

New Europe College
Ștefan Odobleja Program
Yearbook 2011-2012



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Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

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ISSN 1584-0298

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BETWEEN CONSTANTINOPLE AND ITALY: SCHOLARLY CIRCLES, AGENCY, AND IMPERIAL PATRONAGE IN BYZANTIUM BEFORE THE FALL (C. 1350-1453)

Abstract: Contrairement à les sociétés modernes, les savants byzantins n'avaient pas l'appui institutionnel qui est aujourd'hui fourni par les systèmes institutionnels organisés de l'éducation. Au lieu de cela, généralement, en plus des activités pédagogiques occasionnels les savants byzantins souvent attiraient leur soutien de mécènes plus ou moins généreux. Si le patronage a représenté un phénomène social et culturel constant tout au long de l'histoire byzantine, après 1261, l'année où Constantinople a été récupéré des Latins, le soutien pour les activités scientifiques savaient grandes fluctuations dues à des transformations qui s'opèrent dans l'économie et la société régionale. Cet article a deux objectifs principaux: détecter les changements dans la nature des largesses impériales vers les chercheurs au cours du dernière siècle de l'histoire byzantine, et d'identifier les usages des réseaux intellectuelles dans le milieu impérial. Ces éléments seront donc analysés sur trois périodes distinctes correspondant aux règnes des empereurs Jean V Paléologue (1347-1391), Manuel II Paléologue (1391-1425) et Jean VIII Paléologue (1425-1448). En fin de compte, il sera soutenu que le mécénat littéraire de l'empereur Manuel II Paléologue était unique pour la période des Paléologues et qu'il avait de nombreuses implications pour son programme idéologique. Comme preuve de mon enquête je vais utiliser les sources écrites principalement des lettres et des textes rhétoriques des auteurs actifs dans cette période.

Keywords: Patronage, scholars, Byzantium, theatron

Introduction

Unlike in modern societies, in Byzantium scholars lacked the institutional support which nowadays is provided by organized institutional systems of education. Instead, typically, in addition to occasional teaching activities Byzantine learned individuals often drew their support from more or less generous patrons. If patronage represented a constant social

and cultural phenomenon throughout Byzantine history, after 1261, the year when Constantinople was recovered from the Latins, the support for scholarly pursuits knew great fluctuations due to the transformations taking place in the regional economy. If the preserved evidence indicates that the first century of the rule of the Palaiologan dynasty (Emperors Michael VIII, Andronikos II and III) coincided with a period of revival in various fields of studies, both theoretical and rhetorical, for the last decades such activities decreased. Scholars like Theodore Metochites, Nikephoros Gregoras, Nikephoros Choumnos, or Thomas Magistros who were active in the first decades of the fourteenth century and who had an intense philological, theoretical, or scientific activity are not to be found in the later periods.

If these scholars as well as the multiple connections among themselves have been thoroughly investigated in the past years, for the later periods such treatments are missing. Certainly, extensive evidence of scholarly activity in the second half of the fourteenth century is, by and large, less consistent than in the previous periods, and, hence, researchers concluded that after 1350s scholarly activities entered a phase of decline. Yet, a survey of the scholarly activity in connection with imperial patronage in the last hundred years of Byzantine history can reveal a series of significant evolutions within a social and cultural aspect that is essential for understanding both imperial and authorial agency.

Building on these preliminary observations, the present paper has two major aims: to detect the changes in the nature of imperial largesse towards scholars over the last hundred years of Byzantine history; and to identify the uses of scholarly networks within the imperial milieu. These elements will be thus analyzed over three distinctive periods corresponding to the reigns of the Emperors John V Palaiologos (1347-1391), Manuel II Palaiologos (1391-1425) and John VIII (1425-1448). Ultimately, it will be argued that Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos' literary patronage was unique for the late Palaiologan period and that it had wide implications for his ideological program. As evidence for my survey I will use written sources mainly letters and court rhetorical texts of authors active in this period. The reasons why I chose to deal with this period pertain mainly to the significant shift in Byzantine politics, intellectual life, and society occurring by the middle of the fourteenth century that were generated by two major events: on the one hand, the Church Synod of 1354 which declared Hesychasm as official doctrine of the Byzantine church, and, on the other hand, the rise of the new dynasty of the Ottomans more belligerent than ever. The first event had repercussions on the intellectual milieu of Constantinople,

until then much divided by the polemics between Hesychasts and anti-Hesychasts. The second event put further pressure on the diplomacy and the military resources of the Byzantines. Both these elements divided the social and intellectual elites into a group of militants in favor of an intervention of the western/Latin states and another group who feared that such an intervention would bring an unwanted union of the Orthodox and the Catholic churches.

Before beginning the discussion of the three different periods in late Byzantine imperial patronage, several preliminary methodological clarifications are necessary. First, who can be included in the late Byzantine category of “scholars”?¹ I use here a broad definition which encompasses the individuals who had a training in ancient Greek grammar and rhetoric reflected in the composition of various texts: from rhetorical exercises and *progymnasmata* to sophisticated treatises of theology, philosophy, or science. Some of these learned individuals acquired a high reputation and honor among the social elite circles of Constantinople, reflected in their acquisition of administrative positions. Most often, these *literati* formed tightly knit groups on the basis not only of their friendship but also of their religious or political persuasions. Such connections were frequently reflected in their theological polemics which did not cease throughout the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries.

The other major concept used in the present paper, patronage, can be defined as a relationship characteristic to pre-modern societies between two persons or between one person and a group (patron and clients). Such a relationship took place on unequal terms, for one of the individuals involved was socially authoritative whereas the other(s) were in a state of subordination. Relations of patronage, often presented by written evidence as “friendship,” were created on the basis of a reciprocal exchange of services and material assets. A patron could offer financial security or social promotion, that is access to positions in the administrative and political structures. Sometimes, the protection meant the formal adoption of the client into the patron’s family. For their part, the client(s) could offer their expertise, services, and loyalty, thereby enhancing the patrons’ prestige, authority, and legitimacy. From this point of view, the relationship of patronage was mutually beneficial to both the patrons and the clients. As a matter of fact, the vast modern scholarship on ancient and medieval patronage emphasized precisely the economic aspects of this kind of relationships: for instance, P. Bourdieu argued that patronage was a complex exchange between patrons and clients similar

to a systematic economic arrangement. According to him, in pre-modern economies patronage represented a practice which “never ceased to conform to economic calculation even when it gave every appearance of disinterestedness.”²

In Byzantium patronage acquired a wide range of forms, dimensions, and functions. Probably the most widespread one was reflected in the support offered by emperors or wealthy individuals to monastic foundations. During the Palaiologan period examples of such patronage can be identified in the case of the Monasteries of Kyra Martha, the monastic foundation of the female members of the imperial family, the Pantokrator Monastery, the burial place of the Palaiologan monarchs, and the monasteries of Mount Athos who often received lands or tax-exemptions. The practice of offering imperial support to monks and ecclesiastical enterprises which can be identified ever since the beginnings of the empire became a matter of state policy in the sixth century and was formalized in the early ninth century.³ Two major virtues regarded as the cornerstone of imperial conduct – *love of mankind* (*φιλανθρωπία*) and *generosity* (*εὐεργεσία*) – underlined the emperor’s necessity to provide material support to various groups of interest.⁴ In the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries these two imperial qualities continued to be present especially in official documents or public addresses of imperial propaganda. Yet, in addition, during this period, the emperor’s largess was also meant to stand out since it often competed with the generosity of other wealthy individuals and families.

1. Scholars and imperial patronage 1350s-1391

The first period under investigation here coincides with the rule of John V Palaiologos (1354-1391). During his four decade long reign, John V renounced any attempts to form a regional alliance with the western powers and was forced to obey to the Ottomans’ authority who occupied their first territories in Europe. Internally, he was confronted with several attempts of usurpation from his sons Andronikos IV and Manuel II, attempts to which he resisted by summoning the Ottomans in support.

In terms of numbers, the court rhetorical texts produced in this period are much fewer in comparison with the previous reign of John VI Kantakouzenos and with the ensuing one of Manuel II Palaiologos. Unlike his father-in-law, John VI Kantakouzenos, a theologian and historian, John

V undertook no intellectual activities. Only sporadically, public gatherings meant to extol the emperor's deeds surface in the sources of the fourteenth century.⁵ Contemporary authors largely shunned laudatory references to him despite the intense imperial diplomatic efforts to maintain the Byzantine state alive. Strikingly, only two panegyrics addressed to John V survive from his reign: one by Demetrios Kydones, in fact a public autobiography and one by his son, Manuel II Palaiologos, performed as a means to show repentance after previous instances of rebellion. For one of the longest reigns in Byzantine history such as John's, this represented a very low number even in comparison with other late Palaiologan emperors.

The scarcity of court rhetorical activities that would have involved John V is reflected in the scarcity of scholars connected with the emperor. One of the very few examples is that of Demetrios Kydones, a prolific late Byzantine writer and, up to 1370s, one of the emperor's closest collaborators. In the following I will deal with his scholarly activity, since his connection with the emperor is by far the best documented case of such a relationship during this period. The evidence comes from the writer's extensive epistolary corpus. Other contemporary scholars like the astronomer Theodore Meliteniotes,⁶ or the theologians Theodore Dexios, Philotheos Kokkinos, and Prochoros Kydones seem to have derived no support at all from the emperor and in any case they never acquired high ranking court positions. On the contrary Demetrios Kydones entered the imperial court at a very young age in his early twenties. Owing to his family's connections with the Kantakouzenoi, he became the Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos' *mesazon*, an office which, during the Palaiologan period, acquired particular influence within the court hierarchy, as it undertook the attributions of other previous positions which had become obsolete. After the installation of John V Palaiologos in 1354, Kydones retained his position of *mesazon* despite the feud between the families of the Palaiologoi and the Kantakouzenoi. Most probably, John V's reason for keeping Kydones in the same high administrative position was his acknowledged expertise pertaining to the western world affairs. Throughout the first two decades of his reign John V constantly tried to establish an alliance with the Papacy and the western states. The assistance which Kydones offered in this sense was crucial for the emperor's negotiations for the *mesazon* had previously established many connections with the Latins living in Constantinople. It was a Dominican monk from whom Kydones learned Latin and at some point in the 1360s he converted to Catholicism. His favorable attitude towards the Latins

played a major role in John V's own conversion to Catholicism in 1370 during a visit in Rome.⁷

Despite the close ties with the western states, in the beginning of the 1370s, John's external policy shifted towards a strategy of appeasement with the Ottomans. The reasons for such a radical change in the state's foreign affairs go beyond the scope of the present study, yet it is certain that Kydones' position and influence suffered from this sudden change. Significantly, after he left imperial service, he took refuge on the Island of Lesbos at his friend's house, the Latin lord of the place, Francisco Gattilusio. Kydones accused the emperor of undermining the only possible military alliance with the fellow Christian Latins against the Muslim Ottomans. The ensuing letters Demetrios addressed to the emperor indicate a conflict between the two which nevertheless appear to have been partly solved by the early 1380s when we find Kydones fulfilling again state administrative tasks especially in connection with the Byzantine interests in the Italy.

