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Contents

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Ṭoghril Beg and Alp Arslan in the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates

ANTONIOS VRATIMOS*

Abstract

The Byzantine writer Michael Attaleiates was born in Attaleia (Antalya) and, at a young age, left home to pursue his education in Constantinople where he stayed and made a career in the law. He is mostly known for his historical work that thoroughly describes the empire's military operations in Anatolia. The purpose of this article is to discuss the reasons behind the notable antithesis in the way the Saldjūḳs in general and the sulṭans Ṭoghril Beg and Alp Arslan in particular are depicted in the *Historia*. Undoubtedly, a point of comparison is discerned between the two sulṭans and the emperors who came in direct or indirect contact with them. On these grounds, Attaleiates appears to juxtapose Ṭoghril Beg's high respect for bold military men with Constantine IX Monomachos' striking indifference to the army, and Romanos IV Diogenes' conceit with Alp Arslan's modesty. All this serves to demonstrate the quality of imperial virtues inculcated in Botaneiates, the model of governance in Attaleiates' view.

Keywords: Michael Attaleiates, Ṭoghril Beg, Alp Arslan, Nikephoros Botaneiates, Romanos Diogenes, Liparit (Liparites)

Öz

Bizanslı yazar Michael Attaleiates, Antalya'da doğmuş ve genç yaşta eğitimine devam etmek için evinden ayrılıp Konstantinopolis'te hukuk alanında kariyer yapmıştır. İmparatorluğun Anadolu'daki askeri operasyonlarını ayrıntılı bir şekilde anlatan tarihi çalışmaları ile tanınmaktadır. Bu yazının amacı, genel olarak Selçuklular ve özelde Sultan Tuğrul Bey ile Alp Arslan'ın Historia'daki farklı tasvir ediliş şekli ile ilgili antitezin arkasındaki nedenleri tartışmaktır. Kuşkusuz, iki sultan ile onlarla doğrudan veya dolaylı temas kuran imparatorlar arasındaki karşılaştırma düzeyi ayırt edicidir. Bu gerekçelerle Attaleiates, Tuğrul Bey'in cesur askerlerine olan saygısı ile Constantine IX Monomachos'un orduya karşı çarpıcı kayıtsızlığını ve Romanos IV Diogenes'in kibiri ile Alp Arslan'ın alçakgönüllülüğünü yan yana getirmektedir. Bütün bunlar, Attaleiates'in yönetişim modeli olarak İmparator Botaneiates'in emperyal erdemlerinin kalitesini göstermeye hizmet etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mikhail Attaliates, Tuğrul Bey, Alp Arslan, Nikephoros Botaneiates, Romanos Diogenes, Liparit (Liparites)

Beyond doubt, Michael Attaleiates provides the most detailed account of the political and military events that transpired in the provinces during the course of the 11th century. He was born around 1020 in Attaleia (or Constantinople according to others)[1] and became a lawyer, following a quite successful career in the state bureaucratic apparatus. The positions he held enabled him to acquire properties in Rhaidestos (modern Tekirdağ), Selymbria (modern Silivri)

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1 Tsolakis 1965; Hunger 1978, 382. Regarding the surname Attaleiates, see Krallis 2012, 16.

and Constantinople. Details about them are found in his *Diataxis* (the monastic charter)[2] that has survived along with his law manual, the *Ponema Nomikon*.[3] Yet, the most important of his works is the *Historia*, which covers the period from 1034 to 1079-1080. This is when the Pechenegs crossed the Danube River and made terrible inroads on the Balkan Peninsula, threatening even Constantinople itself, while the eastern provinces were overrun by Turkoman tribes. In April 1071, the Norman forces took Bari, the last stronghold of the Byzantines in Italy. And in August of the same year Alp Arslan, with his victory at Manzikert, opened the doors to the gradual conquest of Anatolia by the Salḏjūḳs, which led to the establishment of the sultanate of Rum. The irksome defeats of the army and the contraction of the empire's borders are vividly described by Greek historians and chroniclers who dealt with the events of this period by attributing them to the continual revolts that had plagued Byzantium[4] and to the people's sins.[5] The idea connecting their misfortunes to divine chastisement had been gaining more and more popularity in the eleventh century.

