

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON NOTIONS OF TIME IN THE HISTORIES OF GEORGIOS PACHYMERES AND NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS

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### Abstract

This paper will investigate the notions of time encountered in the histories of Georgios Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras, who stand out from other Late Byzantine historians concerning their references to time. How did the philosophical, intellectual, or ecclesiastical interests of these historians influence their conceptions of time? We will discuss how both historians fuse linear and cyclical understandings of time in their work, and how they lend further philosophical and literary meaning to the notion of time. The paper will discuss how Pachymeres' history seems to reflect the relation between *kinesis* and time, whereas Gregoras' prologue displays some parallels with Plato's *Timaeus*. It will explore how while Gregoras seeks to fuse astronomy and history-writing, Pachymeres manifests an interest in *kairos* and liturgical time. Finally, the paper will also discuss how both historians use time as a literary feature in their narratives.

**Keywords:** Gregoras, Pachymeres, Late Byzantine historiography, historical time, Byzantine philosophy

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## Georgios Pachymeres ve Nikephoros Gregoras'ın Tarih Eserlerindeki Zaman Kavramları Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler

### Öz

Bu makale, zaman kavramına yaklaşımlarıyla diğer Geç Bizans tarih yazarlarının arasında sıyrılan Georgios Pachymeres ve Nikephoros Gregoras'ın tarih eserlerindeki zaman algılarını ele alacaktır. Bu tarihçilerin felsefi, entelektüel ve dini ilgi alanları onların zaman algılarını nasıl etkilemiştir? Her iki tarihçinin de doğrusal ve döngüsel zaman kavramlarını nasıl birleştirdiğini, ve zaman kavramına nasıl felsefi ve edebi anlamlar yüklediklerini tartışacağız. Bu makale, Pachymeres'in tarihinin *kinesis* ve zaman arasındaki ilişkiyi yansıtırken, Gregoras'ın eserinin girişinin Platon'un *Timaeus* diyalogu ile bazı paralellikler göstermesini tartışacaktır. Makale, Gregoras astronomi ve tarih yazımını harmanlama uğraşını, Pachymeres'in de *kairos* kavramı ve litürjik zamana gösterdiği ilgiyi ele alacaktır. Son olarak, her iki tarihçinin de zaman kavramını eserlerinde edebi bir unsur olarak kullanmasına değinecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gregoras, Pachymeres, Geç Bizans tarihyazımı, tarihsel zaman, Bizans felsefesi

The notion of time and history writing are profoundly intertwined. First and foremost, all historical works have some sort of chronological narrative. The authors may label the passage of time by employing different dating systems; for instance, the era of creation, imperial reigns, or tax cycles.<sup>1</sup> Often, these offer insights into the religious, cultural and ideological tendencies of the writers and compilers. Moreover, their authors also offer perceptions of the past and the present— either covertly or subtly. Some histories may also make predictions or speculate directly about the end of times. Their authors may view time as cyclical as frequently encountered in ancient philosophy, linear with an end of times as in the Judeo-Christian tradition, or as can be frequently encountered in Byzantine authors, as a combination of these cyclical and linear frameworks. In some cases, they can also attribute philosophical, theological, and literary aspects to the notion of time.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For some exemplary studies on the relations between calendars, time and ideologies; D. Feeney. *Caesar's Calendar. Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (Berkeley, 2008) and P. J. Kosmin. *Time and its Adversaries in the Seleucid Empire* (Boston, 2018). Albeit a dated work, the most comprehensive study on Byzantine dating systems remains V. Grumel. *Traité des Etudes Byzantines. La chronologie* (Paris, 1958).

<sup>2</sup> P. Odorico, 'Le temps de l'Empire', in *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Όφεις του Βυζαντινού Χρόνου 29–30 Μαΐου 2015*, ed. E. G. Sarante, A. Dellaporta, T. Kollyropoulou (Athens, 2018), 30-41, offers an excellent analysis of the notions of time in Byzantine historiography, especially focusing

Several histories and chronicles of the earlier Byzantine periods, such as Malalas, Theophanes Confessor or Zonaras, have benefitted from many studies on their chronologies, dating systems and views of the past, yet Late Byzantine historical works (post-1204) seldom figure in such studies.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, I opted to work on the Late Byzantine historians through such a perspective.<sup>4</sup> Do they use different dating systems, what sort of perceptions of the past, present and future do they project? Do they attribute any philosophical and theological ideas to the notion of time, or use time as a literary feature? Moreover, as I was asked on many occasions during my presentations on the topic: was there anything distinctive about the notion of time in Late Byzantine history writing when compared to the earlier periods, could one speak of a perception of time, of the past or the future, that united the Late Byzantine historians? The answer, perhaps predictably, is no.

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on the emergence of universal chronicles. G. Brin. *The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden and Boston, 2001), studies the terms of time employed in Judeo-Christian texts and their philosophical/theological implications. J. Koder, 'Time as a Dimension of Identity in Byzantium', *Studia Ceranea* 9 (2019), 532-452, also discusses terms of time encountered in Byzantine historians.

<sup>3</sup> M. Whitby, 'The Biblical Past in John Malalas and the Paschal Chronicle,' in *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron*, ed. H. Amirav and R. B. ter Haar Romeny (Leuven, 2007), 279–301; R. J. Macrides and P. Magdalino, 'The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism', in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth Century Europe*, ed. P. Magdalino (Leiden and Boston, 1992), 117-156; J. W. Torgersen. *The Chronographia of George the Synkellos and Theophanes: The Ends of Time in Ninth Century Constantinople* (Leiden and Boston, 2022); T. Kampiniaki. *John Zonaras' Epitome of Histories: A Compendium of Jewish-Roman History and its Reception* (Oxford, 2022). Also, see M. Maas. *John Lydus and the Roman Past* (London and New York, 1992; 2005) and R. J. Macrides, "The Reason is Not Known". Remembering and Recording the Past. Pseudo-Kodinos as a Historian', in *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie*, ed. P. Odorico, P.A. Agapitos, M. Hinterberger (Paris 2006), 317 – 330. For the end of time, apocalyptic thought and views of the future, P. Magdalino, 'The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda', in *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. R. Beaton and C. Roueché, (Aldershot, 1993), 3 –34; idem, 'The End of Time in Byzantium', in *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, ed. F. Schmeider and. W. Brandes (Berlin, 2008) 119-134; P. J. Alexander. *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, ed. D. Abrabhese (Berkeley, 1985) and A. Kraft, 'Byzantine Apocalyptic Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Apocalyptic Literature*, ed. C. MacAllister (Cambridge, 2020), 172-189; M. H. Congourdeau, 'Byzance et la fin du monde. Courants de pensée apocalyptique sous les Paléologues', in *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople*, ed. B. Lellouch and S. Yérasimos (Paris, 1999), 55–97.

<sup>4</sup> This paper stems from a postdoctoral research project I carried out in 2017-2018, at the Byzantine Studies Research Centre of Boğaziçi University. As such, I would like to express my gratitude to the center's coordinator, Prof Nevra Necipoğlu. After my postdoctoral research in Boğaziçi, I visited the topic from time to time and gave talks on the topic at Harvard University and Marmara University. Some of the discussions in this article originate from my presentation in the roundtable entitled Time in Byzantium, organized by Dr. Elena Vasilescu at the 24<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Byzantium—Bridge Between Worlds, Venice and Padua, 22-27<sup>th</sup> August 2022. I extend thanks to the participants, especially to Dr. Pantelis Golitsis and Dr. Andras Kraft, for their helpful feedback and comments.

