of the emperor's faithful servant. In return, Manuel is described as having excelled even Alexander the Great and King Solomon, for the emperor not only defeated his foe on...
the battlefield but adopted the sultan, thus including him in the circle of his relatives and granting him a seat below his own.  

Those details refer to the festive setting, which publicly visualized the sultan’s hierarchical elevation resulting from his symbolic act of deference to the emperor’s supremacy. In this way, Kilic Arslan, just like Shahnshah in 1116, was ceremoniously acknowledged as a member of the imperial entourage, but with the difference that as the emperor’s spiritual son he had gained one of the most honorable positions a foreign sovereign could obtain in Byzantium. Kinnamos informs us that the sultan’s reception formed part of a prokypsis ceremony, a new court ritual introduced by Manuel I, displaying the imperial family in an especially magnificent public appearance on a lit platform accompanied by music and encomiastic poems. The sharp contrast with the 1116 meeting, where the emperor and the sultan expressed their proximity by riding side by side, reveals the high degree of refinement that Comnenian court ceremonies regarding representatives of the Seljuk sultanate had reached since the early twelfth century. A comparison with the nearly contemporary meetings with King Baldwin III of Jerusalem in Manuel’s camp in Cilicia (early 1159) and with King Amalric in Constantinople (1171) clearly demonstrates that the lower throne on which the sultan came to sit was a common feature of reception ceremonies for foreign rulers, symbolizing the emperor’s ascendancy within the universal hierarchical system of political authority.

In contrast, Kilic Arslan’s adoption as Manuel’s spiritual son, with respect to the Muslim orbit, constitutes a remarkable novelty in the sphere of Byzantine court rituals. In the ninth and tenth centuries this distinction used to be conferred upon the Bulgarian king, while in Alexios I’s reign there are some instances of adoptions of crusader lords such as Godfrey of Bouillon. The only known precedent as far as Byzantium’s eastern neighbors are concerned is the adoption of the Persian king Khusrau II Parwiz by Emperor Maurice in 590.
This late-antique model case of a royal refugee seeking the emperor’s protection might have inspired Manuel’s court to revive this practice. The possibilities and techniques of Byzantine court propaganda are clearly illustrated by the panegyric of Malakes, who brings the Persian past and Seljuk-Turkish present into an unbroken line of continuity by drawing parallels between the Seljuk sultan and the ancient Persian kings. Hence the sultan of Konya, from an ideological point of view, becomes the emperor’s most extolled partner among the rulers of the Muslim world. Accordingly, Kinnamos characterizes the sultan’s arrival as “something sublime and wonderfully great, which, as far as I know, never happened to the Romans before.”

That a barbarian ruler was granted the privilege of mounting the imperial chariot along with the emperor apparently caused anger and indignation among the people of Constantinople. Kinnamos explicitly refers to the resistance of Patriarch Luke Chrysoberges (1157–70), who declared that “impious people should not be allowed to pass through divine objects and sacred decorations.” This was indeed a well-established principle of Byzantine court ceremonies, repeatedly confirmed by older sources such as the tenth-century treatise De administrando imperio of Constantine VII. Hence Manuel, in his attempt to present himself publicly together with his newly adopted spiritual son, acted contrary to customary attitudes and religious sensibilities. The narratives argue that the violation of this taboo provoked divine interference, causing a strong earthquake in Constantinople and thwarting the whole triumph. Kinnamos and Choniates agree that the earthquake was a conspicuous sign of God’s wrath. Later events, culminating in the emperor’s ignominious defeat in 1176, prove that the earthquake was in fact a bad omen for imminent disasters. In this way the triumphal entrance—one of the most momentous state ceremonies in Byzantium—turned into a symbol of the emperor’s personal failure; in other words, because of the emperor’s deviation from traditional rules and the ensuing lack of unanimity, right order was seriously disturbed. As a result historical memory inverted a “good” ritual into a “bad” one, thereby compromising both Manuel’s political purposes and the ideological context of the sultan’s visit to the Byzantine capital.