In parallel with his political activity, Kydones stood as by far the most prolific writer of his age. The conversion to Catholicism as well as the stance favorable to the alliance with the Latins prompted him to write a long series of theological texts and public admonitory orations. An important section of his rhetorical work consists of political, panegyric, and deliberative orations, in which he defended his pro-western stance with regard to the solutions of safeguarding Byzantium in the second half of the fourteenth century. He wrote four extensive orations, titled *Apologies*, in which he defended his political position and two further admonitory speeches: *De non reddenda Gallipoli* and *Pro subsidio Latinorum*.⁸ In both texts, Kydones drew the emperor's attention to the strategic importance of the town of Gallipoli, the first Ottoman possession in Europe and urged him to continue negotiations for a military alliance with the Latins. In addition to these texts, Kydones translated extensively from Latin Church writers and philosophers: Saint Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, or Ricoldo da Monte Croce, the Latin translator of the Qu'ran.⁹ Yet, perhaps more importantly, he also strove to maintain connections with other fellow scholars regardless of their religious options. Thus, his large epistolary collection indicates that he equally corresponded with Orthodox high ranking ecclesiastics and theologians, such as Nikolaos Kabasilas Chamaetos, Euthymios, or Isidore Glabas, Metropolitan of Thessalonike or with individuals well connected to the imperial court.

On the other hand, he appears to have used his position of influence and connections with the imperial court in order to support acquaintances

into positions where they could promote Catholicism. Thus, he established relations of teacher-disciple type with Maximos Chrysoberges and Manuel Kalekas (Letter 437), both of whom had pro-Latin sympathies and later converted to Catholicism. As for Manuel Kalekas, he was the one directly involved in collecting and transcribing partly Kydones' extensive letter collection.¹⁰ Another interesting case of direct support for a late Byzantine scholar with pro-Latin sympathies was that of Manuel Chrysoloras. In 1396, as we find out from a letter of the Italian humanist Coluccio Salutati, Kydones recommended Chrysoloras for the publicly funded position of the first teacher of Greek in Italy. The connection with Salutati, one of the well-known humanists of the fourteenth century, suggests that Kydones could have had many other acquaintances among the Italian humanists as well. As a matter of fact, such connections emerged naturally since Demetrios, owing to his intense diplomatic service and expertise, received Venetian citizenship early in the 1390s.¹¹ Furthermore, in other letters, Coluccio Salutati noted the support of Kydones and Manuel Chrysoloras in the cultivation of Greek studies in Italy. Thus, Coluccio asked Kydones to recommend him a teacher of Greek for Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia. That teacher was Manuel Chrysoloras.¹² Interestingly, despite its conventional terminology, the language used in the correspondence on the issue of Greek teaching in Florence, betrays a rather friendly relation between them.¹³

The above evidence surviving in epistolary form suggests that, by supporting other fellow writers, Kydones maintained a fully fledged scholarly circle and acted as a kind of patron of contemporary literati, both in Byzantium and Italy, the place where they often traveled. The *mesazon's* active support for contemporary scholars appears to have replaced the direct imperial patronage which remained limited throughout all the phases of Emperor John V's reign. In fact, the emperor's lack of interest in promoting court rhetoric is reflected in the eleven letters which Kydones sent to the emperor.¹⁴ While these letters often praise the emperor's generosity (εὐεργεσία) which in itself was a conventional trait of imperial public representations, Kydones constantly summons the emperor to keep up with his payments owed as salary for his administrative services. Thus, in a letter dated to 1374, after praising John for other previous instances of εὐεργεσία, Kydones reminds the emperor of the delay in receiving the previously promised imperial gifts.¹⁵ Similarly, in another letter dated to 1380s he urges the emperor to act like a ruler and not like a private person thus showing generosity in order to fulfill his promises.¹⁶ In other

instances, the emperor's humanity is mentioned when he justifies his post-1370 pro-Latin position that was contrary to the emperor's policy of peaceful approach of the Ottomans. Rarely however, Kydones addresses to the emperor letters of recommendation for several individuals whom he proposes for services close to the emperor: it was the case with Theodore Kaukadenos as tutor for the emperor's students and with Stephanus Garcia as rhetorician.

To conclude this section, it seems that Kydones' eleven letters addressed to the emperor attest for a type of connection between the two, emperor and *mesazon*, that regarded substantial imperial patronage of literary and rhetorical pursuits as rather marginal. Given the emperor's lack of interest, the literati of the second half of the fourteenth century often sought for other patrons within or outside the imperial court. Such an example is provided by Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina, the emperor's wife and daughter of John VI Kantakouzenos.¹⁷ She was the person who played the role of a patron of letters and gathered around herself a group of scholars who met regularly and performed their texts publicly. While supporting Hesychasm and hard-line hesychasts like the Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos (1353-1354 and 1364-1376) who dedicated her several theological texts, she also had friendly relations with scholars like Nikephoros Gregoras and Kydones himself. The latter two addressed her letters which allude to her sophisticated education. Kydones dedicated her the translation from Saint Augustine and received her protection in the years after John V's change of policy. Some of the letters addressed to Helena Palaiologina show that their relationship went beyond a mere literary camaraderie, as he received an important donation from her upon her entrance in a monastery in 1396.¹⁸ Furthermore, she has apparently gave her protection to Kydones' brother, Prochoros, an Athonite monk who converted to Catholicism and wrote against Hesychasm. In 1391, upon her entrance in the Monastery of Kyra Martha, Kydones extolled her in an extensive letter-panegyric for the gifts he received from her.¹⁹

The emperor's use of this scholarly network was thus apparently minimal and it was, by and large, intermediated by Demetrios Kydones. This represented perhaps a normal situation for Emperor John V disappointed with the lack of results after the long years of diplomatic negotiations with the West. Neither his relations with the ecclesiastical learned individuals were much better. Thus, arguably, John V's lack of interest in cultivating rhetorical performances at court most plausibly

reflected a conscious choice and a significant element of his style of government.²⁰

2. Scholars and imperial patronage 1391-1420s

Demetrios Kydones' network of pro-western scholars continued to be operational even after his death in 1396. Despite their mentor's disappearance, literati like Chrysoberges, Chrysoloras, or Kalekas attached themselves to the court of the ensuing Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Palaiologos (r.1391-1425). Like his father, Manuel ruled in a period of political upheaval in a state territorially reduced to the capital Constantinople and few other territories. Like his father also, the emperor made diplomatic efforts to contain the Ottoman advancement into Europe. Yet, unlike his father more preoccupied with issues of day-to-day administration, Manuel constantly cultivated the representation of a learned ruler and wrote extensive texts that addressed questions of politics or theology. As a result, in comparison with the previous period, his imperial patronage of court rhetoric seems to have undergone a considerable shift for it produced a rearrangement and re-purposing of the various scholarly networks active in Byzantium and connected to similar networks in Italy. Noticeably, up to that point, such circles of educated individuals did not draw any benefit from imperial support. In the following section I will deal extensively with the profile and the uses of the scholarly circles backed by Emperor Manuel II himself. Since the extent of the imperial patronage and of the scholarly networks far exceeds the previous and the subsequent similar phenomena, I will proceed by first looking into the elements that played an essential contribution in the formation of an imperially patronized scholarly network and its relation to the emperor.

2.1. *Theatra* and rhetorical practices

The letter collections as well as the evidence drawn from manuscripts dating from the time of Manuel II's reign suggest that, even in this period of political troubles, between the members of a group of intellectuals a continuous exchange of ideas and texts took place. Among the members of the various scholarly groups active at that time one finds people upholding various religious or political persuasions mirroring the political

and social transformations ongoing in the fourteenth century: anti-unionists or supporters of the union of the Churches, lay people or ecclesiastics, members of the old aristocracy or people of lower social status. Owing to his extensive literary oeuvre, the Emperor Manuel himself became a member of this *intellectual society* from an early stage of his career, and, over time, his connections and uses of the network multiplied. Furthermore, because of his position of political authority, he played a decisive part in maintaining the connections between the members of this group and often in promoting them to high ranking administrative positions.

This group of individuals with similar literary preoccupations is attested not only at the level of their substantial extant correspondence but also by concrete meetings in the framework of the so-called *theatra*. These were organized gatherings with a long tradition in Byzantium which can be traced particularly in the late antique, the Komnenian, and the Palaiologan periods. Some of these *theatra*²¹ were specifically designed for authors to read aloud their texts and, following such performances, to receive comments from their peers. *Theatra* fulfilled both a social and a literary function:²² for the Palaiologan period numerous pieces of evidence indicate that such meetings enjoyed a certain popularity among the authors and their patrons.²³ More specifically, with regard to Manuel's reign, the evidence concerning *theatra* is frequent enough to allow us to conjecture that, at least during the first decades of his reign, the *theatra* represented regular occasions of meeting and performing literary texts. The extant sources dating from the late fourteenth century suggest that most of the *theatra* were chaired by the emperor himself, since there are actually no other mentions of such meetings during this period. Already during his stay in Thessalonike (1382-1387) Manuel organized *theatra* where the scholars of the city met regularly.²⁴ In a letter addressed to Tribolēs, one of his supporters,²⁵ Manuel offered a vivid image of the enthusiasm of the audience who listened to Tribolēs' text performed in the theater:

We made a serious effort to have your letter read before as many people as you would wish, and you surely wished a large number to hear it, confident in your literary skill and expecting to be praised for it. And this is just what happened. For the entire audience applauded and was full of admiration as the letter was read by its grandfather. Nor was he able to conceal his own pleasure as the theater was shaken by applause and by praise for the skilled craftsman whose teaching has led you to become such a great rhetorician.²⁶

Despite being couched in elaborate encomiastic terms, the above passage provides several interesting details with regard to the atmosphere and the activities taking place in a *theatron*: the audience comprised a large number of listeners who could understand and appreciate the intricacies of a sophisticated rhetorical text; the emperor seems to have played a leading role in the gathering; and such public recitations could increase or decrease an author's reputation (τιμή).