Just as there are no perceptions of time that unite Early or Middle Byzantine historiography, or just as the historians of the twelfth century idealize different pasts,<sup>5</sup> the Late Byzantine historiography is no different.

First, all Late Byzantine historians have their own dating systems and vocabularies for denoting the passage of time.<sup>6</sup> For instance, it can be observed that Pachymeres uses the Attic months, Kantakouzenos—modeled partially on Thucydides and touching frequently on military affairs—often makes references to the seasons, whereas Chalkokondyles seldom uses any indicators denoting the passage of time and instead relies on particles and adverbs. As in the case of many Byzantine historical works, the narratives of Late Byzantine historians are more detailed when the accounts come closer to the lifespan of the authors, and the narratives slow down and expand in detail if the authors are involved in the events.<sup>7</sup> Many of the Late Byzantine historians are critical of their eras and express nostalgia, but again, this is a tendency that can be observed in historians of the earlier periods. Some view 1204 or 1453 as significant turning points, some do not. In sum, all these issues can be explained by the personal choices of the authors, their literary models, and the Byzantine historical tradition.

However, in my readings of the Late Byzantine historians, two authors, Georgios Pachymeres (c.1247-1310) and Nikephoros Gregoras (c. 1295-1360), stood out for me concerning the notion of time. Both wrote highly classicizing histories with marked literary features. Both were also avid intellectuals with a profound interest in spheres such as philosophy, theology and astronomy; interests that I suggest, influence the notions of time in their historiographical works. As such, in this article, I would like to put forth some of my observations on notions of time in the histories of Pachymeres and Gregoras. I will not be discussing their chronological frameworks, narrative pacing, or their views on the past or the future. Instead, I will attempt to offer some tentative insights into their perceptions of linear and cyclical notions of time, as well as their use of time as a literary motif. Furthermore, I will seek to analyze how the intellectual interests of these two historians, like philosophy and astronomy, might have influenced their understanding and representation of time.

The first historian to be discussed in this article, Georgios Pachymeres, was raised in the Empire of Nicaea and returned to Constantinople after its re-

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, see Macrides and Magdalino, ‘The Fourth Kingdom’, 117-156 for a comparative analysis of the perceptions of the past in Zonaras, Manasses and Choniates.

<sup>6</sup> By the epithet Late Byzantine historian, I refer to the following: Georgios Akropolites, Theodoros Skoutariotes, Georgios Pachymeres, Ioannes Kantakouzenos, Nikephoros Gregoras, Doukas, Laonikos Chalkokondyles and Georgios Sphrantzes.

<sup>7</sup> As an example, see A. Kraft, ‘Living on the Edge of Time: Temporal Patterns and Irregularities in Byzantine Historical Apocalypse’, in *The Fascination with Unknown Time*, ed. S. Baumbach et al. (London, 2017), 71-91, 83-85, for narrative speed in apocalyptic accounts.

conquest in 1261.<sup>8</sup> He held several ecclesiastical and civil offices and was also one of the foremost literati of his era. In addition to penning rhetorical works and a *quadrivium*, Pachymeres also worked extensively on Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. He wrote commentaries on the works of both philosophers, as well as a synopsis of the Aristotelian corpus. His history is unfinished and consists of thirteen books covering the reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II Palaiologos.<sup>9</sup> Even in the prologue, it can be proposed that Pachymeres' philosophical interests influence the notions of time in his history:

...His (Pachymeres) purpose was that the entire duration of time (ὁ ζῦμπας χρόνος), whose nature it is to hide many things through frequent circular revolutions (συχναῖς κυκλικαῖς περιόδοις), might not obliterate these things also by making them diminished and hidden, through the famous law of nature by which all things existing become hidden, as one of the wise once said, creating this true maxim... I would not have undertaken the task of writing if I didn't expect things will continue to worsen as time progresses when I look to the future from the standpoint of the present, even more so when I calculate the events of the future from those of the past. For it would be indeed more surprising to hear that we have advanced from the peaceful and stable circumstances which we have enjoyed in the past to the present misfortune, than that which is now manifest, and that our affairs have collapsed from their previous blossoming state at the entry of a harsh winter, they will wither even more, so that far from blooming again, they will not have any share in the movement of life (ζωτικῆς τὸ παράπαν μετέχειν κινήσεως).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, at the very start of his work, Pachymeres makes an explicit reference to the cyclical nature of time, and a few other such occasions are found elsewhere in his work.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, one can trace a cyclical pattern in many instances in his history; oaths are made and then broken, gifts are given and soon taken back, cities like Tralles and Constantinople are restored only to be hit soon by earthquakes.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For Pachymeres' life and work see *Georges Pachymères. Relations historiques*, 5 vols, ed. and trans. A. Failler and V. Laurent V (Paris, 1984-2000), I, xix-xxiii; A. Failler, 'Pachymeriana Nova', *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 49 (1991), 171-195; N. J. Cassidy, *A Translation and Historical Commentary of Book One and Book Two of the Historia of Georgios Pachymeres*, PhD dissertation, University of Western Australia, 2004, xiii-xxiii; P. Golitsis, 'Georges Pachymère comme didascale: essai pour une reconstitution de sa carrière et de son enseignement philosophique', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 58 (2008), 53-68; idem, 'La date de composition de la *Philosophia* de Georges Pachymère et quelques précisions sur la vie de l'auteur', *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 67 (2009), 209-215.

<sup>9</sup> The work has been edited and translated into French, see *Relations historiques*, and trans. A. Failler and V. Laurent cited above. From now onwards, references to the history will be given as Pachymeres, volume number, page number.

<sup>10</sup> Pachymeres, I, 24-25. English translation by Cassidy slightly modified here, Cassidy, *Pachymeres*, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Pachymeres, I, 149, 211; IV, 311.

<sup>12</sup> For some examples of such cyclical episodes, Pachymeres, I, 137-139, Michael VIII takes back his

Ecclesiastical affairs—in which Pachymeres has a special interest as a churchman—also seem to follow cyclical patterns: patriarchs are enthroned and deposed several times, and changed opinions on doctrines shift back quickly.<sup>13</sup> While the ‘cycle’ of patriarchs or the changing doctrines were indeed a reality of the events narrated, it can be proposed that Pachymeres’ narrative stresses these quick reversals. In a poignant episode, while narrating in detail the ambitious efforts of Michael VIII to rebuild Tralles, Pachymeres also makes a digression into the cyclical motions of air and water as he discusses the lack of water in the city. The fate of Tralles also mirrors the cyclical motion of water, as soon afterward the city is conquered by the Persians and is demolished; the events that were facilitated by the lack of water.<sup>14</sup> Another such instance of a cyclical pattern concerns the narration of the generosity of Theodore II Laskaris. An emperor of Pachymeres’ idealized past, the Nicaean Empire, Laskaris distributes a lot of money but also gains back through his generosity. Pachymeres likens this flow of money to a circle and emphasizes that as Laskaris was at the center, the circle was stable—and so were the finances of the empire.<sup>15</sup>

Pachymeres also displays a linear understanding of time and history. In the prologue, he speaks about the entire duration of time (*o sympas chronos*). Although *chronos* could be used to refer to time in a generic sense as well, it also implied historical time, the countable duration of time observed by humanity, with a beginning and an end. It would come to an end, along with the *cosmos*, as pre-ordained by God.<sup>16</sup> Pachymeres’ usage of *chronos*, augmented by the adjective

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former grants; 151-153, Despot Michael submits to the emperor and is honored, but then revolts again; 178-179, all the riches gathered by the emperor and the palaces renovated by him are lost in a day.