Another important aspect of the sultan’s stay in Constantinople consisted of amusements, gifts, and games. Anna Komnene interpreted these features as ef-

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179 See, for instance, Constantine’s famous prohibitive statement on the sending of imperial dia-
dems or state robes to barbarian recipients: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De administrando impe-
rio, ed. György Moravcsik, trans. R. J. H. Jenkins, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 1 (Wash-


181 McCormick, Eternal Victory.

182 My interpretation relies on Buc, Dangers of Ritual, pp. 70, 72 (with similar examples from the early-medieval West).
fective instruments through which Alexios played out his ruse against his guest Abū l-Qāsim.183 Conversely, William of Tyre’s report on King Amalric’s visit in 1171 highlights the positive effects of generous gifts honoring the king and his companions, the display of relics stored in the imperial treasuries, and various sorts of spectacles.184 Interestingly, in Choniates’s account these elements were used with a sarcastic intention. The unsuccessful “parachute jump” of an otherwise unspecified “descendant of Hagar”—most probably a man of the sultan’s entourage—from a tower erected above the hippodrome’s starting line induced the silversmiths in the marketplaces to mock the sultan.185 What is more, Choniates reduces Manuel’s diplomatic strategy toward the sultan to absurdity by contrasting the ritual of a farewell reception with a derisive comment allegedly uttered by the sultan at some later moment. All kinds of luxurious items and precious objects, piled up in a glamorous reception hall, formed the setting of the concluding meeting between the two rulers, in which the generous emperor, displaying his irresistible power over his enemies, is contrasted with the astonished and greedy barbarian, who promises to deliver the city of Sebasteia.186 Afterwards the author turns the scene’s imagery into ridicule through ironic words put into the mouth of the sultan, who jeers at the empire’s strategy to buy off barbarian allies with huge amounts of money: “The sultan ironically used to say to his intimates that the more injuries he inflicted on the Romans, the more treasures he received from the emperor: ‘for whoever is able to be superior,’ he says, ‘usually receives the gifts as well, so that his victories do not increase further,’ because festering diseases require more treatments for them to subside and to cease to spread.”187

In summary, Kılıc Arslan II’s flight to Constantinople appears, on the one hand, as the apogee of the Seljuk defection movement to the imperial court, which in this case was willing to make hitherto inconceivable concessions to a non-Christian foreign ruler, and, on the other, as the culmination of Manuel’s misplaced policy toward the Seljuk Turks, which caused internal discord, violated basic principles of Byzantine court rituals, and turned out to be to the advantage of Kılıc Arslan’s expansionist plans without having any positive results for the empire.

In the course of the subsequent rivalries among the Turkish lords in Anatolia, Constantinople continued to offer shelter to overthrown princes, such as the last Danişmend ruler Dhu l-Nūn, who, after succeeding his assassinated nephew İsmâ‘îl in the lordship of Sebasteia in early 1173, had been expelled by Sultan Kılıc Arslan in the summer of 1175, and the sultan’s brother Şahānşâh, who lost the remainder of his political influence after the failure of a large coalition of the sultan’s enemies under the leadership of Nūr al-Dīn in 1172.188 Apart from a Byz...

183 See above, p. 612.
antino attempt to reconquer Neokaisareia on behalf of Dhu `l-Nun in 1176, we do not know anything about the imperial government’s attitudes toward these people and about the role they played henceforth at the Byzantine court. It comes as no surprise that, during the critical years of the central government’s decay under Andronikos I and the Angeloi emperors, Constantinople to a certain extent lost its attractiveness for Seljuk defectors. While, as discussed above, several Byzantine local rebels were eager to secure their Turkish neighbors’ support, we know of only one anonymous dignitary from Konya who seemingly fled to Isaac II Angelus shortly after the conquest of Konya by Emperor Frederick I’s German crusaders in May 1190.

The series of twelfth-century Seljuk sultans who came as refugees to Constantinople ends with Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusrau. One of the ten sons of Kılıç Arslan II, he had obtained the city of Sozopolis as a result of the old sultan’s succession arrangements, and, after his father’s death in 1192, he succeeded him on the throne of Konya, while the greatest part of the Seljuk Empire remained in the hands of his elder brother Qutb al-Dīn Malikşāh (d. 1195). A few years later Kaykhusrau was expelled by another brother, Rukn al-Dīn Sulaymānşāh (1196–1204), thus being forced to lead the life of a homeless prince wandering from one potentate to another.