Still, in the imagination of most Byzantine intellectuals Constantinople remained the major hub of literary activity.²⁷ These features emerge in other pieces of late Palaiologan texts as well, including the collection of Manuel's letters. Quite a similar description of a *theatron*, this time taking place in Constantinople, can be found in another of Manuel II's letters, addressed to the *protekdikos* Michael Balsamon:

Expectation of the letter, therefore, caused joy, but when it actually arrived it greatly exceeded our expectations and dimmed the joy that was in us, just as the sun hides the brightness of the stars so brilliantly did it shine. I will not speak of all the applause which came from those inspired by the Muses, nor will I mention Iagaris, acting in your stead and reading the letter, was so overjoyed that he was unable to continue.²⁸

When mentioning the *theatra* organized at court, the emperor is keen to stress that they represented occasions for discussing the literary achievements of certain authors, especially those close to the ruling family. This was the case with some of his addressees: Demetrios Kydones, the emperor's mentor,²⁹ Theodore Kaukadenos, the instructor of Manuel's sons,³⁰ Demetrios Chrysoloras,³¹ or Constantine Asanes.³² The echoes of such literary debates indicate that the *theatra* were not only occasions of praise but also of criticism: a letter addressed by the emperor to "a certain foolish person" shows that the *theatra* also involved debates with regard to the value and actions of certain authors.³³

Manuel was not the only late Palaiologan author who described *theatra* in the imperial palace. Other authors also provided evidence of such gatherings organized in the imperial palace where the emperor had a leading role. In a letter addressed to Eustathios, general judge (καθολικός κριτής), John Chortasmenos praised the emperor for the fact that, during his reign, rhetoric was highly valued in the imperial palace (ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις):

For now wisdom and virtue are held in high esteem, and education took on much space in the imperial palace.³⁴

Another contemporary scholar, Manuel Kalekas, provided a detailed description of a *theatron* in which he participated and in which the emperor played the role of “literary judge” (ὁ βασιλεὺς κριτῆς ἐστὶ λόγων) of the texts recited there.³⁵

Manuel’s role as chief convener of *theatra* during the late Palaiologan period contrasted sharply with his father’s, John V, who does not appear to have shown a particular interest in court rhetoric.³⁶ On the contrary, based on the extensive reference to such meetings in his epistolary collection, it appears that Manuel rather wished his contemporaries to regard the *theatra* organized in the imperial palace as elements of his own style of government. Viewed against the background of court ceremonial, it is not far fetched to assert that the *theatra* organized by Manuel could have constituted attempts to replace older court practices which included the periodical delivery of panegyrics or the presence of an officially appointed orator, a μαῖστωρ (ῥήτωρ) τῶν ῥητόρων, a court position which disappeared in the beginning of the fourteenth century. Under Manuel II the situation changed and the emperor became more interested in promoting public literary debates. Thus, I wish to suggest that under the difficult circumstances of the late fourteenth century and early fifteenth century Manuel attempted to fulfill the role of court orator.

2.2. The profile of the literary court

Even if the *theatra* and other rhetorical performances attracted a wide range of participants with different social or cultural backgrounds, Manuel entertained closer relations with only a limited number of learned individuals.³⁷ Epistolary and manuscript evidence indicate that these individuals formed a group which can be defined as a literary circle.³⁸ In the following section I will try to establish the configuration of this circle and, inasmuch as possible, its functions and the ways it was used by its members.

Certainly, there were many variations with regard to the configuration of this group in terms of the social status of its members. Many of them belonged to the clergy while others were laymen; some held strong theological convictions, either in favor of the Latin Church, or defended an Orthodox position; some were members of the aristocracy while

others came from not so well-off families and had to teach grammar and rhetoric in order to earn their living.³⁹ Despite such differences in status and beliefs it is noticeable that in general many scholars continued to depend exclusively on the ruler's benevolence.⁴⁰

With regard to their strength of connection with the emperor, the members of Manuel's circle can be organized on different levels. On the one hand several contemporary individuals with intellectual preoccupations had close ties with the emperor and yet their connection with Manuel in matters of scholarly pursuits is not so well attested. Among the members of this category we can count the copyist Stephanos, *oikeios* of the emperor and later on appointed metropolitan of Medeia in Thrace, George Baiophoros, another copyist who resided in the monastery of Petra, and Demetrios Pepagomenos, the emperor's secretary and a good friend of John Chortasmenos and Theodore II Palaiologos.⁴¹ Since they had court-related positions, it can be assumed that they were aware of the emperor's literary activities at the court. Still, unlike in other cases, there is no evidence of their direct involvement in the production and circulation of his texts or in assuming a prominent role in the court literary activities of the time.

On the other hand, many individuals corresponded intensely with the emperor and, based on epistolary evidence, it appears that they maintained stronger connections. These *literati* had a considerably more intense activity which involved the production and circulation of texts as well as an active participation in literary activities at court. Within this group we can distinguish two major subgroups, or, to use the social network analysis terminology, clusters whose members forged their ties among themselves based on the consensus over religious doctrinal issues: pro-Latin or strictly Orthodox.⁴² Although the debate over a Church union decreased in intensity in the second half of the fourteenth century, the dispute was far from settled.⁴³ Sometimes this debate took acute forms, as in 1396, when, after a Church synod, most pro-Latin scholars were forced to go into exile or had to reaffirm their Orthodox faith.⁴⁴ Later on in 1422, during the negotiations for a council that would discuss a proposition of a union with Rome, another conflict broke out between the supporters of such a move led by the co-emperor John VIII and the Orthodox party grouped around the monastery of Charsianites.⁴⁵ Thus, within the imperial literary circle a cluster of individuals with a pro-Latin orientation acquired a strong profile especially in the first decade of Manuel's reign.⁴⁶ They were connected by their tendency to participate in polemics with the Orthodox

majority and by promoting on various channels the Catholic doctrine and a sympathy for Latins. Most of them were converts to Catholicism and, as a consequence, they were able to establish more easily connections in the West or with the Italians living in Constantinople.

This group consisted of several individuals most of whom had important administrative duties. By far the most prominent member of this group was the above mentioned **Demetrios Kydones** whose political role in the second half of the fourteenth century can hardly be overestimated.⁴⁷ Kydones' disciples whom I already mentioned, **Manuel Kalekas** (1360-1410), **Maximos Chrysoberges**, and **Manuel Chrysoloras** (1370-1415), followed closely in the steps of their mentor. The first one, a teacher of grammar and rhetoric in the 1380s, became increasingly involved in defending and promoting the Catholic faith in Constantinople.⁴⁸ He composed several theological treatises including an apology addressed to the emperor Manuel II in which he defended his conversion. After a sojourn in Crete and Italy where he drafted theological treatises in favor of the Catholic faith, he retired to a Dominican monastery on the island of Lesbos. Likewise, Maximos Chrysoberges⁴⁹ converted to Catholicism and entered the Dominican monastery of Pera in 1396. It was Kydones who first introduced him in the circle of Manuel Palaiologos whom Chrysoberges accompanied in exile on the island of Lemnos (1387-1389).⁵⁰ He was mostly active as theologian authoring several theological treatises.⁵¹

The activities of Manuel Chrysoloras, a well known late Byzantine scholar, were primarily tied to the Byzantine immigration in the West in the early fifteenth century.⁵² As mentioned above, in 1396 he received a job offer from Florence where a teaching position of Greek language had been set up by Coluccio Salutati, a friend of Demetrios Kydones. Yet, after five years of teaching he entered the emperor's diplomatic service, and in the following decades he dedicated himself almost entirely to the activities of imperial emissary to European courts. In 1403, Manuel II sent Manuel Chrysoloras in a diplomatic mission of recovering assets and several sums of money which western rulers owed to the Byzantine emperor.⁵³ From this position he undertook long journeys to most western European countries. In time, he acquired a strong political reputation and became acquainted with important leaders of the time, such as King Sigismund.

In addition to the above mentioned four individuals we can count two other, less prominent members of this particular cluster who interacted to some degree with the emperor. Chrysoloras' nephew, John,⁵⁴ was also a teacher and a diplomat in the emperor's service. While in Constantinople,

he taught Greek to Guarino of Verona (1403-1408) and afterwards took part in some of the emperor's diplomatic missions in Italy.⁵⁵ Another learned anti-Palamite, Demetrios Skaranos (1370s-1426),⁵⁶ a member of the pro-Latin party also participated in various diplomatic missions. Especially after 1410 he traveled extensively to Rome and Florence where he finally settled.⁵⁷

Several elements offered cohesion to this group of Latinophrones. They all regarded Kydones as their mentor and protector due to his connections in the political and scholarly spheres.⁵⁸ At the end of the fourteenth century, they participated in common diplomatic actions, such as the attempt to recover the assets of John Laskaris Kalopheros, an old friend of Kydones,⁵⁹ assets also claimed by Venice.⁶⁰ As a distinctive group in Constantinople they also enjoyed the protection of a highly positioned courtier, Constantine Asanes, *theios* (uncle), of the emperor.⁶¹ At the same time, they all worked together on the long term project of translating the Dominican liturgy into Greek. It appears that in the framework of this project, each of them took the responsibility of translating a section of the text.⁶² Finally, they all enjoyed close relations with the Latins in Constantinople or with the humanists in Italy. Among Manuel Chrysoloras' students can be identified many of the most distinguished humanists of the early Quattrocento: Guarino of Verona, Leonardo Bruni, Palla Strozzi, Roberto Rossi, Jacopo Angelli da Scarperia, Uberto Decembrio, and Paolo Vergerio.⁶³ For all these scholars Chrysoloras had become the *eruditissimus et suavissimus litterarum Graecarum praeceptor*, in the words of Jacopo Angelli.⁶⁴ Many of them appear also among Manuel Kalekas' correspondents or John Chrysoloras' friends.⁶⁵

Another distinctive cluster in Manuel's circle consisted of individuals who upheld a stricter Orthodox position in religious affairs. Several prominent figures stand out in this group. **Nicholas Kabasilas Chamaetos** (1323-1396) the theologian known for his writings inspired by Hesychasm which included sermons and theological treatises. Through his mother's family, Kabasilas was connected to the imperial dynasty, especially the emperors John VI and John V. **Patriarch Euthymios** (1340-1416), embraced the monastic life at an early age and, in the 1390s, became abbot of the Stoudios monastery. Upon the death of Matthew I in 1410, he was appointed patriarch, a position which he held until 1416, despite several disputes with the emperor.⁶⁶ **Gabriel**, became metropolitan of Thessalonike after the death of Isidore Glabas in 1397 and succeeded in maintaining good relations with the Ottomans during the critical years

of occupation. In the 1390s he became involved in the controversy over the deposition of Patriarch Matthew but defended Makarios of Ankara's position. As metropolitan he was active in preaching, composing more than sixty homilies.⁶⁷ **Joseph Bryennios** (1350-1438), another member of the Orthodox group, began his ecclesiastical career in Crete and then moved to Constantinople by the end of the Ottoman blockade. As a monk in the monastery of Stoudios, and later on in Charsianites, he acquired a high reputation as theologian and soon began to deliver homilies in the imperial palace. In 1422, due to his intransigent position vis-à-vis the union of the Churches, he convinced the emperor to reject an advantageous proposition of union from Pope Martin V.⁶⁸ Bryennios' literary output consists mostly of homilies and apologetic theological treatises, some of them directed against the Latins or the Muslims.⁶⁹ **Makarios Makres** (1370-1431) came to Constantinople from Mt. Athos where he lived as a monk. In Constantinople he became abbot of the monastery of Pantokrator (1423), and later on he participated in the negotiations for Church union. Like other contemporaries he was a prolific writer authoring sermons against Islam, theological treatises.