This idea is clearly echoed in Attaleiates' book which, first and foremost, is an encomium on Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078-1081). It too contains several autobiographical features. Most are found in the section from the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071), whom the historian accompanied on all three of his military campaigns in Anatolia. In his capacity as judge of the army, Attaleiates observed many of the events that led up to the disaster at Manzikert. The *Historia* follows a chronological order that, however, is not preserved in the pages pertaining to Botaneiates' rule. Half of it deals with the first thirty-seven years, going down to 1071. The other half is devoted to the remaining eight years. The aim of this article is to highlight and discuss the striking contrast between how Attaleiates treats the Salḏjūḳs on the one hand, and the two sulṭans Ṭoghril Beg and Alp Arslan on the other. The attitude they both displayed towards their prisoners of war should not be examined in isolation from the negative qualities of other protagonists in the text. These were especially those emperors who influenced Attaleiates' career in important ways: Romanos Diogenes, Michael VII Doukas, and mainly Nikephoros Botaneiates whose imperial virtues were, in the author's view, the foundations of his success.

Various references to Uzes, Pechenegs, and Cumans are contained in the *Historia*, but most are regarding the Salḏjūḳs. The first is found in the section narrating the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055) where they are named "Nephthalite Huns,"[6] a term probably lifted from the *strategikon* of Pseudo-Maurice.[7] In general, Attaleiates' comments on the Salḏjūḳs are limited and quite negative. The defection of the Turkish leader Erisgen (Chrysoskoulos in the *Hyle Historias* of Nikephoros Bryennios)[8] to the Byzantines in 1070 is followed by a depiction of his physiognomy and the statement that he had inherited from the Scythians (i.e. the Turks) "their bad manners and ugliness."[9] On the eve of the battle of Manzikert, before the enemy's

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2 It was published by Gautier in 1981 and translated into English by Talbot 2000, 1:326-76.

3 He wrote it at the request of the emperor Michael Doukas in 1072-1073. It is given in vol. 7 of Zepos et al. 1962.

4 Those are thoroughly recorded by Cheynet 1990, 45-88.

5 Ahrweiler 1975, 56-57.

6 Of the two critical editions of Attaleiates' *Historia* by Pérez-Martín 2002, and Tsolakis 2011, the most recent one is used as a reference in this article: Attal. 35.18. The translation of all passages from Greek is my own.

7 Shliakhtin 2016, 50-51.

8 Gauthier 1975, 101:4-5.

9 Tsolakis 2011, 110:29-30. Shliakhtin 2016, 286-87, is of the view that the author's statement should be taken as an indirect denunciation of Chrysoskoulos for his disloyalty to Alp Arslan.

horsemen assaulted the imperial camp, Attaleiates says: "The Turks, who gird up with wickedness and great deception, accomplish everything by crafty plans and blatant pettiness."[10] In another passage that narrates the negotiations for the surrender of the Frankish chieftain Roussel de Bailleul to Alexios Komnenos, Attaleiates will state again: "For the Turks, who betray any friendship for money, had him (i.e. Roussel) in their possession and kept him as prisoner in fetters…for it seems that he (i.e. Alexios Komnenos) did not consider at all the cruel behavior of the Turks [emerging from] their insensibility and hatred for the Romans (i.e. Byzantines)".[11] The final reference in the *Historia* is traced in the section from Botaneiates' reign. Attaleiates, wishing to show that the new emperor's popularity extended into the Turkish world, writes that "not only the Romans (i.e. liked him), but the foes themselves, the most fighting men, whose actions do not come short of the actions of the wildest beasts, because, it is said, that even warlike men have regard for virtue."[12] Those adverse comments on the Salǧūḳ Turks are converted into laudatory applauses when Attaleiates refers to their sultans.