Kaykhusrau’s stay in the Byzantine capital, which lasted until Alexios III’s overthrow in July 1203, was in many respects decisive for the subsequent developments in Byzantine-Seljuk relations. Notably, Emperor Alexios III both adopted and baptized the dethroned sultan in the years of his stay in the imperial palace, so that his ideological and spiritual ties with the Byzantine court elite and the ruling dynasty became even more intertwined than his father’s had been. In addition, Kaykhusrau married the daughter of Manuel Maurozomes, a high-ranking aristocrat, with whom he presumably was closely connected by a net-

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192 For Sozopolis (modern Uluborlu) in Phrygia, which was not incorporated into the Seljuk sultanate until after 1180, see Klaus Belke and Norbert Mersich, Phrygien und Pisidien, Tabula Imperii Byzantini 7 (Vienna, 1990), pp. 387–88.
193 Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 111, 114–15; idem, Formation, pp. 39–42; Turan, Türkiye, pp. 237–41.
work of common interests. Once Alexios III decided to leave Constantinople under the threat of the Fourth Crusade's military forces, the Seljuk prince fled along with his father-in-law to a fortress on the latter's landed estates. In March 1205, only a few months after the conquest of Constantinople and the ensuing downfall of the Byzantine imperial government, Kaykhusrau managed to regain the throne of Konya, replacing his nephew Kilic Arslan III.

On account of his bonds of spiritual kinship, marriage, and personal friendship with leading figures of the Angeloi regime, the sultan became immediately involved in the conflicts resulting from Theodore Laskaris's attempts to create his “Byzantine successor state” in Nicaea and to lay claim to the imperial title. In 1205 Kaykhusrau supported the plans of his father-in-law, Manuel Maurozomes, to get rid of his rival Theodore, launching attacks in the region of the Meander valley. Several years later, at the instigation of the ex-emperor Alexios, who after an adventurous odyssey had been offered shelter in Konya, Kaykhusrau started a new war against the emperor of Nicaea, which came to an end in 1211 with the sultan's death on the battlefield near Pisidian Antioch (modern Alaşehir).

Most notably, for the first time we are able to derive abundant information from Muslim sources, namely, the universal chronicle of Ibn al-Athîr and Ibn Bibi's Seljuk chronicle, so in this case we can judge the sultan's stay at the imperial court from the Seljuk perspective as well. This is all the more important insofar as the details the Byzantine authors provide are quite limited and contradictory. Niketas Choniates basically rejects any successful outcome of Kaykhusrau's visit, whereas George Akropolites merely notes the refugee's adoption and baptism. Instead, Ibn al-Athîr and especially Ibn Bibi highlight the respectful reception the Byzantine emperor granted to his guest, primarily dwelling on ritual and formal aspects of the encounter and the ensuing relationship between the two rulers.

In the highly idealized and rhetorically elaborated Persian narrative of the Seljuk


chronicle, Kaykhusrau is portrayed as an exiled, but still legitimate, sovereign who received recognition and honor as such from his brothers in Elbistan and Melitene, from King Leo I of Lesser Armenia, and from many Muslim lords in northern Syria. Consequently, his arrival in Constantinople is described as the coming, not of a refugee, but of a guest of the highest rank and significance: "The basileus (fāsilyūs) of that time [Alexios III] deemed the sultan's arrival a great benefit and considered his share or even his independence in his kingdom necessary. When they met they used to sit together on the throne and to show each other friendship and kindness." 

More specifically, the emperor's benevolent attitude is explained by the sultan's self-presentation as the immediate descendant of the great Seljuk sultans of Baghdad and as heir to their political traditions and claims: "My forefathers had conquered the world from East to West, and your forefathers used to send tribute and taxes to their treasuries. And you walked with me on the same path." Hence, Ibn Bibi constructs a bridge linking the ideological tradition of the Seljuk-Persian sultanate and the Byzantine imperial sphere, both of which came to form a part of Kaykhusrau's twofold royal identity. He appears as the heir of Alp Arslan and Malik Shāh and, at the same time, as a sovereign worthy of sharing the throne with the Byzantine emperor.

After 1204 the Byzantine imperial concept underwent a deep crisis with the establishment of a Latin empire in Constantinople and the emergence of numerous claimants to legitimate succession within the remnants of the Byzantine state. This constellation allowed the Seljuk sultan to take his share in the imperial heritage. Greek documents originating from the sultanate's diplomatic correspondence with the Frankish king of Cyprus and the Venetian podestà of Constantinople attest to the usage of Byzantine imperial honorifics for Kaykhusrau's son ʿIzz al-Dīn Kaykāwūs (1211–20).

