

## Romanos IV Diogenes' Attitude towards his Troops

### *Romanos IV Diogenes'in Birliklerine Karşı Tutumu*

Antonios VRATIMOS \*

**Abstract:** Romanos IV Diogenes is well known for the battle of Mantzikert (August 1071 A.D.), the stronghold lying to the north of Lake Van on the Armenian plateau, given that this was the first time in Byzantine history an emperor was captured alive by the Seljuks. His responsibility for his army's crushing defeat has not received the attention that it deserves in modern scholarship. This article examines his attitude to his soldiers and officers; and further discusses whether it was in line with the prescriptions found in Byzantine military manuals. The *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates, a direct participant in all three of Diogenes' military campaigns in Asia Minor against the Turks, constitutes the main source for this research. Important information is also found in later chronicles that were written by Theodoros Skoutariotes, Constantine Manasses, George – the Monk – Hamartolos, and Zonaras. These chronicles remain little studied and some of them are still un-translated into modern languages. The article concludes that the emperor's own attitude had a quite negative impact on the morale of his soldiers, and caused the battle to be lost for the Byzantines before it was even fought.

**Keywords:** Romanos Diogenes, Alp Arslan, Battle of Mantzikert, Zonaras, Manasses, George -The Monk- Hamartolos, Skoutariotes

**Öz:** Romanos Diogenes IV, Bizans tarihinde ilk defa Selçuklular tarafından canlı olarak ele geçirilen bir imparator olarak, Ağustos 1071'de Malazgirt (Ermenistan platosundaki Van Gölü'nün kuzeyindeki ana yer) savaşı ile oldukça iyi tanınmaktadır. Ordunun ciddi yenilgisindeki sorumluluğu şimdiye kadar modern araştırmacılar tarafından hak ettiği değeri bulamamıştır. Bu çalışma, askerlerine ve memurlarına yönelik tutumunu incelemekte ve bunun ötesinde Doğu Roma askeri el kitaplarındaki yönergelere uygun olup olmadığını tartışmaktadır. Diogenes'in Türklere karşı yaptığı üç Anadolu kampanyasına da doğrudan katılan Michael Attaleiates'in *Historia* kitabı, bu konunun ilk kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, önemli bilgiler daha sonra Theodoros Skoutariotes, Constantine Manasses, keşiş George Hamartolos ve Zonaras tarafından yazılan kroniklerde de bulunmaktadır. Bu kronikler çok az çalışılmış ve bazıları hala modern dillerde çevrilmemiştir. Çalışma, imparatorun askerlerine davranışının, onların moralini oldukça olumsuz yönde etkilediğini ve savaşmadan önce Doğu Romalıların savaşı kaybetmelerine neden olduğu sonucuna varmıştır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Romanos Diogenes, Alp Arslan, Malazgirt Savaşı, Zonaras, Manasses, Keşiş George Hamartolos, Theodoros Skoutariotes

In 1068 Romanos Diogenes – a soldier by profession – was selected as emperor to replace the dead Constantine Doukas. His first two military campaigns against the Seljuks met with some success, but nothing decisive. In 1071 he led his third and last campaign to recover possession of the fortresses to the north of Lake Van, which were now held by the Turks. Alp Arslan was somewhere in Syria when he was told about Diogenes' advance towards the Anatolian border. He immediately marched to the scene with a force numerically inferior to that of Diogenes. At Theodosiopolis (Erzurum), the emperor sent off the Franks of the Latin chieftain, Roussel de

\* Assist. Prof. Dr., University of Sakarya, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of History, Esentepe, Sakarya. vratimos@sakarya.edu.tr, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5908-4494>

Bailleul, and the Scythians to Chliat (Akhlát). Later, a second detachment under the command of Tarchaneiotes was also ordered to march to the assistance of the forces at Chliat. Diogenes, after reducing Mantzikert (Malazgirt), moved to join them. It was at this time that the foraging parties of his army were harassed by a group of Seljuks. The emperor recalled the Franks with the magister Tarchaneiotes, but they did not obey. He then decided on battle, giving the signal for the attack. The Byzantines, who were tricked by the feigned retreat of the enemy, suffered a sound defeat, while the emperor himself was taken captive. The battle of Mantzikert is a key event in both Byzantine and Turkish history. This was the beginning of the end for Byzantium given that it gradually changed the balance of power in Anatolia and the Mediterranean.