The continual inroads of İbrahim Yinal - the half-brother of Ṭoghril Beg - on Georgian land forced Constantine IX Monomachos to launch a large-scale campaign against him. The powerful imperial army was further reinforced by the troops of the Iberian nobleman Liparites, the duke of Trialeti. The two forces clashed against each other before the Kapetron fortress (modern Hasankale) in September 1048-1049. The battle is recorded by John Skylitzes in the *Synopsis Historion*.[13] The Byzantine generals Aaron and Kekaumenos, on the left and right wings respectively, defeated the troops immediately opposed to them. But Liparites, who commanded the center, was captured by the Salǧūḳs when he fell from his horse. Upon the news, Aaron and Kekaumenos withdrew with their units to Ani and Iban, the capital of Vaspurakan, while İbrahim Yinal returned to al-Rayy.[14] Let us go over to Attaleiates' *Historia* and listen to his account of the same event:

> At one time, a body of troops was gathered by imperial order on the Iberian frontier, having as their *syntagmatarch* (i.e. commander-in-chief) a notable individual named Liparites. A strong battle between those and the Huns (i.e. Salǧūḳs) was carried out; and for a long time the fighting was equal [on each side], but in the end the opposing army won the victory. And after defeating the Romans, they captured Liparites alive and took him, as though he were some kind of big prey, to their ruler. In the Persian dialect, he is called sulṭan. When he (i.e. the sulṭan) saw him, and after he learned of his [nobility of] lineage, given that the reputation of this man's valor preceded him, he asked how he should treat him. He responded "as a king." And the sulṭan at once released him from his bad fortune, and gave him compensation many times more for everything he had lost in the war. And this is how he came to terms with the Romans over the course of his campaign, because he admired the man's bravery and steadfast spirit; and he did not want to be second to him in the nobility of deeds and contempt for money. When the Roman emperor received him (i.e. Liparites), he decorated him with public honors, and lavished him with gifts and encomia that were magnificent in

10 Tsolakis 2011, 120:26-28.

11 Tsolakis 2011, 154:6-15.

12 Tsolakis 2011, 166:26-28.

13 On the author and his work, see Wortley 2010, ix-xxix.

14 Thurn 1973, 452:69-453:96.

> every respect, for he fearlessly put his own life [at risk] for the sake of the Roman Empire.[15]

Before examining the above passage, it may be of some interest to see first why the historian gives such a short account, which lacks analysis and sufficient description of this significant event. This is rather incompatible with the thorough descriptions of other military events recorded in his book. The reason for it can be his position in government at that time. The "imperial dignities and splendid gifts" Constantine IX dispensed to "nearly everyone"[16] led Treadgold to assume that Attaleiates was among those who had been promoted to the higher echelons of the bureaucracy.[17] On the contrary, Krallis argues (plausibly I think) that the young lawyer's public career in the capital had not yet taken off.[18] We can surmise that Attaleiates, viewing the palace affairs as an outsider, lacked the relevant documentation to provide a more informative account of the actual battle. It is striking, though, that his narrative is built around a single person. This is Liparites whose bravery and nobility motivated the sulṭan to set him free, and whose valor and loyalty were rewarded by the emperor in the palace. There are several examples in the *Historia* where the author underlines his close interaction with certain influential people, but not here. It is most probable that he never had an opportunity to meet Liparites. He sounds, however, quite enthusiastic about his qualities.[19] It is true that bravery and fine lineage are found towards the top of Attaleiates' list of qualities for rulers, as Kazhdan remarks.[20] From this point of view, it is not surprising that other individuals in the *Historia* are judged too in light of these criteria.

Next to Liparites is the sulṭan, who is highly respected for his attitude towards his prominent captive. The short dialogue between the two men is probably fictional. Perhaps Attaleiates had in mind the very similar dialogue of Alp Arslan with Romanos Diogenes (to this I shall turn below). What merits notice is the sharp contrast between Ibrahim Yinal and Ṭoghril Beg: the first seems to treat the Iberian nobleman as a hunted animal, a "big prey," while the second received him as a most honored guest ("a king"). Attaleiates attributes Liparites' liberation - which was without a ransom payment - to the sulṭan's moral probity. Leveniotis is of the view that the goal of Ṭoghril Beg was, perhaps, to weaken the king Bagrat IV through dissensions among the Georgians.[21] Yet, his view fails to satisfactorily explain why the sulṭan did not keep the ransom paid by Constantine IX.[22] The two or three years that Liparites stayed at Khurasan,[23] or Isfahan,[24] might have played a key role in establishing a close relationship with Ṭoghril Beg underpinned by mutual respect and appreciation.[25] Unlike Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233)

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15 Tsolakis 2011, 36:13-37:2.