From the Byzantine perspective, too, things had radically changed with the events of 1204. As the old center had ceased to exist, fleeing to collaborate with the sultan was no longer considered a seditious act deserving of condemnation. What mattered was, above all, survival amidst the fierce struggles with internal and external opponents. Theodore Laskaris took refuge with the sultan shortly before he seized power in Nicaea, and Theodore Angelos, the future ruler of Epirus and Thessalonica, probably did the same. Manuel Maurozomes, after his

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206 For possible references to the same event in orations of Niketas Choniates and for the chronological sequence see Macrides, p. 119 n. 7; for Theodore Angelos's relations with the Turks see Macrides, p. 209 n. 9.
attempt to win the imperial crown had failed, paid homage to his son-in-law and became a loyal servant at the sultan’s court of Konya. Kaykhusrau’s godfather and ex-emperor Alexios hoped to regain the imperial throne with the aid of the sultanate’s military forces. This altered situation is clearly illustrated in the chronicle of George Akropolites, who now describes the sultan as the exiled emperor’s “friend” (συνήθης) and as the mighty protector of Alexios’s legitimate imperial rights: “And an embassy on the part of the sultan reached him [Theodore I] that announced the arrival of the emperor and father-in-law [Alexios III] and expressed the opinion that he [Theodore] illegally had usurped the sovereign rights of someone else. The emperor got excited about these words and he was seized by rather great fear. For the sultan used the Emperor Alexios only as a pretext, in fact intending to attack and to plunder or to subjugate the whole state as a pretense, in fact intending to attack and to plunder or to subjugate the whole state of the Romans. Things were so to speak on the razor’s edge for the Emperor Theodore. Thus he called together all his followers and checked if they were on his side or on that of his father-in-law, the Emperor Alexios.”

Likewise, Akropolites presents Michael Palaiologos’s flight to Sultan Izz al-Din Kaykawus II (1246–61) in 1256 in a way that projects Michael’s claims to the throne. Despite his defection Michael is still “well disposed toward the empire,” thus putting a prediction of Michael’s future rise to power into the mouths of Muslim leaders. Highlighting the enemy’s admiration for the talents of an outstanding Roman commander certainly is a widely used motif of classicizing Byzantine historiography. With respect to the historical situation in the late 1250s, however, it also reflects the new level that Byzantine-Seljuk relations had reached by that time in terms of both realpolitik and ideology.

All these aspects are embodied in the person of the last prominent defector to be examined in this essay, Sultan Izz al-Din Kaykawus II (1246–61), the first-born son of Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusraw II (1237–46). Because of the conflicts with the Mongols in the period preceding Hulegu’s major onslaught against

210 Akropolites 64, ed. Heisenberg, 1:136, lines 23–24: τὸν φρονήσιμον ἐπίσταµαι φιλορωµόνων. Macrides, p. 312, translates: “I know him to be a friend of the Romans in his thinking.” My interpretation further specifies the meaning of the word philoromaios in the sense of “being loyal to the Roman (i.e., Byzantine) state.” In the context of Michael’s defection to the sultan, this aspect obviously was much more important for the imperial government than his general affinity to the Romans, which for a Byzantine aristocrat seems more or less self-evident.
212 On this person see Cahen, Pre-Ottoman Turkey, pp. 271–79; idem, Formation, pp. 175–91; Turan, Türkiye, pp. 458–97; and Rustam Shukurov, “The Family of Izz al-Din Kay-Kawus in Byzantium” [in Russian], Vizantiiskii Vremenik 67 (2008), 89–116.
the central Islamic lands (1258) and the internal struggle for power among the leading members of the Seljuk elite, 'Izz al-Dīn II in the years 1257–61 strengthened his precarious position by maintaining especially close ties with the Byzantine government. After his first overthrow following his army’s defeat in the battle of Aksaray against the Mongols (October 1256), he escaped via Attaleia and Laodicea to Byzantine territory, where in January 1257 he was received by Emperor Theodore II in Sardis. With the support of Byzantine auxiliary forces offered by the emperor in exchange for the city of Laodicea, 'Izz al-Dīn in the spring of 1257 regained the throne of Konya and arrived at a new accommodation with his younger brother Rukn al-Dīn Kilic Arslan IV (1248–65), providing for shared rule over divided territories. The subsequent recognition of this status by Hülegü, however, brought no long-term stability in the sultanate, and in 1261 'Izz al-Dīn II fell victim to the intrigues of internal opponents combined with renewed Mongol pressure. As a result, the sultan was compelled to flee a second time to the Byzantine court, from which he was never to return.