Pachymeres also evokes the cyclical nature of time in his commentary to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, while discussing Aristotle’s arguments on time, motion and the cyclical motion of the heavens, E. Pappa. *Georgios Pachymeres, Philosophia, Buch 10, Kommentar zur Metaphysik des Aristoteles* (Athens, 2002), 71-73.

<sup>13</sup> For one very prominent episode of such a shift in doctrines, see Pachymeres, I, 74-75, where the Arsenites are persuaded with difficulty by the emperor to come back to the Church, but they revert to their previous positions by the next morning.

<sup>14</sup> Pachymeres, I, 592-595; I. Polemis, ‘Theodore Metochites’ Byzantion as a Testimony to the Cosmological Discussions of the Early Palaiologan Period’, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 66 (2008), 241-246, 243, discusses Metochites and Choumnos’ discussions of the circular motions of water, stemming from Aristotle’s *Meteorologica*. As an avid reader and commentator of Aristotle, it is possible that Pachymeres was also influenced by these Aristotelian discussions. Book 5 of his *Philosophia*, a compendium of Aristotelian philosophy, is devoted to the *Meteorologica*, which as expected, also discusses the circular motions of the earth and heavens on many occasions. *Georgios Pachymeres. Philosophia Book 5. Commentary in Aristotle’s Meteorologica*, ed. with introduction and notes, I. Telelis (Athens, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Pachymeres, I, 61-62, 97-98.

<sup>16</sup> Plass, ‘Maximus the Confessor’, 260-622, 277 and Koder, ‘Time as a Dimension of Identity’, 530-532.

*sympas*, seems to indicate a similar understanding of linear time. Although he does not make explicit references to the end of times, Pachymeres' narrative is laced with references to divine providence and God's designs for humanity. Moreover, his account is also filled with divine signs, omens, and prophecies.<sup>17</sup> One could argue that for Pachymeres, time and history are linear, with cyclical patterns manifesting themselves in this linearity that progressed to the end of times. Such an outlook is not unexpected, as it has been demonstrated by several scholars that for the Byzantines, the notion of the Judeo-Christian linear time and the Ancient Greek ideas of cyclical time did not contradict each other. Moreover, cyclical time does not necessarily imply that events happen exactly in the same manner, but merely follow a cyclical pattern. Thus, throughout the duration of the linear, historical time, cyclical patterns such as rise and fall, birth and death, or glory and defeat could manifest themselves in that linearity. Moreover, patterns of time such as the exchanges of seasons and the liturgical calendar also imposed a cyclical quality to time perceived by humanity. Ultimately, many Byzantine authors fused the two, just as in the case of Pachymeres.<sup>18</sup>

In the prologue, while underlining the disastrous outcome he expects for Byzantium, Pachymeres states that the empire's affairs will not even have a share in the movement (*kinesis*) of life. Throughout his history, events are also sometimes presented as a form of *kinesis*, while the verb *kinein* is employed several times to describe the unfolding of various events.<sup>19</sup> *Kinesis* was a word with philosophical undertones, meaning motion, change and alteration. It figured prominently in the philosophical discussions of Plato and Aristotle, to whom Pachymeres wrote many commentaries.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, both Plato and Aristotle strongly related *kinesis* to the

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<sup>17</sup> Pachymeres I, 47-48, on a prophecy on the accession of Michael VIII; 179-181, Michael VIII's accession foreshadowed in his infancy when he would only stop crying if 'Hail Basileus' was sung; 391-392, Michael VIII prophesied to become the new Constantine; 667-668, Michael VIII's death foreshadowed by the letters of his name; II, 457-458, an earthquake in Dyrrachium as an omen; IV, 568-569, a blasphemous man breaks his leg as a divine punishment; 612-613, references to divine punishment; 638-639, a fire in Constantinople as divine punishment. Many more examples are found in the history. See also Cassidy, *Pachymeres*, 149, for the use of omens and prophecies in Pachymeres' history.

<sup>18</sup> Odorico, 'Le temps de l'Empire', 33; E. Vasilescu, 'Early Christianity (up to the eighth century AD) about the Notions of Time and the Redemption of the Soul', *Studia Patristica* 91, vol. 17 (2017), 167-183, 178-179; R. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and Continuum, Theories in Antiquity and Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1986) 187-188; and M. Plass, 'Transcendent Time in Maximus the Confessor', *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 44.2 (1980), 259-277, 270, also notes that even for Neo-Platonist philosophers, time could be both cyclical and linear, its circularity stemming from the spherical motion of the universe.

<sup>19</sup> Pachymeres, I, 25, 117, 143, 175, 295; II, 387, 473, 503, 547, 554, 605, 643; III, 213; IV, 311, 333, 335, 337, 413.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to the works cited in footnote 8, and below in footnote 23 see P. Golitsis, 'Un commentaire perpétuel de Georges Pachymère à la Physique d'Aristote, faussement attribué à Michel Psellos', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100 (2007), 637-766; idem, 'A Byzantine Philosopher's

notion of time, and following them, so did many Byzantine philosophers within a Christian framework, including the Church Fathers.<sup>21</sup> For instance, for Aristotle, time (*chronos*) was a measure of movement, the numerical change of *kinesis*, and there would be no understanding of time without *kinesis*.<sup>22</sup> In his commentaries to Plato's *Parmenides* and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Pachymeres deals with the concept of *kinesis* concerning the notion of time.<sup>23</sup> In a poem he wrote as a preface to his commentary on Aristotelian *Physics*, Pachymeres also refers to time as measuring all things that relate to nature.<sup>24</sup> In his history, in addition to employing variants of the word *kinesis* and the verb *kinein* to narrate the events, Pachymeres frequently uses verbs of motion to describe the passage of time; *tribein*, *anatrechein*, *eksorein*, *proerchesthai*, *parelthein*.<sup>25</sup> While this can be encountered in other Byzantine historians on some occasions, Pachymeres' usage of verbs of motion and that of the variants of *kinein* is rather noteworthy. One could perhaps suggest that Pachymeres' history exhibits an influence of these philosophical discussions on time and motion.

Another prominent notion of time in Pachymeres' history is *kairos*. While *kairos* could be employed to signify season, generic time, or a period shorter than *chronos*, it also had the meaning of the right, apt time and occasion.<sup>26</sup> The concept of the right, proper time existed in Ancient Greek thought and was also present in the Bible. *Kairos* is an especially prominent theme in the *Ecclesiastes* of the Old Testament, which states that there is a right time for all deeds on earth.<sup>27</sup> This is

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Devoutness toward God: George Pachymeres' Poetic Epilogue to His Commentary on Aristotle's *Physics*', in *The Many Faces of Byzantine Philosophy*, ed. B. Bydén and K. Ierodiakonou, (Athens, 2012), 109-127; 109-127 and T. Boiadjiev, 'Georgios Pachymeres between Plato and Dionysius: the One and the Being', in *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, ed. J. A. Aertsen and A. S. Speer (Berlin and New York, 1998), 501-511 for Pachymeres' philosophical work.