16 Tsolakis 2011, 15:5-6.

17 Treadgold 2013, 313.

18 Krallis 2012, 7.

19 Matthew of Edessa also remarks about the warlike spirit of Liparites. Yet he goes one step further to attribute his capture to the betrayal of the Greek troops that "*fled so that he would not gain the reputation of being valiant*" (author's emphasis). Dostourian 1993, 79 (hereafter Matthew of Edessa).

20 Kazhdan and Franklin 1984, 38.

21 Leveniotis 2007, 1:44, n. 174.

22 The relations between the Byzantine emperor and Liparites are discussed by Tchkoidze 2006, 259-76.

23 Matthew of Edessa, 79. The same information is also found in the anonymous Georgian Chronicle, known as Book of Kartli, and translated into modern Greek by Tchkoidze 2006, 199.

24 Minorsky 1953, 57.

25 Tchkoidze 2006, 200.

who exploits the event to glorify the victory of Islam against a Christian enemy,[26] Attaleiates sketches the sulṭan as an imitator of the enslaved nobleman. The martial and Christian values of Liparites set the pattern to be followed by his Muslim captor. And the latter is credited in the *Historia* for adopting these values so as not, in the author's words, "to be second to him in the nobility of deeds and contempt for money." The sulṭan's kindness and benevolence were enough to greatly elevate him in the eyes of Attaleiates, denouncing in parallel Constantine X Monomachos' erroneous policy of disbanding the Iberian army and rendering the distant provinces defenseless against Turkish attacks.[27] For the same reason (i.e. the fiscal neglect of the armed forces), Attaleiates also blames the following emperor, Constantine X Doukas, as we shall see below in the first episode relating to the next sulṭan, Alp Arslan.

Alp Arslan, although not by name, makes his first appearance in the *Historia* under the reign of Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067) when the city of Ani was devastated, and a lot of civilians were either killed or led into slavery. Attaleiates does not say anything particular about the sulṭan, but gives some information which should not be ignored. In denouncing the emperor's parsimony who entrusted the *doukaton* of Ani to an Armenian named Pangratios - because he had promised to defend it without wasting money on military affairs[28] - the author goes on to expound how the military incompetence of this Armenian *doux* provoked Alp Arslan's severe reaction. Pangratios assaulted and pillaged the rearguard troops of the sulṭan "when he was marching through Roman territory, but leaving it untouched… [Unable] to bear the insult - for the majority of the warriors who were with him did not allow the folly to go unpunished also inflamed his anger - and fueled by anger and audacity, he returned to Ani and encamped before it. And he began the siege with a great armament."[29] Attaleiates appears to somehow exculpate Alp Arslan himself who traversed the territory without causing any damages. (But it is hard to believe that his troops carried enough provisions to sustain the journey through Asia Minor.) This can be seen in contradistinction to his writings at a later point in the *Historia*, where the author directly condemns the native soldiers for escalating violence against the provincials: "They hurtfully and savagely attack their countrymen, plundering forcibly their properties, acting as though they were the enemy, in their own land and country without falling short of any ill-doing or plundering [committed by] the so-called enemies. For these reasons, the most vengeful curses from their countrymen lay upon them given that their defeat releases all villages, and lands, and cities of the Romans from the commitment of this kind of acts."[30]And it is not only Attaleiates who reports acts of maltreatment and injustice towards the local population, but also Kekaumenos in his *strategikon* (it comes in the form of admonishments to his son or sons), who explains why many territories had been lost since the reign of Constantine Monomachos and why many people deserted to hostile nations and later brought them against the Byzantines.[31]

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[26] Richards 2002, 67-68. See also Beihammer 2017, 79.

[27] Tsolakis 2011, 36:4-13.

[28] Tsolakis 2011, 64:1-8. Pangratios is identified with Bagrat Vxkacʿi, the magister and governor of Vaspurakan. Beihammer 2017, 114; Leveniotis 2007, 1:70.

[29] Tsolakis 2011, 64:15-24.

[30] Tsolakis 2011, 151:11-18.

[31] Tsoungarakis 1996, 78-79. See also, Vryonis 2003a, 36.