In his monumental book, titled: “The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century”, Speros Vryonis jr. (1971, 103) lists as reasons for the crushing defeat of the Byzantines at Mantzikert in 1071: a) the unceasing strife between the landed military nobility and the bureaucratic aristocracy of Constantinople; b) the desertion of the Uzes and the Frankish mercenaries on the news of Alp Arslan’s presence nearby; c) the attack of the Germans (*Nemitzoi*) on Diogenes during his last campaign; d) the perpetual tensions between the Byzantines and the Armenians; e) the overall decline of the imperial army in the second half of the eleventh century; and f) the treachery of Andronikos Doukas who withdrew with the rearguard in the thick of the battle. Later opinions dispute some of them, like the Armeno-Byzantine discords (e.g. Dédéyan 1975, 115; Cheynet 1990, 401, n. 113; Cheynet 1996, 70-71; Garsoïan 1998, 82), or the betrayal of Tarchaneiotes and Roussel, as they both ignored the call for help before the battle began (e.g. Shepard 1975, 222; Leveniotis 2004, 95-99; Beihammer 2017, 156). Romanos Diogenes’ own responsibility concerning the defeat of his army has not been systematically examined to date.

The idea for this paper originates from research conducted on secondary Greek sources. There are two principal reasons why they have been chosen to be featured here, and have been analysed by two renowned scholars in the field of Byzantine literature: A) the more distanced the author is from the events he records, the more impartial and thus reliable his work must be (Macrides 1996, 207); and B) the repetition of older sources should not be treated as a sign of plagiarism, but as a proof of the accuracy and reliability of the material (Nilsson 2006, 51-52). Attaleiates, who witnessed all three of Diogenes’ military campaigns in Asia Minor, has been charged with subjectivity in his account from the emperor’s rise to power (1068) to the second year of Nikephoros III Botaneiates’ reign (1079-80), where the book ends (Ostrogorsky 1969, 317). On the other hand, the chroniclers not only make things come “true” with their scissors-and-paste technique, but also contribute valuable addenda to their source texts. Furthermore, it is not uncommon that in a later chronicle a lost (perhaps contemporary) text has been utilised. This is the case of the *Historia Imperatorum* that derives from a Byzantine text now lost to us, as Sakel (2009, 245; 2017, 148) postulates. In general terms, chroniclers provide shortened, or abbreviated, versions of previous texts, including or excluding material according to their own taste. That they dedicate space in their works to informing about the emperor’s behaviour, and also link it with the plot of the Doukai, is of considerable importance; hence it requires further examination. The present study aims to illustrate Diogenes’ character traits, as those appear in those chronicles, focusing upon their effects on his imperial army. It concludes that his severe and cruel attitude lowered further the soldiers’ already low morale, breaking too their fighting spirit.

The chronicles discussed below do not include details of how the emperor handled each military circumstance, but briefly outline his character traits at the beginning or the end of the sections describing his reign. I shall take as my point of departure the thirteenth-century work, *Synopsis Chronike*, whose authorship has been attributed to the bishop of Kyzikos, Theodoros

Skoutariotes (Zafeiris 2011, 253-263). He depicts the emperor Diogenes as “*cruel, miserable, fierce to everybody, and haughty, appearing hateful not only to the senate, but also to his own wife.*” (Ἄστοργος δὲ ὢν καὶ δειλὸς, καὶ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἀγέρωχος καὶ σοβαρὸς, μισητὸς ἔδοξεν οὐ τῇ συγκλήτῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ ἰδίᾳ γαμετῇ. Skout. Syn. Chron. 167. 30-168. 1). Next, he explains his criticism in saying: “*For this, and in the course of his third campaign, he was captured by the Turks during the battle. And after he was released, he did not refrain from again claiming the supreme power.*” (Ὅθεν καὶ εἰς τὸ τρίτον αὐτοῦ ταξείδιον ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ ὑπὸ τῶν Τούρκων αἰχμάλωτος γεγονώς, καὶ πάλιν ἀναρρυσθεὶς, οὐ συνεχωρήθη τῆς βασιλείας ἐπιλαβέσθαι. Ibid. 168. 1-4). He goes further to say that Diogenes' character was why his spouse issued a decree, ordering all cities not to offer him shelter (ibid. 168. 4-7. Her role in the despatch of this order is discussed by Vratimos 2013, 277-284).