While 'Izz al-Dīn’s behavior at first glance may appear as just another link in a long chain of very similar patterns of action deeply embedded in the political culture of Anatolian Turkish principalities, a careful analysis of this sultan’s relations with Byzantium in the years 1257–61 reveals an unprecedented degree of intensity and intimacy. First and foremost, Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn was constantly surrounded by a strong Christian element within his entourage. His mother belonged to a local Christian family and enjoyed an honorable position at the court of Konya, which Pachymeres highlighted by referring to her as “the old mother.” Among the court dignitaries were influential relatives of hers, such as Kir


216 Ibn Bibi, ed. Houtsma, p. 213, trans. Duda, p. 204, calls her Bardılıya; Pachymeres 2.24, ed. and trans. Failler, p. 183, line 23: πρὸς δὲ καὶ γνωσθεὶς μητρὶ, χοιρισθεὶς ἐς τὰ μάλιστα ὀσμή. For further details see Turan, Türkiye, p. 458; Cahen, Per-Ottoman Turkey, p. 271; and idem, Formation.
Kadı́d, the sultan’s sharābšalár (cellarer), who is designated as “maternal uncle.” Izz al-Dīn also patronized other persons of Byzantine-Christian pedigree, a case in point mentioned by Pachymeres being the so-called Basilikoi from Rhodes who are portrayed as rich megistanes and intimates of the sultan. Moreover, the fact that in 1261 the metropolitan of Pisidia (Antioch) led ‘Izz al-Dīn to Byzantine territory shows that he also maintained close relations with the remnants of the Greek ecclesiastical hierarchy in the sultanate. Open to further discussion is the question whether ‘Izz al-Dīn was actually married to a Byzantine princess or even a daughter of John III Vatatzes, as a rather elusive piece of evidence in an Armenian source might suggest.

Be that as it may, the strong Christian element at ‘Izz al-Dīn’s court certainly contributed decisively to the successful communication with the imperial court during the period in question. The cordial relations with Emperor Theodore II persisted without rupture after the takeover of Michael VIII, who shortly after his first coronation in January 1259 dispatched an embassy to Konya announcing his rise to power and discussing the state of affairs in the sultanate. Back in Nymphaion, Michael received Seljuk emissaries and promised full support to ‘Izz al-Dīn if he were forced to take refuge with him. In relating these contacts Pachymeres places special emphasis on the prevailing spirit of friendship, which in all likelihood went back to Michael’s stay at the sultan’s court in 1256.

Against the background of the Mongol invasion of the Near East in 1258, Michael VIII sought to secure his Anatolian territories through a policy of accom-

217 Ibn Bībi, ed. Houtsma, p. 297, trans. Duda, p. 284. Aksaraylı, ed. Turan, p. 40, also mentions a certain Kirkháya Ru̇m ı̇-rȧ ki u̇b u̇d (K. the Roman, who was his maternal uncle); see also Vryonis, Decline, p. 203, who interprets the Persian form as possibly reflecting the Greek name “Kyr Giannis.”

218 Pachymeres 2.24, ed. and trans. Failler, p. 183, lines 1–11.

219 Pachymeres 2.24, ed. and trans. Failler, p. 185, line 3: τοῦ Πισσιδία προσήγωγονς.

220 See also Vryonis, Decline, p. 119, which refers to a different version according to which ‘Izz al-Dīn was the son of “a daughter of a Greek priest,” while his brother Kılıç Arslan IV was “the son of a Turkish woman of Konya.” Ibn Bībi, however, speaks of a jāriya-yi Rūmīya, i.e., “a Greek slave maid.”

221 See also Vryonis, Decline, pp. 377–78, 391.

222 Langdon, “Byzantium’s Initial Encounter,” pp. 120, 134 (referring to the chronicle of Kirakos Gandzakets’i); and idem, “Twilight,” p. 188, argues for the reliability of the source and the political significance of this marriage. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Dmitri A. Korobeinikov (Russian Academy of Sciences, Center of Byzantine Studies) for providing me with his translation of the pertinent passage from Kirakos Gandzakets’i, Patmut’yun Hayots’ [History of the Armenians], ed. K. A. Melik’-Ohanjanyan (Erevan, 1961), p. 318. On the basis of philological arguments Korobeinikov concludes that the sultan probably married a member of the large Dukai-Vatatzai clan, thereby becoming the emperor’s son-in-law. This and many other questions related to ‘Izz al-Dīn’s relations with Byzantium will be thoroughly analyzed in the same author’s forthcoming monograph, Byzantium and the Turks (see above, n. 119).