The members of this *Orthodox group* were connected mostly by friendship as their intense correspondence indicates. Their close relations are reflected by the fact that Gabriel of Thessalonike, Euthymios the Patriarch, Makarios Makres, and Joseph Bryennios collaborated in writing several texts, as suggested by the palaeographical analysis of contemporary manuscripts.⁷⁰ They were also connected by the fact that most of them held ecclesiastical positions and were actively involved in preaching or elaborating theological treatises defending Orthodox principles against Latins or Muslims.⁷¹

Yet, even if the members of these two clusters were divided over their religious persuasions and even if the *Orthodox group* seems to have prevailed at the synod of 1396, they remained connected among themselves. In one of his letters, Bryennios alludes to the intense exchanges between Constantinopolitan intellectuals in the years following the end of the Ottoman siege.⁷² Another letter addressed to Maximos Chrysoberges, part of their larger epistolary exchange, suggests that Bryennios and Chrysoberges had a friendly relationship despite their polemic reflected in several of their texts.⁷³ Kydones also expressed admiration for Nicholas Kabasilas and Euthymios, the future patriarch. Moreover, although on many occasions the emperor expressed his Orthodox views, he equally admired the Latin doctrine and rites. In one of his letters Manuel describes

the Catholic rites in positive terms,⁷⁴ just as in his treatise *On the procession of the Holy Spirit*, addressed to a French theologian, he did not put forward a polemic against the Latins but rather produced an explanation of Orthodox principles.⁷⁵

Alongside the members of these two distinct parties, Manuel's literary circle included other *literati* who held positions at the imperial court. One of them was **Demetrios Chrysoloras**, who, for much of his career served John VII: first, in the 1390s in Selymbria, afterwards in Constantinople when John moved to replace his uncle (1399-1403), and finally in Thessalonike (1403-1408) as *mesazōn*.⁷⁶ After John VII's death he moved back to Constantinople to Manuel's court. In 1409 he also participated as member of the senate and the emperor's *oikeios* in the trial of Makarios of Ankara.⁷⁷ Finally, Chrysoloras took part as imperial delegate in the synod of April-May 1416 which elected a new patriarch and clarified the emperor's rights in the church.⁷⁸ His rhetorical skills were also highly praised by the contemporary *literati*,⁷⁹ for he composed several homilies, a panegyric oration for emperor Manuel II titled *A comparison between the ancient rulers and the emperor of today* (Σύγκρισις παλαιῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ νέου, τοῦ νῦν ἀυτοκράτορος), letters, and rhetorical exercises.

Like many of his educated contemporaries, **John Chortasmenos** (1370-1439), having no aristocratic origins, acted as a teacher and writer in Constantinople for a long time. He was also an active collector of manuscripts: twenty-four manuscripts copied or acquired by him survive from his library.⁸⁰ Yet, unlike other scholars of his time, Chortasmenos, did not travel outside Constantinople, in search for a better life or for the company of humanists.⁸¹ His literary preoccupations reflected the activity of a usual educated Byzantine author who tried to approach a large set of genres and topics: poems, *ekphraseis*, philosophy, logic, astronomy, panegyric orations, *epitaphioi*, hagiography, and gnomic literature.⁸²

Manuel's epistolary collection records several other individuals with literary preoccupations who had close connections with the emperor as well. **Isidore**, later cardinal of Kiev (1390-1463), started his career in a monastery in the Peloponnese where he resided during most of Manuel's reign as metropolitan, after his studies in Constantinople. Much of the information concerning Isidore's activity dates from the period after Manuel's death and therefore is irrelevant for my purposes here.⁸³ His written work consists mainly of theological treatises on the union of the Churches, but also of letters and panegyrics addressed to Manuel's son, John VIII.⁸⁴ Finally, **George Gemistos Plethon** spent several years in

Constantinople before leaving for the Peloponnese where, apparently, he had connections with the Palaiologan family attested by the argyrobulls Theodore II Palaiologos issued in which the Despot awarded the scholar and his sons with pieces of land and villages in Morea: Kastron, Chōra Phanariou, and Vrysis.⁸⁵

2.3. Connectivity among the members of the literary court

Having identified the members of the scholarly network I will now turn to the main parameters which define its type and extension: *connectivity* understood as the ability to maintain relations between the members of the same group⁸⁶ and *usage* of the network by its members.

Most of the evidence regarding the connectivity of Manuel's network can be drawn through the analysis of the relationships established between the members of the circle gathered around Manuel. In this case, the letters constitute an instrument for measuring the quality and efficiency of these relations. Surely, the problems involved in the study of this particular genre always remain in the background: selection of letters for the creation of a collection, the utilization of specific formulas of address characteristic to the language of friendship etc.⁸⁷ Yet, they can support the detection of the political usages of the literary network and the place of the *literati* in Byzantine society.

In most instances the extant correspondence among the members of this circle reflects a spirit of friendship and respect, even when the correspondents had different political or religious opinions.⁸⁸ Thus, we have an intense exchange of letters between emperor Manuel and other scholars: Demetrios Kydones, Manuel Kalekas, Nikolaos Kabasilas, Joseph Bryennios, Demetrios Chrysoloras, Manuel Chrysoloras, Isidore of Kiev etc. Moreover, the texts dedicated to the emperor point not only to the emperor's position within this network but also to the type of relationship established between the *literati* and the ruler-literatus. John Chortasmenos, Demetrios Chrysoloras, Manuel Chrysoloras, Gemistos Plethon, or Makarios Makres dedicated to him orations or other texts such as poems, thus positioning themselves in a close relation with the emperor.

2.4. Uses of the network

This literary network served a variety of purposes both for the emperor and for its members. First, at the most basic level, it had a practical

function, since some of its members used their acquaintance with the emperor to acquire material benefits. In their letters addressed to the emperor, Kydones, Manuel Chrysoloras, or Demetrios Chrysoloras, show gratitude to the emperor for the gifts they received. To a large extent most of the scholars who participated in the *theatra* still depended on the emperor's goodwill. As I. Ševčenko pointed out, other contemporary centers of artistic patronage had limited resources to dispose of in favor of scholars. Thus, in a letter addressed to the emperor, John Chortasmenos made a request for financial support from the emperor for his mother.⁸⁹ Reflecting the same kind of network usage, Manuel Kalekas, Kydones, and Chortasmenos also wrote in the name of other individuals who were looking for administrative positions or various other benefits. In several letters, Demetrios Kydones promoted a friend, Theodore Kaukadenos, who was searching for a position at court⁹⁰ and who sent a literary text to the emperor in order to be performed in the *theatron*.⁹¹ The emperor appreciated Kaukadenos' text and, according to his own statements, he indeed delivered it in public. Eventually, he appointed Kaukadenos as his sons' preceptor.⁹²

Second, a further important function of this network was to provide a platform for cooperation among *literati* in the process of writing. The emperor not only delivered most of his texts in public but he also constantly circulated them among his fellow authors. Often, Manuel sent versions of his texts together with cover letters in which he requested opinions regarding their literary level. Such letters were sent together with the *Admonitory Oration for the Thessalonians*, the *Dialog on marriage*, the *Funeral oration on his brother Theodore*, and the *Foundations of imperial education*, *The prayers*, *The homily on the Mother of God*. Several addressees of such cover letters answered the emperor's demands: Demetrios Kydones,⁹³ Manuel Chrysoloras,⁹⁴ Demetrios Chrysoloras,⁹⁵ Gabriel of Thessalonike,⁹⁶ or the Italian humanist Guarino of Verona.⁹⁷ The process was mutual, for Manuel himself read and commented on texts of his friends.⁹⁸

Often the feedback addressed to the emperor took the form of lengthy and detailed interpretations. An example of the echo which the emperor's texts found among contemporary authors is the *Funeral oration*, commented extensively by Manuel Chrysoloras and George Gemistos Plethon.⁹⁹ Each of them praised different rhetorical aspects. On the one hand, Plethon, following the ancient theories of rhetorical composition, praised the right division of the various parts of the oration,

while Manuel Chrysoloras in the *Epistolary discourse* commented upon various theoretical aspects like justice, virtue, or education.¹⁰⁰ There were other instances of differences of opinion regarding the literary value of certain texts. As the chair of a *theatron*, the emperor noticed that at one of the scholarly meetings different groups appreciated different merits of the performed texts. Despite the fact that these remarks were also meant to flatter an interlocutor they are telling for the attitude which the emperor sought to cultivate at the court.¹⁰¹

In many cases, the collaboration between authors went beyond the mere sharing of commentaries on different texts, for they elaborated together certain writings. When addressing Euthymios, Manuel acknowledged his friend's role in writing a theological text, a clarification (σαφήνεια) following a debate between Demetrios Chrysoloras and the Italian Antonio d' Ascoli:

The present work is the child of both of us, it is yours and mine, not only because "friends share their possessions," but also because it belongs almost as much to you as it does to me. While I gave birth to it, it was you who helped it grow by adding your ideas. You may therefore do what seems best for it just as I would. At your discretion add or remove whatever you wish.¹⁰²

The evidence drawn from late Palaiologan manuscripts which have been analyzed in the past few decades, indicates that the scholars gathered around Manuel have often worked on copying and improving the emperor's texts. Ms. Vat. gr. 1619 provides evidence for contacts between the members of Manuel's learned circle in late fourteenth century.¹⁰³ The same type of collaboration is detectable in other manuscripts as well: in manuscripts Vat. Barb. gr. 219 and Vat. gr. 1107, containing the texts of Manuel, the hands of Makarios Makres, and Isidore of Kiev have been identified both of whom corrected the emperor's texts.¹⁰⁴ In Paris.gr. 3041 and Vindob. phil. gr. 98 have been detected the hands of several scribes who corrected the emperor's texts, some of them, arguably, upon Manuel's request.¹⁰⁵ Also, the final version of the *Funeral oration* included in Paris. Suppl. gr. 309 included no less than five hands that added commentaries and corrections.¹⁰⁶ In addition, there is also strong evidence that Joseph Bryennios, Makarios Makres,¹⁰⁷ and Manuel Chrysoloras collaborated in writing their own texts.¹⁰⁸

Third, Manuel actively sought to engage his literary friends into his political endeavors. Despite the predominant literary topics, the emperor's letters addressed to his literary friends often allude to the political situation of the empire. He was in constant contact with Manuel Chrysoloras, his ambassador, to whom he transmitted his thoughts on the progress of negotiations with the western leaders. At other times, in letters addressed to friends, he alluded to his daily activities or the problems he encountered in establishing order in the empire.¹⁰⁹ In a letter addressed to Kydones, Manuel summoned his mentor to take a more active part in the state affairs.¹¹⁰ The literary circle also provided the emperor with intellectual and political contacts beyond the Byzantine realm, especially in the Latin world where it had multiple ramifications. Many Byzantine *literati* were proficient in Latin and thereby became members of the humanist intellectual milieu.¹¹¹ The emperor's friendship with the Byzantines active in Italy who used their Hellenic education in building up their relationships¹¹² helped Manuel establish closer political relations and advertise his need for support. The cases of Manuel Chrysoloras, John Chrysoloras, and Demetrios Skaranos¹¹³ indicate that the emperor used his literary connections as agents in the West, alongside court ambassadors like Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes who came from aristocratic pro-western families.¹¹⁴

The case of Chrysoloras' diplomatic service in the West is telling for the general use of the scholarly network by its members. Chrysoloras was active in the West at a time when Manuel needed to show his willingness to continue negotiations with the Latin Church for a future union. Later on, especially after 1415, Manuel accepted the preeminence of Joseph Bryennios, another member of his literary circle, in religious matters at the court. He also recruited the patriarch Euthymios II from among his literary friends. These cases indicate that the relations established previously on the basis of literary preoccupations served later on other purposes determined by the emperor's changing interests.¹¹⁵

Based on these functions, in the absence of established rhetorical services such as the regular performance of imperial orations on designated dates by designated people (e.g. αμαίστωρ τῶν ῥητόρων), the emperor used this scholarly circle as a platform to advertise an image of his authority. As mentioned above, in the difficult political circumstances of the last decade of the fourteenth century, there were few occasions for panegyric celebrations. If before 1403 the *theatra* offered the opportunity for the emperor to show off his literary skills, with the stabilization of the situation

in the empire the emperor could rely on several members of this network, such as Demetrios Chrysoloras, Manuel Chrysoloras, Makarios Makres, and John Chortasmenos, to write panegyrics or pieces of public oratory which extolled his military and political merits in pacifying the state. This tendency is particularly noticeable in the period after 1415 when he succeeded to assert his control over the Peloponnese or other Byzantine territories in continental Greece.