Michael Attaleiates gives more prominence to Alp Arslan in one of the most studied sections of the *Historia*, the narrative of Diogenes' military expedition to Manzikert which, as in the case of the Liparites, brought about his capture and captivity by the Turks. Having collated the Greek and Arab accounts of the battle, Vryonis argues that the former drew the information from a letter Diogenes wrote to his wife Eudokia almost immediately after he was liberated from the Salḏjūḳs, while the latter came from the *fatḥnāme* (the official announcement of the victory)[32] that had been sent by Alp Arslan to the caliph in Baghdad and read in public. The longest, and most detailed, Greek account is that of Attaleiates who, as Vyronis notes, gives a positive picture of the sulṭan.[33] Here is how the author recounts the event of Diogenes' captivity and his treatment as a prisoner of war:

> When the next day it was reported to the sulṭan that even the emperor had been taken captive, some immense joy along with suspicion seized him, because he thought that it was indeed too great and unbelievable to have even the emperor himself, following his defeat, captive and slave. It was with such a humane and sensible manner that the Turks saw the victory, without boasting highly, as is customary on occasions of good luck, to speak generally,[34] and without committing the event into their own strength, but they attributed the whole thing to God, as [something] greater than a trophy that they won with their own might. For this reason, when the emperor was brought to the sulṭan in paltry military clothes…, he (i.e. Alp Arslan) stood up at once and embraced him. "Do not fear," he said, "O emperor, but above all be cheerful, for you will not be exposed to a bodily danger, but will be honored [in a way] worthy of your supreme power; because foolish is the one who is not cautious about unexpected (because of a reverse of fortune) circumstances." He then ordered a tent to be prepared and service to be arranged for him. Immediately, he made him his companion at table and dined with him. He did not put him to sit somewhere beside, but [just] next to him, making him equal [to himself], as his eminent rank and dignity [required]. In this way he was meeting him twice a day, chatting with one another, and encouraging him with many charming words about sudden reversals of fortunes in life. He was having words and salts[35] with him in this way for eight days without insulting him whatsoever, but only making mention of some supposed mistakes [that the emperor committed] during the course of the march of his army. Thus, God's judgement proved, here also, to be fair and impartial, for not only others, but even the captive emperor himself admitted that he (i.e. Alp Arslan) deserved to win. Even if he lacks a law to love one's enemies, he obeys by instinct this divine law in virtue of his inborn and good disposition; because the Eye of Providence ordains power not to haughty individuals, but to those who are humble and compassionate, for "there is no partiality [for people]," as the Holy Paul says, "with God." And in one of their meetings the sulṭan asked the emperor: "If, under these circumstances, you yourself had me in your hands, what would you have done?"

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32 Lewis 1991.

33 Vryonis 2001, 441-42.

34 The meaning of the verb περιπολῶ in Medieval Greek is ἀσχολοῦμαι; see Dimitrakos 1964, 11:5726, par. 4. So, the literal translation of the phrase is: "To generally concern myself with [this issue]."

35 The meals with salt they shared - an expression still in common use - denotes an inviolable friendship. See Sophocles 1914, 119-20.

> He responded without any dissimulation or any flattery: "Know that I would have inflicted many blows on your body"; and he (i.e. the sulṭan) replied: "But I shall not imitate your harshness and severity."[36]

Attaleiates highly praises Alp Arslan for the modesty with which he handled his achievement and directly links his magnanimity with his caution for a sudden reverse of fortune. How is this to be conceived, and who is alluded to in the statement: "Foolish is the one who is not cautious about unexpected…circumstances?" It seems to be addressed to two men. The first is Michael Doukas (1071-1078), who held a key role in Diogenes' blinding.[37] At a later point Attaleiates warns him: "At some time, though, a Titanic and Kronian eye will gaze on you too, and will turn the fortunes around of your evil manner."[38] Indeed, the deposed emperor was forced to wear the monk's habit and sent to the monastery of Stoudios on a "poor donkey."[39] The second is Diogenes. Despite the benevolence he enjoyed during his eight-day captivity, he pushed his luck when he tried to retake the throne by force of arms. Attaleiates returns to the "sudden reversals of fortunes in life," when recounting Alp Arslan's consolation to Diogenes; and later again, when narrating the surrender of Diogenes after the failure of his revolt. Though absent from the scene, the author states that those who were there had been seized by fear and compassion, as they were thinking of "the instability of conditions that suddenly reverse and rapidly turn to the opposite."[40] So, there is in the *Historia* a direct connection between the changing moods of fortune and those fallen emperors. Attaleiates highlights his disagreement with Diogenes' blinding, but there is no firm evidence that he wished to see him on the throne of Byzantium a second time.[41] It should be said here that he is against all attempts to violently overthrow a government, apparently including the one of Diogenes, with the sole exception the revolt of Botaneiates against Michael VII Doukas. This is justified because it met with the public's approval.[42]