- <sup>21</sup> Plass, 'Maximus the Confessor', 260-262, 277; Koder, 'Time as a Dimension of Identity', 530-532; Vasilescu, 'Early Christianity', 3-7, 14.
- <sup>22</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, 217-220, 'ὅτι μὲν τοίνυν ὁ χρόνος ἀριθμὸς ἔστι κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὑστερον.' The exact meaning of Aristotle's arguments is still subject to debate, T. Roark. *Aristotle on Time: A Study of the Physics* (Cambridge, 2011) and C. C. Harry. *Chronos in Aristotle's Physics. On the Nature of Time* (New Haven and New York, 2005), Sorabji, *Time, Creation and Continuum*, 84-90, for some commentaries on the issue.
- <sup>23</sup> George Pachymeres, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, ed. L. G. Westerink (Athens, 1989), 38-41; Pappa. *Georgios Pachymeres, Philosophia*, 71-73.
- <sup>24</sup> The poem is edited and translated, with commentary in Golitsis, 'George Pachymeres' Poetic Epilogue', 111-112; 'Ταῦτ' ἄρα θείας μήτισι φύσιος ὄντα ἄποινα, αἰὲν ἀθόρματ' ἔασσι παλμπλάργητοιο χρόνοι, σέϊο δ' ἐπιπροσόνης πυκνὰ σπουδάσματα κλυτὰ. Μετρεῖ ταῦτα φύσις, μετρεῖ χρόνος...'
- <sup>25</sup> Pachymeres, I, 25, 29, 39, 49, 52, 57, 87, 115, 161, 177, 185, 295; II, 417, 473, 503, 529, 569, 655, 657; III, 25, 59, 83, 171, 205; IV, 393, 397 for some examples.
- <sup>26</sup> Koder, 'Time as a Dimension of Identity', 530-535 for the definition of *kairos* by several Byzantine thinkers.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ecclesiastes* 3, 1-2, 11, 14: For everything there is a *chronos* (time) and for every matter under heaven a *kairos*, a *kairos* to give birth and a *kairos* to die, a *kairos* to plant and a *kairos* to harvest the planted... He made everything good in its *kairos*; and he has given the *aion* (eternity/age) in



valid not only for good deeds but also for less positive ones like hating or dying, and it is implied that only God knows with certainty the right time for all. In his history, Pachymeres employs the notion of *kairos* frequently and seems to have a fondness for this theme of the right time. Many characters in his narrative, such as emperors, patriarchs, and statesmen, are explicitly depicted as waiting for the *kairos* for their designs, be they good or bad. For instance, Michael VIII waits for the *kairos* not only to revolt against the Laskarids and seize the crown, to re-conquer Constantinople but also to blind John IV, take revenge on the patriarch, or punish Holobolos for his speech.<sup>28</sup> On some occasions when deeds go awry or come to a bad ending, Pachymeres takes care to stress their untimeliness, like the untimely (*akairos*) rivalries with the Alans that cause future problems for the empire or the untimely anger of Holobolos that leads to his disgrace.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, individuals sometimes mistakenly believe that it is the proper time, *kairos*, for their deeds and fail as it is not. As in *Ecclesiastes*, despite looking out for *kairos*, Pachymeres' characters make flawed judgments on account of their limited human understanding. For instance, the emperor thinks it is the right time for a campaign on the Eastern front, but is proved wrong as his efforts merely serve to further up the borders for Turkic invasions.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, while John Bekkos is reading philosophical and theological works to convince the emperor in theological matters, he comes across as a piece addressed by Nikephoros Blemmydes to Theodore II Laskaris.<sup>31</sup> The lines he comes across, prophetically stress the significance of acting according to the right time (*kairos*). Later in the narrative, it becomes manifest that Bekkos did not act at the right time since he fails to convince the emperor.

On some occasions, Pachymeres underlines the ambivalent nature of *kairos*; hinting that one cannot know whether the outcome of things would be positive or negative, and what would this imply for the individual in question. In a dream, Bekkos is told that it is not the appointed time (*kairos*) for him to die, which, naturally comes across as a positive omen.<sup>32</sup> However, between the dream and his eventual death, Bekkos suffers a lot at the hands of Michael VIII. A similar outlook can be traced concerning the re-conquest of Constantinople. After he

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their heart, but mankind should not comprehend what God had created, from beginning to the end... I understood that whatever God had done, lasts for the *aion*; there is no adding to it, and no taking away from it.

<sup>28</sup> Pachymeres, I, 61, 55, 71, 171, 185, 213, 255, 282, 291; II, 376, 501, 503, 603, 630-1; III, 87, 119, 205; IV, 349, 377, for some examples. In addition to *kairos*, variants such as *kairos euprepē*, *kairos armodion* and *enkairios* are also used. Pachymeres, I, 71, 185, 255, 282; II, 503 for the specific occasions referred to above.

<sup>29</sup> Pachymeres, II, 503-504; III, 462-463.

<sup>30</sup> Pachymeres, II, 342-345.

<sup>31</sup> Pachymeres, II, 602-603.

<sup>32</sup> Pachymeres, I, 171-172.

narrates how the city was taken back, Pachymeres reports a prophecy of Senacherim that the reconquest of the city would lead to many evils for the empire. However, in the following speech Pachymeres crafts for Michael VIII, the overjoyed emperor emphasizes several times that God had aided the Byzantines and willed them to reconquer Constantinople, adding that it was *kairos* to go back to the city.<sup>33</sup> As Pachymeres is highly critical of the conqueror, Michael VIII, and exceedingly pessimistic for the future of the empire, he presents the reconquest of Constantinople in an ambivalent manner. Through his choice to report the prophecy and his cool appraisal of the reconquest, Pachymeres implies that evils will fall upon the empire as foretold by Senacherim. He thus subtly credits the prophecy. It may have been the *kairos* for taking the city back and God may have willed it, but for Pachymeres, it was also to have negative consequences. One can observe this understanding in his critical narration of the future reigns of Michael VIII and Andronikos II, filled with troubles and losses for the empire. Finally, the only individual who pays no heed to *kairos* and is still represented favorably is Theodore II Laskaris, who despite his many flaws, is an emperor of the nostalgic Nicaean past. Pachymeres states that Theodore did not wait for the *kairos* to do good things for people, but always did so: day, night, sunrise and setting, in sadness and joy.<sup>34</sup> This enumeration of all these occasions seems to echo the *kairos* passage in *Ecclesiastes*, with Pachymeres implying that one should do good on all occasions and times. This depiction of Theodore Laskaris also serves as a foil to Michael VIII, who on many occasions, is represented as carrying out good deeds or acting generous when it serves his own interests.