Imperial patronage during Manuel's reign and beyond. Conclusions

The extent of the emperor's letter collection and the constant concern for advertising his literary compositions suggest that the emperor maintained, and presided over a separate group of individuals with literary interests. Manuel played both the role of a literary patron, supporting various *literati*, and of a patron of a literary salon, chairing meetings where texts of his literary peers were performed.¹¹⁶ While the late fourteenth century scholars established many connections among them, it was the emperor who played the major role in providing them with support in their intellectual endeavors. More often than not, these individuals created close relations with the ruler or with the ruling family of the Palaiologoi. At the same time, according to his own statements, Manuel constantly presented himself as their peer and not as their patron. This happened not only because they had common preoccupations but, arguably, because thus it was easier for him to advertise the political messages of authority embedded in most of his texts.

One of the tasks of this paper has been to identify the configuration of the literary circle gathered around Manuel and the functions it fulfilled at different moments in the emperor's career. I. Ševčenko's statement that in the Palaiologan period everybody knew everybody reflects the situation of Manuel's circle of intellectuals during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.¹¹⁷ The evidence presented here indicates a revival of court rhetoric during Manuel's reign in comparison with the previous reign of John V Palaiologos. We also have no information of systematic rhetorical activities at the parallel imperial court of John VII either in Constantinople or in Thessalonike.

As for the final decades of the Palaiologan period the evidence for imperial patronage of scholarly networks points to a steep decline. The

number of literati living in Constantinople decreased and no *theatra* are mentioned during this period even if towards the end of the empire, the *megas doux* Luke Notaras tried to revive such meetings by gathering fellow intellectuals at his house.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, if John VIII seems to have continued his father's efforts and apparently encouraged the creation of a higher education school in Constantinople under the guidance of John Argyropoulos,¹¹⁹ there is no much evidence on the activities of this school. Regarding the imperial patronage, the scholars and panegyrists of the time, continue to mention Manuel II as the one who provided support for the literati. Such a situation must come as no surprise: both emperors of the last two decades in Byzantine history John VIII (r.1425-1448) and Constantine XI (r. 1448-1453) were much more preoccupied with the negotiations with the Latins and the Ottomans. In addition, by that time, the intellectual circles of Constantinople almost disappeared as more and more scholars found better opportunities to teach in Italy as well as wealthier patrons.

Thus, when compared with other emperors of the late Palaiologan period, it appears that during his reign, Manuel played an active role in gathering rhetoricians to whom he gave the opportunity to perform their texts in *theatra* organized at his court. Based on the evidence of his epistolary collection, we may assume that the emperor wished to portray himself as an *arbiter elegantiae* of courtly literary productions and encouraged his friends to consider him as a kind of a *first among equals* rather than an emperor. In doing so, it is possible that he wished to follow the model of his mentor, Demetrios Kydones, who also gathered around him a circle of friends with literary preoccupations.

Several observations can be made regarding the composition and chronological development of this group which constituted the primary learned audience of Manuel's texts. First, it was not restricted geographically to Constantinople since the emperor had many connections among *literati* in Cyprus, Morea, Thessalonike, and even Italy. Second, it comprised individuals with different social status: with very few exceptions (e.g. Maximos Chrysoberges) all the members in the emperor's literary circle held a position in the administrative or ecclesiastical hierarchy. Third, most of them were divided with regard to their religious or political opinions and even at the level of literary aesthetics, as the members of this group seemingly had different preferences in terms of the literary merits of a text.

The differences between the members of the same literary circle might have forced the emperor to tune his political discourse according to the views characteristic to each of these different groups. From this point of view we can understand the fact that the emperor did not confine himself to a single genre but approached a multitude of rhetorical forms which he tried to adapt to given situations. In addition to his theological texts, Manuel authored extensive writings with political content: two didactic texts for his son, John VIII, a funeral oration for his brother Theodore II Palaiologos, a dialogue with his mother, as well as prayers occasioned by the Ottoman sieges. In these texts he made frequent references to current political events and put forward solutions for further action. At a different level, since the emperor was much interested in prolonging negotiations with the Latin West, the multifaceted literary circle offered him the possibility of entertaining the role of mediator between the Orthodox and the western oriented Byzantine groups.

In chronological terms, this literary circle knew several transformations throughout Manuel's reign. The group to which he belonged was also active before his reign, as the many letters dating from the period before 1391 testify to.¹²⁰ In the beginning, due to his mentor, Demetrios Kydones, Manuel maintained closer relations with several Byzantines who upheld pro-western views or who converted to Catholicism. In the second half of his reign the number of people with strict Orthodox views, especially members of the clergy, like Makarios Makres, Joseph Bryennios, or the hieromonk David, increased. This change in the group configuration can be explained on the one hand by the fact that many members of the pro-Latin group gradually left Constantinople for Italy while the influence of several Orthodox ecclesiastics increased. The chronological evolution of the circle is also reflected in the literary preoccupations cultivated at court: if in the first decade of his reign the discussion of literary aspects prevailed in Manuel's letters, later on he appeared more concerned to approach political and religious topics.

The significance of Manuel's activity as convener of a literary circle becomes clearer when compared with similar contemporary activities. In fact we know of only three other contemporary patrons of literature and artistic endeavors in Constantinople: Theodore Palaiologos Kantakouzenos to whom John Chortasmenos addressed several poems-ekphraseis on his palace;¹²¹ Constantine Asanes who offered protection to the pro-Latin group in Constantinople although, later on, he had to reaffirm his Orthodox position; and Matthew Palaiologos Laskaris, an active collector

of manuscripts.¹²² To these may be added Theodore II Palaiologos in the Peloponnese: *literati* like the *grammatikos* Manuel Holobolos, Demetrios Pepagomenos, author of a monody for Cleope Malatesta, Plethon, and Isidore, future cardinal of Kiev seem to have found shelter in Mystras at different points of their careers.¹²³ All three patrons were prominent members of the imperial court and *oikeioi* of the emperor: Theodore Palaiologos Kantakouzenos was a rich businessman with many Latin business connections, and a senator in Constantinople;¹²⁴ Constantine Asanes was *theios* of the emperor and of John V; and Matthew Palaiologos was a member of the ruling family.

Apart from these Byzantine patrons, Italian humanists residing temporarily in Constantinople also played a role in attracting Greek scholars into their service. Cristoforo Garatone, an Italian humanist and student of Guarino, who around 1420 lived in Constantinople as *cancellarius* of a Venetian businessman, commissioned several scribes to copy manuscripts for him or for his wealthier master.¹²⁵

Some members of Manuel's circle also maintained their own smaller but effective networks. John Chortasmenos was able to collect almost thirty manuscripts and was well acquainted with Constantinopolitan scribes, such as Joasaph.¹²⁶ At the same time, monasteries remained important centers of ecclesiastical manuscript production. In the beginning of the fifteenth century particularly the Petra monastery housed an important collection of manuscripts and prolific scribes like Stephanos or George Baiophoros were actively involved in copying texts both ancient and modern.¹²⁷ Stephanos who later on was to be appointed metropolitan became one of the emperor's *oikeioi*, while Baiophoros was a teacher. John Chrysoloras and Matthew Palaiologos Laskaris commissioned several manuscripts comprising both ancient and contemporary texts. Among the texts copied were *Mazaris' journey* and Demetrios Chrysoloras' *Refutation of Demetrios Kydones' treatise against Nil Cabasilas*.¹²⁸

Still, despite the fact that in the Palaiologan period such places of patronage emerged and offered incentives for literary or artistic endeavors, there was no other center comparable to Manuel's imperial court.¹²⁹ Not only that it managed to offer shelter to numerous *literati*, but even in terms of book collections, the imperial palace housed a library such as the one described by Pero Tafur who traveled in Constantinople around 1430s.¹³⁰ In addition, it seems that the emperor encouraged the copying of manuscripts with different ancient texts, rhetorical or scientific. A recent study suggests that the emperor sponsored a workshop of manuscript

production in Constantinople where Isidore of Kiev and Demetrios Pepagomenos, two copyists connected to the imperial family, were active. This workshop was most probably functioning in the first three decades of the fifteenth century. Five manuscripts seem to have survived from this workshop and one of them, the Paris. Suppl. gr. 309, has an official character as it opens with the emperor's portrait and it includes only Manuel's *Funeral oration*.¹³¹ Based on these observations, I would like to suggest that Manuel made a conscious effort to enforce the imperial court's role of a preeminent center of literary patronage, given the fact that previously during the Palaiologan period other local centers of patronage had multiplied: Thessalonike, Mystras, Italy, Trebizond.

Unlike in the case of other emperors of the last hundred years of Byzantine history, Manuel's circle served a variety of functions and had a wide extension within the late Byzantine intellectual sphere. It served both the emperor's needs to receive some kind of feedback from other fellow authors as well as his need to advertise his political messages. From this point of view texts were often regarded as objects in the wider political negotiations of the period and intellectuals were frequently integrated in the emperor's efforts to insure stability and support for his actions. Arguably, by attaching himself to the scholarly circles of Byzantium and beyond and by constantly seeking recognition for his literary achievements Manuel attempted to legitimize himself as a different kind of ruler. At the same time, the scholarly network he gathered around himself appears to have played the role of a parallel court especially in those moments when he lacked full support for his political actions. This extensive imperial patronage represented an approach that was rather unique for the later periods of the Byzantine state.