Attaleiates returns to Alp Arslan's victory further down in a passage where he expresses, in a tragic tone, his disagreement with Michael Doukas' order for the blinding of Diogenes. The scene is set at Kotyaion (modern Kütahya) where the latter, dressed in a monastic habit, surrendered to the commander-in-chief of the imperial army, Andronikos, son of the caesar John Doukas and cousin of the new emperor. The passage is written as a direct appeal to Michael VII Doukas and goes as follows:

> What do you say, O emperor, and those who prepared this profane plan together with you? [I am speaking about] the eyes of the man who did nothing at all wrong, but put his own life [at risk] for the whole happiness of the Romans, and he opposed the most warlike nations with a great army, when he could have safely stayed in the palace and have shaken off the sufferings and apprehensions of battles; of the man whose virtue was also reverenced by his enemy (i.e. Alp

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36 Tsolakis 2011, 126:21-128:8.

37 Vryonis 2003b, 12.

38 Tsolakis 2011, 137:1-3. On the meaning of the "Titanic and Kronian eye," see Papaioannou 2013, 167.

39 Tsolakis 2011, 208:9-12. Exactly the same had occurred to Diogenes; see Tsolakis 2011, 135:4-6, 135:20-21.

40 Tsolakis 2011, 135:10-11.

41 When he wrote the *Historia*, he had already established a good relationship with the administration of Michael VII Doukas, as he had been promoted to magister and perhaps proconsul. Krallis 2012, xxix; Treadgold 2013, 314.

42 In a reference to an uprising against Constantine X Doukas, Attaleiates explains that it was doomed to fail because it did not make a wider impact on the public; see Tsolakis 2011, 59:27-60:2.

> Arslan); [of the man whom] he genuinely embraced, shared meals (lit. salts) with him, as though he were his brother, placed his captive to sit next to him and, like a good doctor, consoled his patient from grief with this kind of a pain-allaying medicine. So, it was a right decision the sulṭan to receive the victory from God, the rewarder, for he proved himself to be a man of such nature and shewed himself of such a depth of wisdom and forbearance. O emperor, what do you charge? Who is the man to lack his light itself and his sight that has been given to him by God? [The man] who has taken the role of father towards you in law and fact, who has refused the supreme power and offered it to you, who wore the monk's habit instead of the purple garment, who renounced everything earthly and exchanged it for a solitary life, the ill and weakened man who was in more need of medical treatment and consolation, the man who has refused all [royalties], being ill and in despair, who has been crushed as a reed, and wasted away by showers of tears [running down] his eyes and face? But despite this kind of so many efforts for persuading [you]…you, at any rate, give yourself to your anger [at Diogenes] and your lust to exercise power in a highly longing and insatiable tendency without feeling shame for his monastic habit or for your mother's breast that you and your brothers shared together with his sons. At some time, though, a Titanic and Kronian eye will gaze on you too, and will turn[43] the fortunes around of your evil manner.[44]

Undeniably, Diogenes is the central focus of this and the above-quoted passage, but he seems to be turning from an unlikable character to a sympathetic figure. The difference is defined by the way he was treated by his two captors. Although the sulṭan lacked "a law to love one's enemies," he showed remarkable respect for the arrogant emperor due to "his inborn and good disposition." On the opposite side stands Michael VII Doukas. He had no pity at all for the sick Diogenes who is presented to have abdicated the throne for the son of his wife Eudokia. This comes in antithesis to Michael VII Doukas' alleged lust for power. In reality, Diogenes was forced to surrender after the imperial forces seized the fortress of Adana where he had withdrawn with the remnants of his troops.[45] It merits notice that Attaleiates puts the blame for the blinding of Diogenes on the young emperor, although this had been decided by his uncle John Doukas and Michael Psellos.[46] Those two men are likely implied in his statement of the ones "who prepared this profane plan together with you." Attaleiates believes that the maltreatment of the sick monk (namely Diogenes) was an omen of the fate that later befell Michael Doukas. His reference to the sultan as "a good doctor" who "consoled his patient from grief" is reminiscent of his comment on Nikephoros Botaneiates' magnanimity towards his subjects, including the overthrown Michael VII Doukas: "The emperor was the most excellent, much more than anyone else, in restoring fortunes, consoling unfortunate people, and bringing those who had been in ill repute back to a profitable repute that suited their condition. Nor had he abandoned to a darksome and gloomy fortune the deposed and denounced emperor Michael, but, having consulted the chief shepherd (i.e. the patriarch)