Likewise, the Continuator of George (the Monk) Hamartolos describes Diogenes, in the *Chronikon Breve*, as a man who,

*was arrogant by nature, self-satisfied, disdainful, also greatly unlikeable, and haughty. But he became much more arrogant since he assumed the supreme power. He was unstable in his opinion and suspected everyone either his own or foreign people (this may denote high-ranking officials, courtiers, or distant acquaintances), thinking that almost everyone is plotting against him. On this account, he was greatly tedious and fierce, and was alienated (literally: non-saluted) not only from his own magistrates, but from his spouse and his step-sons. On this account, they called meetings everywhere to decide how to trap him, for they detested him, and decided to surrender him to the Saracens (i.e. the Turks) before a battle. The caesar, Constantine Doukas' brother, drew up this [plan], and developed it with his son Andronikos who, then, commanded the Roman (i.e. the Byzantine) army, together with certain other generals and grandees; and they weaved for such a king, or better say against him, a net of deceit.*

ὥς ἦτον φυσικῶς ἀλαζονικὸς καὶ αὐτάρεστος καὶ ἐπιηρμένος πολλὰ καὶ ἀπρόσδεκτος καὶ ὑπερήφανος· τότε δὲ μάλιστα ἀπὸ τὴν ἀζίαν τῆς βασιλείας ἠλαζονεύθη περισσοτέρως. Εἶχε δὲ καὶ ἄστατον γνώμην, καὶ ὑφορᾶτο ἅπαντας εἰς τὸ κακὸν καὶ ἐδικοὺς καὶ ξένους, καὶ ἐφαίνετο αὐτῷ ὅτι σχεδὸν οἱ πάντες κατ' αὐτοῦ εἰσὶν ἐπίβουλοι· διὰ τοῦτο ἦτον πολλὰ βαρετὸς καὶ ἄγριος καὶ ἀχαιρέτιστος, μὴ μόνον εἰς τοὺς ἄρχοντας αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς τὰ προγόνια αὐτοῦ. Διὰ τοῦτο πανταχοῦ ἐσυνετύχαιναν κρυφὰ καὶ ἐμελετοῦσαν κατ' αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεσκεύαζον παγίδα, καὶ ἐμίσησαν αὐτὸν· καὶ ἔβαλαν βουλὴν χωρὶς πολέμου νὰ τὸν προδώσουν εἰς τοὺς Σαρακηνούς. Τοῦτο γοῦν κατεσκεύαζε Καῖσαρ, ὁ ἀδελφὸς Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Δοῦκα, καὶ ἐβουλεύθη τοῦτο μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἀνδρονίκου στρατηγούντος τότε τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ φασάτου, καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων στρατηγῶν καὶ μεγιστάνων ὁμοίως· καὶ ἐπλεξαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ τοιούτου βασιλέως, καὶ μᾶλλον κατ' αὐτοῦ δολιότητος δίκτυον (Hamart. Chron. Breve, col. 1241).

Along the same lines is the *Historia Imperatorum* whose anonymous chronicler does not omit to also refer to the role of John Doukas as the ringleader of the plot against the emperor (since the complete text is unedited, I consulted the Berne manuscript: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, cod. 596, ff. 215r.17-215v.8, <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/bbb/0596/215r/0/Sequence-40>). It should be noted that no systematic research has been done on what the origins of those details in his source might have been. Many striking parallels, though, are detected between the two works (the *Chronikon Breve* and the *Historia Imperatorum*) and the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses who writes in political verse (on the genre, see Jeffreys 1974, 143-195, while on the

use of the text in relation to its composition, see Nilsson & Nyström 2009, 42-60). In the work of Manasses, Diogenes is portrayed as,

*independent by nature, presumptuous,  
supercilious, arrogant, and selfish who trusted his own judgement.  
The purple robe puffed him up;  
[but] his conceit grew even worse once he became Roman emperor;  
and indeed, since he was unstable in his opinion  
and [was behaving] in an erratic manner, distrusting everyone  
and suspecting everyone – either close or distant ones –  
as treacherous who kept watching his back,  
he appeared tedious and harsh not only to the magistrates,  
but even to his spouse and the sons of Doukas.  
Thenceforth discussions, whisperings, treacheries and cunning [began];  
thenceforth odd hatred, nets, and traps [were being prepared];  
and they planned to deliver the emperor to the enemy beforehand,  
[as though he were] an easy, untroubled, and the readiest prey.  
The man who mixed up this drink of treason  
was the caesar, the brother of Constantine Doukas,  
since his son was a general at that time.  
Then, the plan was put forward to the generals and his son;  
and a net of danger had being prepared for this miserable,  
and a black garment was being weaved for [his] death.*