NOTES

- ¹ For the definition of late Byzantine intellectuals and further discussion of different intellectual groups see F. Tinnefeld, "Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," *DOP* 57 (2006): 153-172; I. Ševčenko, "Society and Intellectual life in Late Byzantium," in M. Berza and E. Stănescu (eds), *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Bucarest, 6–12 Septembre, 1971*, Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1974, vol. 1, 65–92: "intellectual denotes Byzantine producers of preserved intellectual statements, whether original or not, in short, Byzantine writers;" S. Mergiali, *L'enseignement et les lettrés pendant l'époque des Paléologues (1261–1453)*, Athens: Hetaireia tōn philōn tou laou, 1996.
- ² P. Bourdieu, "Outline of a Theory of Practice," 177.
- ³ Byzantine Monastic Typika.
- ⁴ For instance see the last page of one of the manuscripts of Manuel's oeuvre, Vindob. phil. gr. 42 comprising prescriptions of imperial behavior.
- ⁵ E.g. Demetrios Kydones, Letter 210 (1382-1383). This was a letter of recommendation for a certain Kaukadenos praised for his rhetorical skills. Theatra and public gatherings for the emperor's praises are mentioned (ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἀτεχνῶς καὶ ἀγορὰς καὶ βασιλεία καὶ θέατρα καὶ πάντας συλλόγους τῶν σῶν ἐγκωμίων ἐνέπλησε.)
- ⁶ *PLP* 17851.
- ⁷ Kydones' knowledge of Latin prompted him to create multiple connections among the Latins of the region. For Kydones' influence on John V conversion to Catholicism in 1370 while in Rome, O. Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance à Rome*, 98.
- ⁸ *A Monody on the Dead of Thessalonike*, composed after the Zealot uprising of 1345 in Thessalonike (*PG* 109, 640-652); *Two Orations for John Kantakouzenos*- both dating to 1347, when Kantakouzenos established himself in Constantinople. The *First Oration* stands as a plea to Kantakouzenos for support based on Kydones family's association with Kantakouzenos, and the troubles they have endured. The *Second Oration* is more strictly an oration: it gives a short, selective review of the recent events of the civil war, framed within an encomium of Kantakouzenos as the new emperor; *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum* (1366); *Oratio de non reddenda Callipoli* (1371); *Oratio ad Iohannem Palaeologum*, shortly after John V's return to Constantinople in October 1371: Demetrios is aware of John's disfavor, which he sees as the result of John's lending credence to Kydones' opponents. He asks to be released from his duties in imperial service, and for permission to travel to Italy, to continue his studies and represent John V's interests to the pope. The speech has several levels: it is framed around Kydones' scholarly interests but also discusses his career in John V's service and his theological stance; Four *Apologias*: I- discusses the development of

- Kydones' interest in Latin language and thought; II- defense of sincerity in adopting Catholic faith; III. *De contemnenda morte* (1371) a philosophical discourse; IV. *Defense of Thomas Aquinas against Nil Kabasilas* (1373). Cf. J. Ryder, *Kydones*, 42-47.
- ⁹ E.g. the letter addressed by Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakouzene presenting a translation from Augustin, Loenertz, *Correspondence*, letter 34.
- ¹⁰ E.g. Mss containing Kydones' letters: Urbin. gr. 133 written by Manuel Kalekas and Vat. gr. 101 which belonged to Kalekas and later on to Maximos Chrysoberges and his brother Andreas, R.-J. Loenertz, *Le recueil*, 1-2.
- ¹¹ R.-J. Loenertz, "Demetrius Cydones, citoyen de Venise," *EO* 37 (1938): 125-126.
- ¹² Coluccio Salutati, *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, Florence: Forzani, 1905, vol. 3, letter 13, 105-119.
- ¹³ Coluccio Salutati's Letter to Kydones, asking for a teacher of Greek for Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia: *Nunc autem volo tibi persuadeas me virtutis et scientie quam in te Deus ostendere dignatus est, commotum atque pellectum in animum induxisse meum dignissimum esse, quod te non solum diligam ut proximum, sed colam et amem etiam ut amicum, teque rogatissimum velim, quod benivolentiam tuam michi non inideas. Nam, ut noster testatur Cicero, nichil minus hominis este, quam non respondere in amore, cum provoceris; ut amodo quicquid michi Deus concessit atque concedet vel habere vel posse tuum dicas. Iacobum autem meum, quem amor affectioque discendi ad te usque perduxit, recipias in filium, precor; dirige consiliis et favoribus adiuva, quo finem honestissimum, ad quem suspirat, attingat.*
- ¹⁴ Letters 139, 147, 193, 210, 211, 215, 221, 233, 266, 340, 349, 386.
- ¹⁵ Letter 139, δὸς δὴ τέλος, ἄριστε βασιλέων, τῇ τῆς δωρεᾶς ὑποσχέσει.
- ¹⁶ Letter 386 (1388-89): letter in which Kydones requests his salary which the emperor did not pay to him (Λαμπάδια καὶ βιβλία πρῶην ὑποσχόμενος δῶσειν μοι, βασιλεῦ, δέδωκας οὐπω, [οὐ] οὐκ εἰωθός σοι τοῦτο πεποηκώς). In the end of the letter Kydones urges the emperor not to act as an ordinary person but to show high virtue (ἄρχοντι δὲ ἀγαθῷ καὶ μάλιστα κατὰ σέ, ὃς τῶν λαμβανόντων αὐτὸς μᾶλλον ἤδη διδούς, οὐκ ἂν ἀρκέσειεν ἢ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν ἡμῶν ἀρετῇ, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τῷ σχήματι οὕτω προσήκον ἡμᾶς καὶ τῇ μεγαλοψυχίᾳ νικᾶν.)
- ¹⁷ Other letters also attest for the relations with members of the ruling family, such as Theodore Kantakouzenos, Despot of Morea, or Matthew Kantakouzenos.
- ¹⁸ F. Kianka, "The letters of Demetrius Kydones to Empress Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina," *DOP* 46 (1992): 160-164.
- ¹⁹ Kydones, Letter 222.
- ²⁰ J. Ryder argues that John V consciously emphasized his actions rather than his words, *The Career and Writings of Demetrius Kydones: A Study of*

Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Politics, Religion and Society, Leiden: Brill, 2010, 111.

- ²¹ The late Byzantine imperial oration were also delivered in a *theatron-like* setting. See. I. Toth, "Rhetorical Theatron in Late Byzantium: The example of Palaiologan imperial orations," in *Theatron: rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter*, ed. M. Grünbart, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007, 429-448.
- ²² On *theatra* in late Antiquity, see *Libanii Opera*, ed. R. Foerster, Vols.10-11, Leipzig 1921-1922, ep. 1259. For the same phenomenon in the twelfth c. see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 335-356 and M. Mullett, "Aristocracy and patronage in the literary circles of Comnenian Constantinople," in: *The Byzantine Aristocracy from IX to XIII Centuries*, ed. M. Angold, Oxford 1984, 173-201; P. Marciniak, "Byzantine Theatron—A Place of Performance?" in *Theatron: rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter*, ed. M. Grünbart, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007, 277-287. On *theatra* in the Palaiologan period see N. Gaul, "Schauplätze der Macht," in *Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik: Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten der frühen Palaiologenzeit*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011, 17-61.
- ²³ For the earlier periods we have evidence from scholars like Demetrios Kydones, John Kantakouzenos and Nikephoros Gregoras who often alluded to such meetings taking place either in the imperial palace or in private houses.
- ²⁴ See F. Tinnefeld, "Intellectuals in Late Byzantine Thessalonike," *DOP* 57 (2003): 153-72.
- ²⁵ G.T. Dennis, "Prosopography," in Manuel, *Letters*, liii.
- ²⁶ Manuel, *Letters*, 9, 3-17, tr. G.T. Dennis. The ensuing translations of the letters are from G. T. Dennis edition. The passage was also discussed by N. Gaul, "Die Hierarchie der *Theatra*" in *Thomas Magistros*, 27-28.
- ²⁷ Kydones, *Letters*, 188.16-17: ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἡ πόλις ποιητῶν ἐστί καὶ ῥητόρων πατρίς, καὶ πνευμά τι μουσικὸν ἄνωθεν δοκεῖ ταύτῃ συγκεκληρωῖσθαι.
- ²⁸ Manuel, *Letters*, 34. Other mentions of literary gatherings can be found in Manuel's letter 15.5-6 to Kabasilas: "the astonishment of the others when they saw me reading your letter was something to see. They looked at one another nudging all the way glancing sideways at me;" in letter 30 to Constantine Asanes, "everyone who listened to the letter made the observation that it was really sent not to you, but to me;" and in letter 28.18-19: "you always provide the audience (τὸ θέατρον) with a chance to jeer, inasmuch as you present yourself before all as a noble athlete."
- ²⁹ As it happened often in the case of Demetrios Kydones, e.g. Manuel, *Letters*, 23.
- ³⁰ Manuel, *Letters*, 27 (1395) addressed to Theodore Kaukadenos gives a detailed description of a θέατρον in that period.

- 31 In Letter 61.2-3 Manuel suggests that Chrysoloras' *Hundred Letters* were read aloud: "the hundred letters you recently sent to us brought much applause and many words of praise from those who do not know your abilities."
- 32 Manuel, *Letters*, 30, addressed to Constantine Asanes, includes another description of a *theatron*: "Everyone who listened to it (the letter) made the observation that it was really sent not to you, but to me."
- 33 Manuel, *Letters*, 28. 16-20: "falsehood is your ally, fighting along at your side, in your never-ending battle. You always employ it as your model, your trainer and your teacher in preparing you for combat. But then, you always provide the audience with a chance to jeer, inasmuch as you present yourself before all as a noble athlete."
- 34 Letter 10, Chortasmenos- Hunger, 13-21.
- 35 Cf. Kalekas, letter 47.32-40: θέατρον οὖν τοῦτοις καθίζεις ὡς ἀφροστικῶς πάντων. In another letter addressed to the emperor (letter 34) Kalekas reasserted the emperor's function in the scholarly activities of his time and addressed him as emperor and rhetor.
- 36 Kydones, *Letters*, 340, 5-21. Cf. F. Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft*, 307.
- 37 Among the educated individuals contemporary with Manuel, yet not appearing to have been integrated in Manuel's circle can also be counted Makarios metropolitan of Ankara and Symeon of Thessalonike, who, until 1416, resided at the Byzantine court. They both expressed views that downplayed the emperor's authority (See ch. 7). In this category can further be included Matthew I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Bessarion, or George Scholarios, who started their careers towards the end of Manuel's life.
- 38 The approach of the group of *literati* gathered around the emperor in terms of a cohesive literary circle was followed by several scholars: G.T. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II*, ix, I. Ševčenko, "Society and intellectual life in the fourteenth century," 3, H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, Munich: C. H. Beck, 1978, vol. 2, 157; S. Mergiali, "L'état intellectuel durant le regne de Manuel II Paleologue," in *L'enseignement et les lettrés pendant l'époque des Paleologues*; F. Tinnefeld, "Gelehrtenzirkel," in *Die Gesellschaft*, 307.
- 39 Partial lists of Palaiologan *literati* were also compiled by I. Ševčenko, "Society and Intellectual Life," and F. Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft*, 371-386.
- 40 Ševčenko, "Society and Intellectual Life," 4.
- 41 Chortasmenos-Hunger, letters 43, 44, 47, and 48.
- 42 In studying the different groups of late Byzantine *literati*, scholars have used as major criteria the social status and the dichotomy ecclesiastic vs. lay (I. Ševčenko, "Society and Intellectual Life" and Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft*, 365-373). However, these criteria of division among the members of Manuel's circle are not entirely operational here.
- 43 Especially after the Ottomans' siege which ended in 1403 when many aristocrats became more oriented towards the West.