Pachymeres' interests as a churchman can be traced in his frequent timing of the events by the church calendar: feast days, saint days, and prayer times. While Byzantine historians did on some occasions, use important feast days as chronological markers, Pachymeres' entire narrative is adorned by them and his chronology largely seems to revolve around the church calendar and the daily prayer times.<sup>35</sup> Arguably, such a preference probably stemmed from Pachymeres' interest in the liturgical cycle as a churchman. Moreover, in some instances, Pachymeres seems to emphasize these ecclesiastical time markers to create layers of meaning such as irony or literary contrast. For instance, he underlines that John IV Laskaris is blinded on the birthday of Christ, how Michael VIII chants during the divine office for an entire night while he is accused of treason, and in a poignant, detailed episode, the Mouzalon brothers are murdered during the liturgy;

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<sup>33</sup> Pachymeres, I, 204-205, 209-213. See also Magdalino, 'The End of Time in Byzantium', 312, for Senacherim's prophecy.

<sup>34</sup> Pachymeres, I, 59-60.

<sup>35</sup> Pachymeres I, 46-47, 82-83, 308-309, 316-317; II, 335-336, 341-343, 364-365, 388-389, 396-399, 520-521; III, 229, 30-31, 74-75 for some examples.

the violent deed juxtaposed to the divinity of the hymns.<sup>36</sup> Patriarch Joseph and Michael VIII make a symbolic choice in having the latter's absolution coincide with the Feast of Absolution, on another occasion, the emperor takes advantage of the approaching all-saints day to pacify the patriarch by sending him gifts and words of praise. In an ironic episode, Michael VIII summons the patriarch on a Wednesday, which Pachymeres points out, is a day symbolizing God's mercy and intercession. But, the patriarch is then exiled to Chora.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Michael VIII chooses the Great Saturday, close to the Resurrection Feast as Pachymeres notes, as the date on which two volumes of Arsenite writings are to be burned. The emperor believes that he has persuaded the Arsenites to change their minds and revert to the Church, but they alter their position yet again by the morning; their Arsenite beliefs are 'resurrected'.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it can be suggested that Pachymeres' ecclesiastical time markers also serve to imbue his narrative with additional layers of meaning.

On several occasions, Pachymeres moreover uses the disruption of liturgical time to subtly tarnish the image of Michael VIII and Andronikos II— Palaiologan emperors of whom he is quite critical. In one episode, when attempting to reconcile with the Patriarch Arsenios, Michael VIII seizes the opportunity during the celebration of the divine liturgy. He orders the priests to chant the *eulogison* when the patriarch appears and to not join in the procession. However, his plan backfires as Arsenios accuses the emperor of trying to steal the divine glory.<sup>39</sup> Andronikos II, too causes problems by disrupting the established order of liturgical time. The emperor leads to confusion in the patriarchal tribune and monasteries; he daily interrupts the processions of the tribune by sending in decrees and causes delays.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Andronikos II disrupts the liturgical time by deciding on whim, that monks should only rest at the ninth hour except for Saturday and Sunday. This alteration, Pachymeres points out, creates havoc as the monks resort to eating in secret and immoderately as now they are forced to eat at night. More importantly, they cannot pay attention to the service and prayers due to this change in their rest schedule. Pachymeres thus expresses his discontent at the emperor's audacity to disrupt the ecclesiastical time. Finally, although not directly relevant to liturgical time, Pachymeres uses the notion of time to criticize the Catalan Company, mercenaries at the service of the Palaiologans.<sup>41</sup> The

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<sup>36</sup> Pachymeres, I, 46-47, 83-85, 257-258. In contrast, Georgios Akropolites makes no reference to Michael VIII's chanting and while narrating that the Mouzalones were indeed murdered in the church, he provides no details on the event; *George Akropolites. The History*, trans. with introduction and commentary R. J. Macrides (Oxford, 2007), 339-340.

<sup>37</sup> Pachymeres, I, 396-399; II, 308-309, 520-521.

<sup>38</sup> Pachymeres, I, 73-74.

<sup>39</sup> Pachymeres, II, 342-343.

<sup>40</sup> Pachymeres, IV, 678-679.

<sup>41</sup> Pachymeres, IV, 528-529.

historian points out that they demand a lot of money as they measure their pay not by deeds, but by time, unlike God who values deeds. This description of associating money with time is slightly reminiscent of usury, a practice frowned upon by the Church as time was seen as belonging to God. The Catalans then leave the Byzantine service and cause disruption in Lampsakos. Despite all this, the emperor continues trusting them. Through criticizing the Catalans, who measure their pay by time, Pachymeres also subtly discredits their employer, the emperor.

The second part of this article will briefly turn to the history of Nikephoros Gregoras entitled *Historia Rhōmaikē*, covering the years 1204-1359 in thirty-seven books, left unfinished. The paper will especially focus on the prologue of his history. An accomplished polymath, Gregoras also authored works on philosophy, theology, and astronomy. One of the pioneers of Late Byzantine astronomy, he successfully calculated many solar and lunar eclipses, wrote on the construction of astrolabes, and even proposed a calendar reform around 1324 that was very similar to that of Pope Gregory XIII in 1582.<sup>42</sup> Gregoras' history incorporates material from his letters and treatises on astronomy, and reflects his interests in astronomy and philosophy.<sup>43</sup> For instance, right at the start of his history, Gregoras establishes a strong link between astronomy and history, between heavenly and earthly affairs:

The heavens and the earth are the silent heralds of God's glory, existing for the whole duration of the time (τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον) as they summon perception as a witness. However, history, a living and speaking voice, as a vivid and loud herald of God's glory, passes through the ages (τὸν αἰῶνα), always showing the past events to the future generations as if on a universal tablet: all the deeds carried out by others in different times since the beginning of the ages (ἔξ αἰῶνος), all the

<sup>42</sup> For a comprehensive overview of Gregoras' life and work, see D. Manolovna. *Science and Philosophy in the Letters of Nikephoros Gregoras*, PhD dissertation, Central European University, 2014, 10-25. This dissertation amply discusses Gregoras' philosophical and astronomical work, especially in relation to his letter collection, but also extends its analyses to his history. See also D. Manolovna, 'The Student Becomes a Teacher: Nikephoros Gregoras' Hortatory Letter Concerning the Study of Astronomy', in *Toward a Historical Sociolinguistic Poetics of Medieval Greek*, ed. A. M. Cuomo and E. Trapp (Brepols, 2017), 143-160 and eadem, 'Who Writes the History of the Romans? Agency and Causality in Nikephoros Gregoras' *Historia Rhōmaikē*', *New Europe College Black Sea Program Yearbook 2014-2015*, ed. I. Vainovski-Mihai (Bucharest, 2018), 97-123. For the theological debates in Gregoras' history; T. Hart, 'Nicephorus Gregoras: Historian of the Hesychast Controversy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 2.2 (1951), 169-179. A PhD dissertation on Gregoras' history examines the work in detail, analyzing its narrative, genre and structure, sources, and literary features such as character portrayal; B. Pavlovic. *"Romejska istorija" Nicifora Grigore: istorijska analiza dela ("The Roman History" of Nikephoros Gregoras: Historical Analysis of His Work)*, PhD dissertation, University of Belgrade, 2018. I was only able to consult the English abstract of the thesis.