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modation toward the Ilkhanids and the Golden Horde in combination with a certain extent of control over the sultanate of Konya. These endeavors converged with Izz al-Din’s need for protection against possible Mongol encroachments and his internal opponents. This constellation resulted in an increasing tightening of personal bonds on the Konya-Nicaea axis, which, apart from the sultan himself, also encouraged other Seljuk dignitaries, both Christian and Muslim, to switch sides. The aforementioned Basilikoi fled to Michael VIII after his ascent to power and were granted important ranks as parakoinomenos tou koitonos and megas bataireiarches respectively. Melik (Μελής) or Ghiyath al-Din Mas’ud, Izz al-Din’s son, had already fled in 1258 to the imperial court, being viewed by his father for some time as a potential threat to his own ambitions. ‘Ali Bahādur, a Seljuk emir who had played an important role in the conflicts with Kilic Arslan IV, defected shortly after Izz al-Din’s flight in 1261. The fact that by that time many of the sultan’s former supporters had been executed by the new regime in Konya rendered the Byzantine court even more important as a place of sanctuary.

The events of 1261 also brought about a fundamental redefinition of the ideological relationship between the emperor and the Seljuk sultan, which manifested itself in unparalleled forms of imperial self-representation granted for the first time to a Turkish-Muslim lord. Ibn Bibi and Pachymeres agree as to the highly honorable treatment the Seljuk guest enjoyed at Michael VIII’s court. While Ibn Bibi somewhat elusively notes that “the lord of the Romans made extraordinary efforts in honoring him [the sultan], and they were all day long occupied with festivities,” the Byzantine historian, most likely referring to a prokypsis ceremony, relates that the sultan was sitting beside the emperor on an imperial podium, surrounded by terrifying bodyguards and making use of the symbols of lordship by wearing red sandals.

By recalling the setting of Manuel I’s official appearance with Kilic Arslan II in 1162, the much-elevated status that the Seljuk sultan had been granted in the hierarchical thinking of Byzantine court ceremonial becomes obvious. Instead of being placed below, he sat on the same level with the emperor, and, even more significant, he was entitled to present himself with one of the most distinctive insignia of imperial authority. The sultan’s privilege to appear publicly in red shoes is all the more remarkable in that the court of Nicaea unmistakably rebuked sim-

225 For details see Langdon, “Byzantium’s Initial Encounter,” pp. 135–37, and the bibliography cited there.
226 Pachymeres 2.24, ed. and trans. Failler, p. 183, lines 11–19, who with respect to the Basilikoi’s integration into the Byzantine court hierarchy uses the characteristic phrase χωτά Ρωμαίους μεταψημιοποιήτες (transformed into Romans).
231 Pachymeres 2.24, ed. and trans. Failler, p. 185, lines 7–9.
ilar acts of its rival claimants for the imperial office in Epirus and Thessalonica.\textsuperscript{232} In the Palaiologan period, according to the treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos, even the \textit{despotes}, who were mostly sons of the senior emperor and second in rank to the \textit{basileis}, wore two-tone shoes (\textgreek{δίβρόλεα πέδιλα}).\textsuperscript{233} This distinction, therefore, cannot be explained as an extraordinary sign of courtesy or as recourse to the old bonds of spiritual kinship. Rather, it expresses a sort of recognition on the part of the Byzantine court of the general tendency of Konya to incorporate imperial elements into the sultan’s symbolism of authority, a trend that after 1204 had significantly intensified, as the formulaic patterns of the sultans’ official correspondence with Christian potentates reveal.\textsuperscript{234} Through ‘Izz al-Dīn’s arrival in 1261 these features found their way into Byzantine court ceremony, celebrating thus a kind of ideological unification of Muslim and Roman-Christian traditions of lordship. From Alexios I’s cape on Shāhānshāh’s shoulders until the red shoes on ‘Izz al-Dīn’s feet, it was a long journey of nearly one and a half centuries.

This survey of two centuries of Byzantine-Seljuk apostasy and defection reveals a fascinating field of human behavior, where legal views, moral constraints, and ethnic stereotypes stood in sharp contrast to day-to-day practices and survival strategies in a conflict-ridden world. As for the historical facts, the story began in the 1050s with seditious Seljuk commanders arriving in Constantinople and offering their services to the Byzantine army in exchange for incomes and titles. During the following decades, the increasing Turkish pressure on the empire’s eastern borderlands caused Armenian lords and Byzantine local commanders to develop a modus vivendi with the invaders, ranging from pretense of deference to open collaboration and even conversion to Islam. The recognition of the Seljuk lordship of Nicaea as an independent political entity in 1081 prepared the ground for a new bilateral relationship, enabling the Byzantine emperor to present himself as the protector of threatened Seljuk lords who were coming as refugees to Constantinople and to establish bonds of spiritual kinship with them, so that the sultans of Rūm gradually became integrated into the Byzantine Empire’s inner circle. This practice, among other factors, may have inspired discontented Comnenian aristocrats from the 1130s onwards to set off in the opposite direction, taking refuge with powerful Turkish potentates, a practice that later on was adopted by Byzantine generals and local rebels as well.