- 44 On the intense debates and negotiations over Orthodoxy and Church union see G. Patacsi, 'Joseph Bryennios et les discussions sur un concile d'union (1414-1431)', *Kleronomia* 5.1 (1973), 73-96; M. Chivu, 'Ἡ ἔνωσις τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν κατὰ τὸν Ἰωσήφ Βρυέννιον', PhD dissertation, University of Thessalonike, 1985; P. Gounaridis, "Ἐπιλογές μιας κοινωνικής ομάδας," in Ch. Angelide, ed., *To Βυζάντιο ὄρμιμο για ἀλλαγές: ἐπιλογές, ἐναισθησίες καὶ τρόποι ἔκφρασης ἀπὸ τὸν ἐνδέκατο στὸν δέκατο πέμπτο αἰῶνα*, Athens: Byzantine Research Institute, 2004.
- 45 G. Patacsi, "Joseph Bryennios," 75.
- 46 The Latinophiles in Palaiologan Byzantium formed a strong group already in the second half of the fourteenth century. During the reign of John VIII they became even more influential. See F. Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft*, 330-344; I. Djuric, *Le crépuscule de Byzance*, 121-136.
- 47 For much of his political career, owing to his family's connections, he held the position of *mesazōn* of emperors John VI and John V (1354-1370). A member of a Thessalonican family, he came to Constantinople at an early age and was employed by John Kantakouzenos, a friend of his father. See Demetrios Kydones, *First Oration addressed to John Kantakouzenos*, in R.-J. Loenertz, *Correspondence*, 6-7.
- 48 In 1396 after the synod organized by Patriarch Matthew I intended to reaffirm the Orthodox principles, Kalekas was forced to leave Constantinople and take refuge to Pera, Kalekas, *Letters*, 21.
- 49 Giovanni Mercati, *Notizie Di Procoro E Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca E Teodoro Meliteniota: Ed Altri Appunti Per La Storia Della Teologia E Della Letteratura Bizantina Del Secolo XIV*, Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1931, 480-483.
- 50 Kydones, *Letters* 394, and 387.
- 51 G. Mercati, *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota*, 481-483.
- 52 Chrysoloras' career has so far been treated in several monographs and extensive studies: Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini e le origine dell'umanesimo*, R. Maisano, *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del Greco in Occidente*, and the recent monograph by L. T. Wickert, *Manuel Chrysoloras (ca. 1350-1415). Eine Biographie des byzantinischen Intellektuellen vor dem Hintergrund der hellenistischen Studien in der italienischen Renaissance*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006.
- 53 Cf. the official letter issued by Manuel II when in Venice (March 1403) and edited by Th. Ganchou, "Ilario Doria, le gambros Génois de Manuel II Palaiologos: beau-frère ou gendre?" *Études Byzantines* 66 (2008): 90-93.
- 54 Mentioned in Manuel's letter 56.
- 55 In February 1410 he arrived at the papal court in Bologna as the emperor's envoy; then he had missions to Morea and to King Sigismund.

- 56 Manuel's letter 49 suggests a close relation between Skaranos and Manuel Chrysoloras.
- 57 G.T. Dennis, "Prosopography," in *The Letters of Manuel II*, xxxvi.
- 58 Kalekas, *Letters*, 4. 14-15, σὺ <Κυδώνης> δὲ ἄρα τὰ λαμπρὰ τῶν ἄλλων εἰς σεαυτὸν κεράσας ἔχει καὶ πολλὰ πολλαχόθεν εὐδαιμονίας εἶδη προβάλλη, μαθητῆς μὲν κοινῇ τῶν παλαιῶν ἀπάντων γενόμενος, διδάσκαλος δὲ ἐκάστου, μηδενὸς αὐτῶν διὰ πάντων ἐλθόντος.
- 59 Kydones, *Letters*, 37 and 73.
- 60 D. Jacoby, "Jean Lascaris Calophéros, Chypre et la Morée," *REB* 26 (1978): 190-193.
- 61 Cf. Kydones' letter 71 addressed to Constantine Asanes, and Kalekas, *Letters*, 73-77.
- 62 T. Violante, *La Provincia Domenicana di Grecia*, Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1999, 202-205.
- 63 I. Thomson, "Manuel Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance," *GRBS* 7 (1966): 63-82.
- 64 Cf. G. Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini*, 180.
- 65 Demetrios Skaranos enjoyed the friendship of many Italians who offered him a shelter in Florence, Cammelli, *Manuele Crisolora*, 66.
- 66 In 1397 he was candidate to patriarchate. He took sides with Makarios of Ankara in the dispute with Matthew I and opposed the Emperor when he wanted to install his favorite metropolitan.
- 67 H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reiches*, München: Beck, 1959, 777. V. Laurent, "Le métropolitte de Thessalonique Gabriel (1397 - 1416/19) et le couvent de la Νέα Μονή," in *Hellenika* 13(1954): 242-255.
- 68 In 1419-1420 he vehemently opposed the attempts of Church union, when Antonio de Massa came to Constantinople for negotiations and Theodore Chrysoberges and Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes traveled to Pope Martin V, R.-J. Loenertz, "Pour la chronologie des oeuvres de Joseph Bryennios," *REB* 7 (1949): 73-75.
- 69 Most of his theological texts were reused in his homiletic pieces: H. Bazini, "Une première édition des œuvres de Joseph Bryennios: les Traités adressés aux Crétois," *REB* 62 (2004): 83-132. She differentiates between two editions of the author's texts: the corpus of texts written in Crete and the Constantinopolitan homilies.
- 70 Ch. Dendrinios, "Co-operation and friendship among Byzantine scholars in the circle of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425) as reflected in their autograph manuscripts," (<http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/greek/grammarofmedievalgreek/unlocking/html/Dendrinios.html>) 13-17.
- 71 G. Patacsi, "Joseph Bryennios," 73-96.
- 72 Bryennios, *Letters* 23.10-11 addressed to a certain John.

- 73 Bryennios, *Letters*, 10.
- 74 See letter 55 addressed to Manuel Chrysoloras.
- 75 Ch. Dendrinios, "Introduction," in *An annotated critical edition of the treatise On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, 3-9.
- 76 Not much is known about his office in Thessalonike. In 1407 we find him in a delegation sent by John VII from Thessalonike to Constantinople, F. Dölger, *Regesten*, 77, no. 3207.
- 77 During the synod discussing the accusations of Makarios of Ankara and Matthew of Medeia, Demetrios Chrysoloras spoke in favor of reconciliations between the different parties involved in the conflict. V. Laurent, *Trisépiscopat*, 134, 136.
- 78 Silvester Syropoulos, *Memoirs*, 134, 136.
- 79 John Chortasmenos, Theodore Potamios, and Manuel II: G. T. Dennis, *Manuel II. Letters. Appendices*, Potamios' letter 8, 226. Chortasmenos-Hunger, 90-94. Manuel, *Letters*, 45.
- 80 H. Hunger, "Handschriftsammler und Kopist," in Chortasmenos-Hunger, 20-29. On Chortasmenos' scribal activity see also P. Schreiner, "Johannes Chortasmenos als Restaurator des Vat. gr. 2226," in *Scrittura e Civiltà* 7: (1983), 193-199.
- 81 *Ibid.* 13-20.
- 82 In a letter addressed to Theodore, notary in Constantinople, Chortasmenos indicates his knowledge and interest in rhetoric and poetry: ῥητορικῆς μὲν σχημάτων ποικιλία καὶ νοημάτων ἐξῆλλαγή πυκνότης τε ἐνθυμημάτων μετὰ ῥυθμοῦ τε καὶ ἀναπαύσεως ἐκάστῳ μέρει προσηκούσης τὰ οἷον οὕτωςί πως εἰπεῖν χαρακτηριστικά τε καὶ ἰδιαίτατα, ποιητικὴ δὲ ὀρίζεται μάλιστα μέτρῳ καὶ ταῖς τούτου διαφοραῖς (Letter 13, Chortasmenos-Hunger, 164).
- 83 He traveled to Russia, as cardinal (1436-1463), participated in the Council of Ferrara-Florence as Byzantine representative, and was appointed Latin Patriarch of Constantinople.
- 84 G. Mercati, *Scritti d'Isidoro il Cardinale Ruteno e codici a lui appartenuti che si conservano nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Roma: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1926, 130.
- 85 *PP* 4, 104-109.
- 86 On the connectivity of the elite scholarly groups of late Byzantium see Ševčenko "Society and Intellectual life in the Fourteenth Century," N. Gaul, "The Twitching Shroud: collective construction of paideia in the circle of Thomas Magistros," *Segno e Testo* 5 (2007): 263-340. G. Cavallo, "Sodalizi eruditi e pratiche di scrittura a Bisanzio," in *Bilan et perspectives des études médiévales (1993-1998)* ed. by J. Hamesse, Turnhout: Brepols, 2004, 645-665.) These studies emphasize the transfer of information and knowledge from one group to another.

- 87 Cf. G. Dennis, "Introduction" in *The Letters of Manuel II*, and R.-J. Loenertz, "Introduction," *Correspondance de Manuel Calecas*, Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1950, 16-46.
- 88 Representations of friendship in Manuel's letters are to be found in 5.5-8, "granted that our friendship has reached perfection, and that you are right in saying that nothing further can be added, is it not likely that this friendship will of necessity decline?" Several of Manuel's addressees were explicitly addressed by the emperor as friends: Demetrios Kydones, Nicholas Kabasilas (letter 15), Demetrios Chrysoloras, hieromonk David, or Makarios Makres. In other cases Manuel mentions an intense letter exchange with the addressee, letter 17.4-5 to Pothos: "your snowfall of letters has enabled you to surpass many of those to whom we have personally written."
- 89 πένης μὲν εἶναι ὁμολογῶ καὶ λέγων οὐ ψεύδομαι. [...] δεήσομαί σου περὶ τῆς σῆς δούλης, τῆς ἐμῆς μητρὸς (Chortasmenos, letter 35). Chortasmenos repeated his request for financial help in a poem addressed to John VIII Palaiologos: γενοῦ μοι σωτῆρ σύμμαχός τ' αἰτουμένω/ καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ συντηχῶν, ὥσπερ οἶδας/ τῷ παμμεγίστω καὶ σοφῷ καὶ πατρὶ σου,/ δὸς ἐν τάχει μοι τὴν χάριν πτωχεύοντι (Hortatory Poem to emperor John the younger, 5-9). Chortasmenos also addressed several poems to another patron of *literati* and collector of manuscripts, Theodore Kantakouzenos Laskaris. Another scholar, Manuel Chrysoloras, acknowledged to have received gifts from the emperor (Manuel Chrysoloras, *Epistolary discourse*, 54).
- 90 In letter 215, Kydones mentions that Kaukadenos received a position at the court by the imperial order (πρόσταγμα) of John V (Cf. G. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II*, p. xlvi). Kaukadenos lost however his position in 1386 and asked Kydones to intervene for him to John's mesazōn, Goudeles, because some of the courtiers were plotting against him, see Kydones, *Letters*, 357.
- 91 Kydones, *Letters*, 210.
- 92 Manuel, *Letters*, 27.
- 93 Manuel, *Letters*, 62 to Demetrios Kydones, asking for feedback on the *Dialogue on marriage*. In his turn, Kydones answered in another letter. Manuel's Letter 11 addressed to Kydones is a cover letter for his *Admonitory Oration to the Thessalonians*. Again the mesazōn's answer came in the form of a letter.
- 94 Manuel, *Letters*, 56 addressed to Manuel Chrysoloras on the *Funeral oration*.
- 95 Manuel, *Letters*, 61 (1417): in response to Chrysoloras' *Hundred letters* Manuel sent him an Oration to the Mother of God, for revision and feedback: "But just now I have composed an oration to the Mother of God which I am sending you in place of the reply I was planning to write. You will not, I am sure, take it ill and assume that your letters have been surpassed by this oration, for the preeminence of the Immaculate does not allow you to feel that way. Rather, on reading through the work, add to it if something necessary is missing and remove whatever is superfluous."