<sup>43</sup> For instance, Manolovna, 'Who Writes the History of the Romans?', 97-123, discusses the philosophical notions of free will, chance, and spontaneity in the history and letters of Gregoras, as well as the influence of Gregoras' astronomical work on these. See also eadem, *Science and Philosophy*.

words said by the wise concerning the nature of beings... It seems to me that through history, the glory of heavens and earth become even more glorious, and the splendour becomes more splendid by far. For if there were no history, wherefrom would humanity have known how the heavens, moving since the beginning according to the same unaltered movement (ἀκίνητον κινούμενος κίνησιν), continuously unfolding the sun, the moon and the stars towards an orderly and rhythmical variety, described God's glory day and night through the ages? (δι' αἰῶνος) And indeed, does not the earth manifest that unchanging glory through the ages (δι' αἰῶνος) by its continuous turning around by the flourishing and perishing of the generations that follow each other...<sup>44</sup>

Gregoras argues that history does not only encompass human affairs that took place on earth but also extends history-writing to the celestial movements of the sun, moon and stars. Both the heavens and the earth are created by God and their movements/affairs reflect God's glory. Thanks to history-writing, mankind does not only learn about the past generations and their deeds but also the movements of celestial bodies. A few passages later, he remarks that unless they are put to words — that is without history writing— the many exchanges for the sun are nothing.<sup>45</sup> Thus, from the start, Gregoras signals that for him, astronomy and history writing are connected and that his work will fuse them. Indeed, as noted by many scholars, throughout his voluminous historical work, Gregoras narrates many solar and lunar eclipses, as well as offering other astronomical observations.<sup>46</sup> Some of these also serve as divine signals and omens. While not a proponent of astrology, Gregoras suggests that the motion of heavenly bodies may reflect the terrestrial ones as parts of the same cosmic body.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in addition to incorporating his astronomical observations into his history, Gregoras also very frequently uses astronomical markers to date events. Indeed, many events are solely dated/timed by astronomical markers: the position of various planets and stars in the sky, and their movements through various constellations.<sup>48</sup> While the use of eclipses or the movements of the stars and planets as time markers could be encountered in other historians as a part of the classicizing history writing

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<sup>44</sup> Gregoras, I, 4-5. Translation by Manolovna, slightly modified, Manolovna, 'Who writes the History of the Romans?', 108.

<sup>45</sup> Gregoras, I, 10.

<sup>46</sup> Manolovna, 'Who Writes the History of the Romans?', 103; eadem, *Science and Philosophy*, 18-19, 117-118; eadem, 'Student Becomes Teacher', 144; A. Tihon, 'Astronomical Promenade in Byzantium in the Early Palaiologan Period', in *The Occult Sciences in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino and M. Mavroudi, (Geneva, 2006), 265-290.

<sup>47</sup> Gregoras, I, 108; Manolovna, 'Who Writes the History of the Romans?', 109; eadem, *Science and Philosophy*, 107-108.

<sup>48</sup> For some examples see Gregoras, I, 72, 376, 999, 108, 384-385, 452, 455, 524, 530; II, 596, 624, 813, 836, 844, 873, 876; III, 3-4, 11, 13, 38, 60, 77, 134, 141-141, 171, 233.

in Byzantium, Gregoras' usage is notably frequent and detailed. Arguably, it reflects his envisioning of history writing as encompassing both earthly and celestial affairs.

This strong link established by Gregoras between celestial motion and earthly, human history in the prologue is also reminiscent of some ideas found in Plato's *Timaeus*. In the *Timaeus*, the universe is fashioned by the demiurge as a moving likeness of eternity, and time is created at the moment of the creation of the heavenly bodies. It is the circular and well-ordered motions of the celestial spheres that create time. The universe will exist for the entire duration of time (*ton apanta chronon*), while its model will exist for all ages (*panta aïona*), that is, always. Furthermore, the demiurge creates the sun not only to give light but so that creatures sufficiently endowed to do so should observe the revolutions of the sky.<sup>49</sup> As previously discussed in the case of Pacyhmeres, parts of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy were malleable to Christianity and could thus be blended into the philosophical thinking of Byzantine literati. More specifically, *Timaeus* exerted an influence on philosophers such as Dionysios the Pseudo-Aeropagite and Michael Psellos on their understanding of time.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the connection between the perception of time and celestial movements could also be found in the Bible and had been adopted by several Byzantine thinkers. For instance, Gregory of Nazianzos points out that time is measured by the sun.<sup>51</sup> For Gregoras, too, earthly time can be inferred from the motions of the celestial bodies, and their motion has been ordained by God as well-ordered, rhythmical, and cyclical. He repeats the latter idea elsewhere in his history while arguing against Gregory Palamas, pointing out that time measures motion. The celestial movements are also associated with the divine as their motion is well-ordered and they move according to a perpetual, unaltered motion; they serve as heralds of God's glory during all the days and nights. Gregoras argues that heavenly motion was divinely ordered by God since the beginning.<sup>52</sup> In the *Timaeus*, the demiurge wishes for humanity to observe and learn from the revolutions of the sky, while Gregoras points out that history writing enables humanity to learn about celestial movements. For Gregoras, like the universe in the *Timaeus*, the heavens and the earth, will endure for the

<sup>49</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 37 d-e, 38b-39b.

<sup>50</sup> For instance, see Plass, 'Maximus the Confessor', 260-62, 277; idem, 'Transcendent Time and Eternity in Gregory of Nyssa', *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980), 180-192; *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, ed. K. Ierodiakonou (Oxford, 2004), see especially the introduction, 1-14, 9-10, Sorabji, *Time, Creation and Continuum*, 2-3, 117-118. For Dionysios and Psellos, E. Vasilescu, 'Dionysius the Pseudo-Aeropagite on the Notion of Time', *Analele Stiintifice ale Universitatii Alexandru Ioan Cuza*, vol. 27, Issue 1, (2022), 71-83 and Koder, 'Time as a Dimension of Identity,' 534-535. Both Dionysios the Pseudo-Aeropagite and Psellos refer to time as a moving image of eternity, as argued in the *Timaeus*.

<sup>51</sup> I. Ramelli and D. Konstan. *Terms for Eternity: Aiônios and Aïdios in Classical and Christian Texts* (New Jersey, 2011), 186.

<sup>52</sup> Gregoras, II, 1065-1066, also in III, 723. On this issue, Manolovna, 'Who Writes the History of Romans?', 106-108; eadem, *Science and Philosophy*, 117-118.

*Some Observations on the Notions of Time in the  
Histories of Georgios Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras*

entire duration of time (*ton apanton chronon*), they will cease to exist at the end of times. The heavens, the earth, and countable historical time, along with human history, will cease to exist at the same time. In the *Timaeus*, while the universe will exist for the duration of time, the model of the universe that the demiurge looked to during the creation, will be eternal; for Gregoras, the created universe is perishable and God is eternal, without beginning or end.<sup>53</sup>

As in the case of Pachymeres— and many other Byzantine authors— Gregoras manifests an understanding of time as both cyclical and linear. It is linear as time progresses to the end of times as pre-ordained by God. This can be already inferred from the prologue where the heavens and the earth are said to last for the duration of historical time (*chronos*); that they will come to an end when time does. Gregoras also refers to God's *pronoia*, human repentance, and God's forgiveness in his history, omens moreover appear on many occasions.<sup>54</sup> Time furthermore has a cyclical quality for Gregoras as the celestial motions are cyclical, as well as the coming and fading away (*genesis* and *ftora*) of human generations. Elsewhere in his history, Gregoras also refers to time as separating things and then bringing them back together in its flow and reversals (*pallirboa*).<sup>55</sup> Again, while speaking about history-writing, Gregoras argues that it almost allows the dead generations to speak to the living, that one can learn about the past deeds through history as if reading a book that recounts the cycles (*kykelous*) of deeds carried out across the ages. (*aioniōn ergōn*)<sup>56</sup> However, unlike the celestial motions, the earthly cycle of human generations is not said to be moving according to an unaltered motion; human affairs are prone to chance and imperfections.<sup>57</sup> As such, it can be argued that for Gregoras, both celestial and earthly time follow cyclical patterns on a linear framework.