The events of 1204, once more, turned things upside down, with the sultan of Konya becoming directly involved in the contest of several claimants to the imperial title. Contemporary narrators referring to these events swayed between extolling successful attempts to win over dignitaries from the foe’s camp and condemning defectors abandoning their own ranks. Court rituals provided an appropriate framework for stressing concepts of superiority and projecting successful rulership. On the other hand, emotional outbursts emanating from a general atmosphere of contest and insecurity provided a good basis for justifying morally un-

\textsuperscript{232} See, for instance, Akropolites 38, ed. Heisenberg, 1:61, trans. Macrides, p. 207, concerning the adoption of red shoes and red ink by John, son of Theodore Angelos, in Thessalonica.


\textsuperscript{234} See above, n. 205.
acceptable forms of behavior. In some cases, however, our informants deliberately reversed these interpretative patterns, downplaying the significance of conflicts or dwelling on the failure of rituals. When the emperor himself became the object of harsh criticism, the Turkish barbarians, who in the eleventh century were regarded as uncivilized “Huns” or “Scythians,” susceptible to all manifestations of Roman cultural and moral superiority, could even be considered highly esteemed authorities, able to judge a Byzantine general’s suitability for the imperial throne. Moreover, the gradual elevation of fugitive Seljuk sultans seeking the emperor’s protection, who from the Commenian court title of sebastos successively ascended to the status of the emperor’s “spiritual son” and “godchild,” eventually resulted in a remarkable synthesis of Byzantine and Seljuk-Muslim ideas of lordship. The fact that Michael Amiraslan, the Seljuk dignitary mentioned at the beginning of this essay, even on his coffin insisted on his family’s claims for a purple-born lineage is but one consequence of this ideological amalgamation.