- ⁹⁶ Manuel, *Letters*, 57 addressed to Gabriel, accompanied the text of the *Kanon Paraklētikos* written in the aftermath of the Ottoman siege of Constantinople of 1411.
- ⁹⁷ Manuel, *Letters*, 60 addressed to Guarino of Verona. Evidence for Guarino's involvement in the emperor's literary endeavors comes from the manuscript Vat. gr. 2239, the very copy which the Italian humanist received from Manuel II. This codex bears the marginal notes of Guarino and of his friend, Nicolo Barbaro who both read the text. See A. Rollo, "A proposito del Vat. gr. 2239: Manuele II e Guarino," *Nέα Πώμη*, 3 (2006): 375-378.
- ⁹⁸ Manuel, *Letters*, 5. 10-12: "on many occasions you thought it worthwhile to place your writings in my hands even though I was younger and understandably less experienced in literature than now." Letter 15 to Kabasilas: "first of all then, I can give no higher opinion about your most recent letter to us than that which you know we have already given about your previous ones." The letter to Demetrios Chrysoloras on his *hundred letters*. Letter 10 to Kydones shows that often texts from contemporary authors were collected by their peers: "your letter arrived here bearing an indictment that what you had previously written was nonsense and at the same time accusing us of compiling these letters of yours into a book [...] Since all of your writings are above reproach."
- ⁹⁹ Shorter comments on the same text were written by Manuel Chrysokephalos and Joasaph, the monk: J. Chrysostomides, ed., Manuel II Palaiologos. *The Funeral oration on his brother Theodore*, 70-71.
- ¹⁰⁰ Manuel Chrysoloras, *Epistolary discourse*, 81.21.
- ¹⁰¹ Manuel, *Letters*, 61, 2-4.
- ¹⁰² Letter 54, 2-4. The answer of Euthymios (Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II*, Appendix p. 221) praises the emperor's text for its power, clarity and charm.
- ¹⁰³ Ch. Dendrinis, "Co-operation and friendship among Byzantine scholars in the circle of Emperor Manuel II."
- ¹⁰⁴ See also Ch. Dendrinis, "Palaiologan scholars at work: Makarios Makres and Joseph Bryennios' autograph" *Vom Codex zur Edition-From Manuscripts to Books*, ed. A. Giannouli and E. Schiffer, Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011, 25-55.
- ¹⁰⁵ A. Angelou, "Introduction," *Dialogue on marriage with the empress-mother*, 14-20.
- ¹⁰⁶ J. Chrysostomides, "Introduction" in *Funeral oration on his brother Theodore*, Thessalonike: Association for Byzantine Research, 1985, 36.
- ¹⁰⁷ R.J. Loenertz, "Écrits de Macaire Macres et de Manuel Paleologue dans les mss. Vat. gr. 1107 et Crypten. 161," in *OCP* 15 (1949): 185-192.
- ¹⁰⁸ Dendrinis, "Co-operation and friendship," 12.
- ¹⁰⁹ Manuel, *Letters*, 44 addressed to Demetrios Chrysoloras.
- ¹¹⁰ Manuel, *Letters*, 3 and 4.

- 111 Plethon was aware of the philosophical debates in Italy ‘Τοὺς δὲ νῦν Πλάτωνος ἠττωμένους ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ, οἷς φησι χαριζόμενος τὴν τοιαύτην πραγματείαν λαβεῖν ἐπὶ νοῦν, ἴσμεν τίνες εἰσὶ· καὶ ἐώρων πολλοὶ τῶ ἀνδρὶ συγγιγνομένους αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ, οἷς τοσοῦτον μέτεστι φιλοσοφίας, ὅσον αὐτῷ Πλήθωνι ὀρηκτικῆς. [...] ‘Ὅσοι δὲ ἐν Ἑσπέρα γνησίως τῶν φιλοσοφίας δογμάτων ἐπεμελήθησαν, οὐχ ὁμοίως τὰ τοιαῦτα κρίνουσι· κρεῖττους δὲ ἀριθμοῦ σχεδὸν εἰσιν οἷ γε τοιοῦτοι, ὧν αὐτὸς οὐκ ὀλίγοις ἐνέτυχον.’ Καὶ πότε σὺ ἢ τίσι τῶν γε ἐν Ἑσπέρα ἐνέτυχες σοφῶν; George Gemistos, *Against Scholarios in favor of Aristotle’s objections*, 2.14-17
- 112 I. Thompson argued that teaching Greek to the leading men of Florence, Venice and Milan was for Chrysoloras a means to attach the educated elites of Italy to the cause of the Greek empire. In proof of his contention Thomson cited Andrea Zulian’s funeral oration for Chrysoloras, which claimed “his true task was to save his country from danger rather than give delight to Italy.” I. Thompson, “Manuel Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance,” *GRBS* 7 (1966): 63-82;
- 113 Manuel’s letter 49 addressed to Manuel Chrysoloras suggests that Demetrios Skaranos was instrumental for the promotion of the emperor’s interests in Italy.
- 114 Relationships with the Latin West are attested by the significant number of Latin letters issued from Manuel’s chancery and often conveyed by his ambassador, Manuel Chrysoloras: letters were sent to the kings of England, France, and to Sigismund (some of them translated by J. Barker, “Appendices” in *Manuel II*); Manuel’s letter to the Siennese (PP 3, 120-121); four letters addressed by the Byzantine chancellor in Manuel’s name to Martin V and Ferdinand I of Aragon. Manuel’s Letter 38. 26-28 addressed to Manuel Chrysoloras speaks of the English King: “this ruler (Henry IV of England) is most illustrious because of his position, most illustrious too, because of his intelligence; his might amazes everyone; he extends his hands to all and in every way he places himself at the service of those who need help.”
- 115 In fact, in Manuel Chrysoloras’ case it has been pointed out that the pedagogical activities of the Byzantine scholar in Italy might have been determined by several underlying political factors such as the emperor’s strategy to promote proper relations with the papacy (I. Thomson, “Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance” and J. Haskins, “Chrysoloras and the Greek Studies of Bruni,” in *Manuele Crisolora. Il ritorno del greco in Occidente*, Napoli, 2002, 175-205).
- 116 On this dichotomy, see M. Mullett, “Aristocracy and Patronage in the literary circles of Comnenian Constantinople,” *Byzantine Aristocracy. IX to XIII century*, ed. M. Angold, Edinburgh, 1984, 173-201.
- 117 I. Ševčenko, ‘the criss-crossing of the lines of correspondence shows that everybody was in touch with everybody at some time, either directly or through a potential intermediary and that literary traditions ran in some families, in “Society and Intellectual Life,”’ 72.

- 118 George Scholarios, Letter 5 addressed to Luke Notaras, 31-35, M. Jugie, *Œuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, vol. 4. Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1935: 494.
- 119 Between 1425 and 1441 Argyropoulos taught philosophy in a *didaskaleion* sponsored by John VIII. See É. Legrand, *Cent-dix lettres grecques des Francois Filelfe*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1892: no.24, 50-51; S. Mergiali, "L'état intellectuel à Constantinople la veille de sa chute," in *L'enseignement*, 232-234; F. Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft*, 309. Later, under the patronage of Constantine XI, in Constantinople Argyropoulos taught in a so-called *Mouseion* frequented by the descendants of aristocratic families, F. Tinnefeld, *Die Gesellschaft*, 210-212, 309.
- 120 Letters addressed to Kydones, Kabasilas, Tribolios.
- 121 Chortasmenos- Hunger, *Poems* b, d, e.
- 122 Cf. *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten*: Laskaris commissioned to two scribes Stephanos of Medeia and George Baiophoros several manuscripts. Cf. also N. Gaul "The Partridge's Purple Stockings Observations on the Historical, Literary and Manuscript Context of Pseudo-Kodinos' Handbook on Court Ceremonial" in *Theatron*, p. 100, discussed in connection with manuscript Paris. gr. 2991A, a miscellaneous manuscript copied for Matthew Laskaris which included both older and more recent texts.
- 123 See the poems addressed to him. The dedicatory letter addressed by Mazaris: S. Mergiali, "Attitudes intellectuelles et contexte social dans le despotat de Morée au XVe siècle," D. Zakythinis, *Le Despotate grec de Morée*, vol. II, 245-250.
- 124 Synodal tome of 1409.
- 125 On the activities of Cristoforo Garatone in Constantinople and Italy see Th. Ganchou, "Géorgios Scholarios, 'secrétaire' du patriarche unioniste Gregorios III Mammas? Le mystère résolu," in *Le patriarcat oecuménique de Constantinople aux XIVe-XVIe siècles: Rupture et continuité*. Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, neo-helleniques et sud-est europeennes, 2007, 173-175. L. Pesce, "Cristoforo Garatone, Trevigiano nunzio di Eugenio IV," *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 28 (1974) 23-93.
- 126 John Chortasmenos, *Monody for scribe Joasaph* in Chortasmenos- Hunger, 194.
- 127 E.D. Kakulide, Ἡ βιβλιοθήκη τῆς Μονῆς Προδρόμου-Πέτρως στὴν Κωνσταντινούπολη, *Hellenika* 21 (1968), 26-28.
- 128 See *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten*, Vaticanus, 584.
- 129 Cf. also Ševčenko, "Society and Intellectual Life," 71.
- 130 "The emperor's palace must have been very magnificent, but now it is in such a state that both it and the city show well the evils which the people suffered and still endure. At the entrance to the Palace, beneath certain chambers, is an open loggia of marble with stone benches around it, and stones, like tables, raised on pillars in front of them, placed end to end. Here are many

books and ancient writings and histories, and on one side are gaming boards so that the Emperor's house may be well supplied. Inside, the house is badly kept, except certain parts where the Emperor, the Empress, and attendants can live, although cramped for space" (Pero Tafur, *Travels and adventures 1435-1439*, tr. M. Letts, London, 1926, 145).

- ¹³¹ D. Grosdidier de Matons and C. Förstel, "Quelques manuscrits grecs liés à Manuel II Paléologue," in B. Atsalos and N. Tsironis (eds), *Proceedings of the 6th International Symposium on Greek Palaeography, Drama, Greece, 21–27 September 2003*, vol. 1, Athens, 2008, 375–86.

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