While Gregoras uses the term *chronos* in the prologue when speaking about the existence of the heavens and the earth to emphasize their perishable nature, he also refers to *aiōn* several times in the same passages. This insistent use of *aiōn* by Gregoras is only found in the prologue of his history; throughout the work, he uses *chronos* to refer to the passage of time.<sup>58</sup> While *aiōn* could sometimes be used to mean eternal or eternity, it was more often used in the Bible and by Christian thinkers to denote a sense of perpetual enduring across time or to speak of large

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<sup>53</sup> Gregoras dwells on time, God and His eternity in another passage in which he argues against the teaching of Palamas, Gregoras, II, 1065-1066.

<sup>54</sup> Gregoras, I, 85, 98-99, 108, 307, 384-386, 460; II, 572, 624, 695-696, 765 for some examples.

<sup>55</sup> Gregoras, II, 1021-1022.

<sup>56</sup> Gregoras, II, 573.

<sup>57</sup> On the issue of chance and spontaneity see Manolovna, 'Who writes the History of the Romans?', 106-108.

<sup>58</sup> In Gregoras, II, 1065-1066, *aiōn* is again used in relation to the discussions outlined above in footnote 54. It is encountered again II, 573, where Gregoras extolls history-writing and speaks of the deeds of generations across ages, very similar to his statements in the prologue.

ages, past, present, and future; it thus did not mean eternal in the sense of infinite duration.<sup>59</sup> In the prologue, while speaking about the heavenly motion and the manifestation of God's glory, Gregoras does not seem to be using the term in the sense of eternal, but as a perpetual enduring or as a very large time frame. He arguably opts to employ the word *aiōn* several times to emphasize the grand scale of the duration of the heavens and earth, and the grandeur of God's creation and divine plan. As opposed to *chronos*, *aiōn* was also a term of time often associated with divinity and God's divine plan.<sup>60</sup> Thus, it can be suggested that by employing the term, Gregoras imbues his account of heavenly and earthly motions with a sense of the divine. Furthermore, Gregoras also associates *aiōn* with history-writing, arguing that it passes through *aiōn* proclaiming God's glory. Thus, history writing, too, is associated with a sense of divinity and is given a more sublime function. This is reinforced by Gregoras' claim that history-writing and astronomy both serve to reveal the truth and that the historian's hand is guided by God.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, Gregoras' elaborations on the grandeur of the heavenly and terrestrial motion also serve to underscore the vast longevity of the history of human generations. Arguably, it also helps to emphasize the relatively small scale of one individual's place in terrestrial space and time. For instance, Gregoras states in his prologue that the earth shows the same flourishing and fading pattern for human generations since the very ancient ages or the very beginning. Under the perfect and unchanging motions of the heavenly bodies, countless generations of different men pass through earthly history. A few lines later, while extolling the benefits of history-writing, Gregoras argues that history allows people to learn about a vast array of lands, seas, rivers, and ports, the peculiarities of peoples (*ethnōn*) and places, as well as of events that unfolded in different places on earth in different times. In contrast, Gregoras emphasizes that an individual lives only for a short time and does so in a set place in the *oikoumene*.<sup>62</sup> As such, the small scale of an

<sup>59</sup> Plass, 'Maximus the Confessor', 260-262, 277, idem, 'Transcendent Time', 180-181 and Koder, 'Time as a dimension of identity', 530-535; Ramelli-Konstan, *Terms for Eternity*, discusses in detail the usage of *aiōn* by Classical and Christian authors and the meanings attributed to it. Overall, they conclude that while speaking about eternity, Christian authors usually opt to use *aidios*; instead, they use *aiōn* and *aiōnios* to refer to large, indefinite periods or cosmic eras, or sometimes to the afterlife. They thus chiefly follow the Septuagint and the New Testament usages. For the use of *aiōn* and *aiōnios* in Septuagint and the New Testament, 37-70; for an analysis of their use by the Cappadocian Fathers, 172-199. I am grateful to Dr Andras Kraft for bringing this book to my attention.

<sup>60</sup> Ramelli-Konstan, *Terms for Eternity*, 52.

<sup>61</sup> Gregoras, I, 1-2, 9-10.

<sup>62</sup> Gregoras, I, 5. However, this should not be interpreted as Gregoras giving little importance to individuals' choices and actions in the shaping of history, on the contrary, he points out the significance of free will and choice, II, 572. Manolovna, 'Who Writes the History of Romans?', discusses in detail the issue of free will and choices in Gregoras' history.



individual's life and the grandeur of history—both earthly and heavenly—are contrasted.

Throughout his history, Gregoras also appears to be very fond of evoking time as a literary feature.<sup>63</sup> While referring to the flow of time or to the oblivion and destruction caused by time was a widespread *topos* in Byzantine literature, Gregoras' usage is still notable for its variety and frequency.<sup>64</sup> Besides often referring to the flow of time and its obscuring of the events, Gregoras also speaks of the flute (*anle*) of time, false doctrines being refuted by the walk of time, time separating and bringing things back together or of time keeping memories safe as if on a tablet.<sup>65</sup> Time deals blows, vanquishes all, and hinders people in their purposes; it is also likened to painting and is said to dislike rushed acts.<sup>66</sup> Time drags memories to holes in the labyrinths of life, later showing them forth to future generations. In another passage, people and events in history are as if on a boundless sea in time.<sup>67</sup> These metaphors and imagery related to time arguably lend further literary flair and a sense of grandeur to Gregoras' historical narrative. In a touching narration of Metochites' restoration of the Chora Monastery, placed right before a monody on his death, time plays a rather prominent role. Before the Komnenian restoration, time is said to have destroyed down to Chora's foundations and the monastery is depicted as being tired in the roads of time. As time again threatens Chora with decay (*ftora*), Metochites comes to its rescue and painstakingly restores the monastic complex.<sup>68</sup> Arguably, this prominent evoking of time serves to emphasize the importance of Metochites' restoration and renders the passage emotional in the face of Metochites' misfortunes. Finally, an irony with relation to time can perhaps be observed in Gregoras' final words to his long monody on the death of Andronikos II: it was the year 6849 since the birth of the universe and 36 years since the birth of his grandson, the young emperor,

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<sup>63</sup> Gregoras, I, 187, 459, 467, 474, 478; II, 572, 588, 632, 753, 819; III, 173, 530, 550, 1020-1021, for some examples.