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[43] The translation is based on Polemis' reasonable suggestion to amend the verb παραστήσει to περιστήσει; see Polemis 2012-2013, 340.

[44] Tsolakis 2011, 136:1-137:3.

[45] Tsolakis 2011, 134:28-135:6.

[46] Polemis 1968, 37; Vryonis 2003b, 14.

of Constantinople, he promoted him, as he had already become a monk, to a high priestly office."[47] Such acts, as the author states elsewhere in the *Historia*, are "worthy of imperial forbearance and magnanimity."[48] On this basis, we may infer that in his earlier reference to the "others" who "declared that he (i.e. the sulṭan) deserved to win," Attaleiates dissembles his personal opinion. This inference may find support in his admission, as expressed in the above passage: "it was a right decision the sulṭan to receive the victory from God the rewarder, because he proved himself to be a man of such nature and shewed himself of such a depth of wisdom and forbearance."

Attaleiates' admiration for the two sulṭans is not limited to the fact that they set their captives free. It is also that neither Liparites nor Diogenes were subjected to any punishment in the period of their captivity. There are many examples in the *Historia* illustrating the author's overall opposition to severe punishments. In 1069, when Diogenes launched his second Anatolian campaign, the imperial army clashed in battle with a group of Turks somewhere close to Larissa[49] in the theme of Sebasteia. The Turks were eventually defeated, and several of them were captured. "On the next day, he [i.e. Diogenes]…observed the captives of the enemy and gave the order that they be sentenced with death penalty, without sparing anyone, not even the man who declared his commanding brilliance (it was apparent that he was the commander from his clothes, as he was splendid in them with the weapons and other equipment) though he offered to pay a considerable ransom for his freedom and also to exchange himself for a large number of Roman captives."[50] In this passage, the historian's disagreement with the execution of the Turks, especially their leader, also deals with more practical matters, such as the collection of ransom which was essential to the soldiers' morale and fighting ability.[51] But the lack of Diogenes' genuine philanthropic attitude is doubtlessly highlighted in his refusal to exchange the Turkish leader for the Byzantine captives.[52] Attaleiates becomes more critical in the next example that concerns a stolen Turkish pack animal from a Byzantine soldier during the course of the Manzikert campaign. The accused was brought in fetters before Diogenes to decide his fate. He appealed to the intercession of the Virgin, but Diogenes ordered that his nose should be cut off, instead of punishing him with a double fine and dismissal from the army, as the Byzantine military manuals prescribe.[53] Attaleiates describes it as a "disproportionate" and "impious" punishment; hence, he foresaw that "a great vengeance from the God" would be wreaked upon them.[54] For him, this was an ominous sign of the defeat that the Byzantines experienced in the battle of Manzikert. On the contrary, Attaleiates highly praises the magnanimity of the Frankish rebel Crispin who successfully repulsed the attack of the *vestarches* Samuel Alousianos on Easter Sunday 1069: "Then the commander of the Latins sat down before [his men] and delivered a speech that was not ill-timed or unreasonable. He accused the Romans of impiety, because on such a wonderful and marvelous day which is the feast of [all] feasts they armed themselves [to shed] Christian blood…. He, however, behaved

47 Tsolakis 2011, 233:4-11.

48 Tsolakis 2011, 159:20-21. His statement concerns the Frankish leader Roussel de Bailleul after his capture by the Turks and his delivery to the *proedros* Alexios Komnenos, the future emperor.