**APPENDIX**

The following tables provide a synopsis of the prosopographical data of all individuals involved in Byzantine-Muslim defection. The entries are arranged in chronological order and indicate each defector’s name and original status, the court he took refuge with, and the results of the defector’s stay at the foreign court.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Turkish Warlords and Potentates (1050–1118)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Defector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1056/57</td>
<td>Ibn Khān al-Turkumāni, Turkish commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1070</td>
<td>Arıṣghı/Chrysoskoulos, Turkish commander, brother-in-law of Sultan Alp Arslan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1078</td>
<td>Sulaymān b. Kutlumuş and his brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1086</td>
<td>Siaous, Seljuk dignitary of mixed Georgian-Turkish origin, emissary on behalf of Sultan Malik Shāh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1092</td>
<td>Elchanes, Turkish potentate in the region of Apollonia and Kyzikos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1092</td>
<td>relatives and companions of Elchanes, among them a certain Skaliarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1092</td>
<td>Abū l-Qāsim, Seljuk lord of Nicæa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1116</td>
<td>Shāhānshāh, Seljuk sultan of Konya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2
Christian Frontier Lords (1050–1118)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Defector</th>
<th>Sheltering court</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1067/68</td>
<td>Aristakis, Armenian commandant</td>
<td>Alp Arslan, sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire</td>
<td>temporary conversion to Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1085</td>
<td>Philaretos Brachamios, Armenian potentate in northern Syria</td>
<td>Malik Shah, sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire</td>
<td>temporary conversion to Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1085</td>
<td>Philaretos's son</td>
<td>Sulayman b. Kutlumush, lord of Nicaea</td>
<td>agreement concerning an attack on Antioch (Anna Komnene)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3
Comnenian Aristocrats and Court Officials (1118–1260)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Defector</th>
<th>Sheltering court</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1130</td>
<td>Isaac, sebastokrator, brother of Emperor John II</td>
<td>Ghazi Gumustekin, Danismend emir; Mas'ud, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>temporary stay 1130–1138/39, conspiracies against John II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1140</td>
<td>John, son of the sebastokrator Isaac</td>
<td>Ghazi Gumustekin, Danismend emir</td>
<td>conversion to Islam, marriage with a daughter of the sultan of Konya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1167</td>
<td>Andronikos Komnenos, second son of the sebastokrator Isaac</td>
<td>Salruk, emir of Erzurum (via Antioch, Jerusalem, and Syria)</td>
<td>temporary stay 1167–80, raids on Byzantine territory (John Kinnamos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1167</td>
<td>Alexios Axouch, protostator, son of John Axouch (a former Turkish slave, megas domestikos under John II)</td>
<td>Kilic Arslan II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>accusations of conspiratorial plans (John Kinnamos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1195</td>
<td>Isaac Komnenos, grand-son of Manuel II's brother Isaac, ex-ruler of Cyprus</td>
<td>Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusrau, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>failed attempt to conclude a military alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Michael Angelos-Doukas, dux of Mylassa, bastard son of the sebastokrator John and cousin of Alexios III</td>
<td>Rukn al-Din, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>raids on Byzantine territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1204</td>
<td>Theodore Laskaris, despotes, son-in-law of Alexios III</td>
<td>Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusrau, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>temporary stay before his takeover in Nicaea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1204</td>
<td>Theodore Angelos-Doukas, brother of Michael Angelos-Doukas</td>
<td>Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusrau, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>temporary stay before his flight to western Greece</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Defector</th>
<th>Sheltering court</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1224/25</td>
<td>Andronikos Nestongos, cousin of John III Vatatzes and head of a conspiracy</td>
<td>'Ala’ al-Din Kayku-bādh, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>lifelong stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1237</td>
<td>Manuel Angelos, despotes of Thessalonica, brother of Theodore Angelos</td>
<td>Seljuk authorities of Attaleia</td>
<td>handed over to John III Vatatzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1256</td>
<td>Michael Palaiologos, megas kontostablos under Theodore II</td>
<td>'Izz al-Din Kaykāwūs II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>protection against Theodore II, participation in the battle of Aksaray against the Mongols (October 1256)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1259</td>
<td>Theodore Karyanites, protovestiarites</td>
<td>Seljuk territory</td>
<td>killed by Turcoman warriors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Defector</th>
<th>Sheltering court</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1126–40</td>
<td>Constantine Gabras, semi-independent governor in Trebizond</td>
<td>Ghāzī Gümüştekin, Danışmand emir</td>
<td>military alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1130</td>
<td>Kassianos, semi-independent governor in the Pontus region</td>
<td>Ghāzī Gümüştekin, Danışmand emir</td>
<td>submission, annexation of his territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1182</td>
<td>Manuel and Alexios, sons of the megas domestikos John Vatatzes based in Philadelphia</td>
<td>Kılıc Arslan II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>protection against Andronikos I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1191</td>
<td>Theodore Mangaphas, local potentate of Philadelphia</td>
<td>Kılıc Arslan II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>raids on Byzantine territory, eventually handed over to the imperial government raids on Byzantine territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1191</td>
<td>Pseudo-Alexios “Kausalones,” local rebel in the region of the Meander valley</td>
<td>Kılıc Arslan II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>military support, campaign against Theodore I Laskaris</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5
Turkish Potentates and Sultans (1118–1260)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Defector</th>
<th>Sheltering court</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1125/26</td>
<td>Mas‘ūd, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>John II</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents, temporary stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1126/27</td>
<td>‘Arab, brother of Sultan Mas‘ūd</td>
<td>John II</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents, died in Constantinople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1162</td>
<td>Kılıç Arslan II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents, peace treaty, addressed as the emperor’s “spiritual son”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1175</td>
<td>Dhû l-Nūn, Danişmend ruler</td>
<td>Manuel I</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1196</td>
<td>Ghiyâth al-Dīn Kaykhusrau, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>Alexios III</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1257</td>
<td>‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykâwûs II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>Theodore II</td>
<td>military support for regaining his throne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1258</td>
<td>Ghiyâth al-Dīn Mas‘ūd II (Melik), son of ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykâwûs II</td>
<td>Michael VIII</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents, temporary stay until his flight to the Golden Horde 1278/79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1259</td>
<td>Basilikoi, dignitaries of Greek descent at the court of Konya</td>
<td>Michael VIII</td>
<td>offices of megas hetaiireiarches and parakoimomenos tou koiitonos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1261</td>
<td>‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykâwûs II, sultan of Konya</td>
<td>Michael VIII</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents, bestowal of imperial insignia, baptism, temporary stay until his flight to the Golden Horde in 1278/79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1261</td>
<td>‘Ali Bahādur, Seljuk emir at the court of Konya</td>
<td>Michael VIII</td>
<td>protection against internal opponents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>