<sup>64</sup> Gregoras also uses time as a literary feature in his letters, for instance in Letters 9 and 11, he speaks of the feet of time. Letter 54: time as changing fortune, Letter 83: wax stains of time, Letter 114: the flow of time, Letter 118: the belly of time, Letter 124: time as extinguishing hope; Letter 127: time has given his recipient many treasures, Letter 140: time brings forth the weapons of decay; *Nicephori Gregorae Epistulae*, 2. vols, ed. Leone, P. A. M. (Matino, 1982-1983). While the evoking of time was a *topos* in Byzantine texts, Gregoras is fond of using such time-related imagery and metaphors. For instance, in contrast, the other historian discussed in this paper, Georgios Pachymeres, does not display such a preference despite also writing a highly literary history.

<sup>65</sup> Gregoras, II, 753; III, 550; II, 1020-1021; II 572.

<sup>66</sup> Gregoras, I, 467, 478; II, 588, 819, 632.

<sup>67</sup> Gregoras, II, 1020-1021; III, 530.

<sup>68</sup> Gregoras, I, 459.

Andronikos III.<sup>69</sup> Gregoras' choice to contrast the current time since the creation of the universe—a widespread Byzantine dating practice — with the age of the emperor serves to emphasize the youth of Andronikos III, as well as perhaps his rashness and lack of wisdom. After all, in Gregoras' eyes, he had dragged the empire into turmoil by fighting with his grandfather for the throne instead of waiting to inherit it. Moreover, Gregoras' beloved mentor Metochites had also greatly suffered because of this civil war and Andronikos III — overall Gregoras was rather critical of the young emperor.

In conclusion, while time and history-writing are enmeshed with each other, Pachymeres and Gregoras stand out from other Late Byzantine historians concerning their uses of time in their narratives. Through a close reading of their histories, it can be suggested that both Pachymeres and Gregoras attribute philosophical and literary undertones to the notion of time in their work. Arguably, this stems from the fact that they both wrote highly classicizing and literary histories and had a profound interest in philosophy— which they opted to showcase in their historical narratives. For instance, both historians seem to view time as being linear and cyclical, fusing the Judeo-Christian understanding of a linear, progressive time with that of cyclical pattern often encountered in Ancient Greek philosophy. Whereas Pachymeres' narrative seems to reflect the philosophical relation between *kinesis* and time, it can be suggested that Gregoras' prologue to his history reflects some aspects of Plato's *Timaieus*. Furthermore, Gregoras' interest and competence in astronomy lead him to conceive history as encompassing both earthly and celestial affairs, fusing astronomy and history-writing. Throughout his history, he also often uses astronomical phenomena as time markers. Both Gregoras and Pachymeres moreover use the notion of time as a literary feature, albeit in different manners. Pachymeres often refers to *kairos* and employs the theme of the 'right time' throughout his history. He also frequently uses the liturgical calendar to date and time various events, as well as referring to liturgical time to create layers of meaning such as irony. In contrast, Gregoras displays a fondness for using time-related imagery and metaphors, introducing variations on this *topos* in Byzantine literature. Ultimately, it can be suggested that the intellectual background and interests of Pachymeres and Gregoras influence the notions of time encountered in their histories, lending their narratives further literary and philosophical complexity.

<sup>69</sup> Gregoras, I, 474, lines 10-12: ἔτος δὲ τὸτ' ἐνεστήγει τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ἑξακισχιλιοστὸν ὀκτοκοσιοστὸν τεσσαρακοστὸν. τηρηκαῦτα δὲ καὶ τῷ νεῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀνδρονίκῳ ἕκτον καὶ τριακοστὸν ἦνυετο ἔτος ἀπὸ γενεσέως.'

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### Genişletilmiş Özet

Tarih yazımı ve zaman kavramı arasında oldukça yakın bir ilişki vardır. Örneğin, Bizans tarihçileri, geçmiş, şimdiki zaman ve geleceğe dair yaklaşımları, hatta kullandıkları tarihlendirme sistemleriyle bile farklı ideolojik yaklaşımlar sergileyebilirler. Ayrıca, bazı durumlarda zaman kavramına felsefi, teolojik ve edebi anlamlar yükleyebilirler. Malalas, Theophanes Confessor veya Zonaras gibi Erken ve Orta dönem Bizans tarihi eserleri bu açılarından ele alınmış olmasına rağmen, Geç Bizans tarih yazımı bu tür çalışmalarda pek yer bulmamaktadır. Bu makale, tarihlerinde zaman kavramına yaklaşımlarıyla Geç Bizans tarihçilerinin arasından sıyrılan Georgios Pachymeres ve Nikephoros Gregoras'ın eserlerindeki zaman anlayışlarına dair gözlemler sunacaktır. Eserlerinin bu açıdan incelenmesi sonucunda, iki tarihçinin de zaman kavramına felsefi ve edebi anlam katmanları yüklediği önerisi yapılabilir. Bu durumun, iki tarihçinin de klasik üslupta, edebi yönü kuvvetli eserler kaleme almalarından ve felsefeye derin bir ilgi duymalarından kaynaklandığı öne sürülebilir. Pachymeres ve Gregoras eserlerinde hem doğrusal hem döngüsel bir zaman algısı sergilerler; kökenini Yahudi-Hristiyan düşüncesinden alan doğrusal, nihai bir sona ilerleyen

zaman anlayışı ile Antik Yunan felsefesinde sık rastlanan döngüsel zaman anlayışını harmanlarlar. Zaman, bir yandan Tanrı tarafından belirlenmiş olan kıyamete ilerlerken, gökyüzü hareketleri, mevsim geçişleri gibi doğa olayları döngüsel bir örüntü gösterirler. Ayrıca, imparatorluklar yükselir ve çöküşe geçer, jenerasyonlar dünyada yaşar ve yok olur, iyi ve kötü talih daima birbirini takip eder. Pachymeres'in anlatisının, *kinesis* ve zaman arasındaki felsefi ilişkiyi yansıttığı, Gregoras'ın eserinin ise Plato'nun *Timaeus* eserinden izler taşıdığı da ileri sürülebilir. Aynı zamanda, Gregoras'ın astronomiye dair derin bilgisi ve ilgisi, onun tarih yazımını hem dünyevi hem göksel olayları içeren bir anlatı olarak görmesine neden olur, eserinde astronomi ve tarihi birleştirmeye çalışır. Tarih eseri boyunca Gregoras gökyüzü olaylarını zaman belirteçleri olarak kullanır. Hem Pachymeres hem Gregoras zaman kavramını edebi motif olarak da kullanırlar. Pachymeres sıklıkla *kairos* kavramından bahseder, 'doğru zaman' temasını eseri boyunca işler. Ameller doğru zamanlamaya göre başarılı veya başarısız olur, kişiler *kairos*'u gözetir, bazı durumlarda da o *kairos* esnasında harekete geçmenin tüm sonuçlarını kestiremezler. Pachymeres ayrıca çeşitli olayların zamanını veya tarihi belirtmek için sıklıkla litürjik takvime başvurur ve ironi gibi çeşitli anlam katmaları yaratmak için litürjik zamandan faydalanır. Onun aksine, Gregoras Bizans edebiyatında bolca rastlanan bir *topos*'a yenilikçi dokunuşlar yaparak, zaman hakkında imgelere ve metaforlara özel bir düşkünlük sergiler. Sonuç olarak, Pachymeres ve Gregoras'ın entelektüel arka planlarının ve ilgi alanlarının eserlerindeki zaman algılarını etkilediği, anlatılarına edebi ve felsefi derinlik kazandırdığı ileri sürülebilir.