49 It is located to the south of modern Mancınık.

50 Tsolakis 2011, 99:27-100:6.

51 See the discussion in Vratimos 2019b, 533.

52 Patoura 1994, 24, and n. 22; Koukoules 1949, 3:173-75.

53 Ashburner 1926, 109. On the episode, see the discussion in Haldon 2002, 283.

54 Tsolakis 2011, 118:13-28.

to them (i.e. the captives) in a gentle manner and released them, because he deemed them worthy of sympathy; and he laid the wounded in villages, ordering for their proper care."[55] Despite the author's low esteem of the Franks, whom he portrays as "faithless by nature,"[56] this episode, as Paul Magdalino argues, reflects well on Crispin and badly on Diogenes himself and the Byzantines.[57]

To conclude, Attaleiates' writings are adapted to the context complying with the two reasons that inspired his historical work: a) to preserve the past for the next generations; and b) to present Botaneiates as a model ruler. He was, the author states, "More philanthropic and more beneficent than those who ruled before him, while his piety was integral and incomparable."[58] This explains why the sulṭans are praised in the *Historia* for their piety, justice and kindness, while their ethics are contrasted with the vices of Byzantine rulers: "Justice, it is said, is honored by non-Christian nations and their customary virtues are strictly maintained by them. And they say all the time that all good fortunes come from the Creator. These privileges are common to all people and required by every religion. But our sincere and undefiled Christian religion is more a reason of our censure and our condemnation - because we have met with our fall from virtues - as the divine law of the commandments appears to say: 'the one who is aware of the Lord's Will but does not follow will be thrashed many times.'"[59] Attaleiates' declaration must be interpreted as an indirect criticism of Diogenes. His target, when he rebelled in 1068, was not "love of himself, but love of his brothers and love of piety."[60] His military campaigns, however, proved his cruelty and conceit. His cruelty relates to the imposition of the most severe ("impious" in the author's words) punishments on his soldiers, and to the execution of war captives. To that we have to add the emperor's admission to the sulṭan that if he had won the battle: "Know that I would have inflicted many blows on your body." Attaleiates, in sharp contrast, hails Botaneiates' philanthropic decree to enforce a Theodosian law dictating a thirty-day delay between an imperial decision on the infliction of a serious punishment and its execution because he explains: "Anger is a natural desire being the opposite of mercy."[61] Diogenes' arrogance is directly condemned by Psellos[62] and later chroniclers,[63] while Attaleiates' criticism is neatly disguised in statements of more general character, like when he comments: "It was with such a humane and sensible manner that the Turks saw the victory, without boasting highly, as is customary on occasions of good luck, to speak broadly" and "the Eye of Providence ordains power not to haughty people, but to those who are humble and compassionate." We may further say that his critique also applies to how Diogenes treated the sulṭan's ambassadors on the eve of the battle of Manzikert: "The emperor received them and communicated with them as the laws of diplomacy-speak require, but did not treat them in a very humane manner."[64] The author equally condemns the rebel Bryennios.[65] He was very

55 Tsolakis 2011, 97:6-15.

56 Tsolakis 2011, 98:7.

57 Magdalino 1996, 30.

58 Tsolakis 2011, 216:33-217:2.

59 Tsolakis 2011, 152:12-20.

60 Tsolakis 2011, 78:15-16.

61 Tsolakis 2011, 240:12-242:23. Also, Laiou 1994, 180.

62 Ljubarskij 2003, 357-58; 2004, 319-20.

63 Vratimos 2019a.

64 Tsolakis 2011, 123:10-12.

65 Bryennios made an unsuccessful attempt to usurp the throne in 1077. It was around the same time that Botaneiates took the crown from Michael VII Doukas.

contemptuous of Botaneiates' ambassador, although "it is not a custom for true emperors to behave [dishonorably] to an envoy, even of the most insignificant ruler." And he notes that "the envoy is considered to be a sacred person, as he becomes mediator between opposing sides. And he transmits peace by generally appeasing many disputes and averting issues [that may lead to] war."[66] In this respect, it must not come to us as a surprise that the two sulṭans are greatly distinguished in the eyes of Attaleiates. Their modesty in victory and their benevolence towards their captives are echoed in an old saying that is mentioned in the *Historia*: "Win but do not transcend your victory."[67]

66 Tsolakis 2011, 220:21-221:1.

67 Tsolakis 2011, 21:24.

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