*ἦν μὲν γὰρ φύσει Ῥωμανὸς αὐθέκαστος, αὐθάδης,  
ὑπέροφρος, φιλότυφος, φίλαντος, αὐτογνώμων·  
τότε δὲ πλέον φουσηθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλουργίδος  
καὶ μείζω τῷφον προσλαβὼν ἅτε Ῥωμαίων ἄναξ,  
ναὶ μὴν καὶ προσκτησάμενος γνώμην ἀστατουμένην  
καὶ τρόπον ἀλλοπρόσαλλον καὶ πάντας ὑποπτεύων  
καὶ πάντας ὑφωρώμενος, οἰκείους οὐκ οἰκείους,  
ὡς ἐπιβούλους, ὡς αὐτοῦ πτέρναν ἐπιτηροῦντας,  
βαρὺς ἐδόκει καὶ πικρὸς οὐ τοῖς ἐν τέλει μόνον,  
ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ τῇ γαμετῇ καὶ τοῖς τοῦ Δούκα τέκνοις.  
ἐντεῦθεν λόγοι, ψίθυροι καὶ συσκευαὶ καὶ δόλοι,  
ἐντεῦθεν μῖσος ἔκφυλον καὶ θήρατρα καὶ πάγαι,  
καὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς ἐσκέπτοντο τὸν κράτορα προδοῦναι  
ἄπονον, ἀπραγμάτευτον, θήραν ἐτοιμοτάτην.  
ἐκύκα δὲ τὸ κέρασμα τοῦτο τῆς προδοσίας  
ὁ καῖσαρ ὁ ταυτόσπορος τοῦ Δούκα Κωνσταντίνου·  
τούτου γὰρ παῖς Ἀνδρόνικος ἦν τότε στρατιάρχης.  
κοινοῦται γοῦν τοῖς στρατηγοῖς καὶ τῷ παιδὶ τὸ σκέμμα  
καὶ δίκτυον ἐπέλεκτο κινδύνου τῷ δειλαίῳ  
καὶ στόλισμα μελάμπεπλον ὑφαίνετο θανάτου.  
(Manas. Brev. Chron. 347. 6408-348. 6427).*

In the *Epitome Historion* by the twelfth-century chronicler and canonist Zonaras, Diogenes is described as “arrogant and unsubdued”, and as a man who “wished to keep the reins of power entirely for himself.” (ὁ δὲ καὶ ἄλλως ὢν ἀλαζονικὸς καὶ ἀδούλωτος [...] καὶ ἤθελεν αὐτὸς τὸ κράτος καθαρῶς ἀναδήσασθαι. Zonar. Ep. Hist. 688. 5-10). Contrary to what said earlier, John

Zonaras [he is regarded as an objective historian (Hunger 1978, 417), handling his material in an independent way (Ostrogorsky 1969, 212)] states that the emperor's arrogance grew worse after his 1068 campaign, "as if he may have brought it to the most successful end." (Ibid. 692. 5-10). A similar declaration is found in the *Chronographia* of the eleventh-century statesman, philosopher and writer Michael Psellos: "his (i.e. the emperor's) manner was straightforward, but for the most part he was hypocrite and boastful." (ὁ δὲ τρόπος ἔστι μὲν οὗ κατευθύνων, τὰ πλείω δὲ εἰρωνικὸς τὲ καὶ ἀλαζών. Psel. *Chron.* 266. 131. 4-5). He later states that the emperor, "wished to be an absolute sovereign, governing the affairs of the state entirely on his own." (ὁ δὲ ἐβούλετο μὲν αὐταρχεῖν καὶ τὸ κράτος τῶν πραγμάτων ἔχειν μονώτατος. Ibid. 267. 132. 6-8). Zonaras is far more detailed than other chroniclers, recording, too, Diogenes' merciless order of executing the enemy captives during the 1069 campaign, and his fierce envy at the exploits of the general Komnenos in 1070 (Zonar. *Ep. Hist.* 692. 5-10; 694. 8-14). The first of those two occasions is vividly described by Attaleiates:

*On the next day [Diogenes], making a public assembly, observed the captives of the enemy, and ordered that they be sentenced with death penalty, without sparing anybody, not even the man declaring his commanding brilliance – it was evident that he was the commander from his clothes, for he was splendid in them with the weapons and other equipment, although he offered to pay a considerable ransom for his freedom and also to exchange himself for a large number of Roman captives.*

*Τῇ δ' ἐπαύριον δημοσίᾳ καθίσας τοὺς ἐαλωκότας τῶν πολεμίων κατείδε καὶ τῇ τελευταίᾳ ψήφῳ τούτους παραδοθῆναι προσέταξε μηδενὸς τὸ παράπαν φεισάμενος, μήτ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ τὴν ἡγεμονικὴν ἀρχοῦντος λαμπρότητα. Ὅς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσθῆτος, λαμπρειμονῶν γὰρ ἦν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ σκευῇ, ἐμαρτυρεῖτο τοιοῦτος, εἰ καὶ πολλῶν λύτρων ἑαυτὸν ὄντιον ποιήσασθαι ἐπηγγέλλετο καὶ Ῥωμαίους αἰχμαλώτους ἑαυτοῦ ἀντιδοῦναι τῷ πλήθει πολλοῦς (Attal. *Hist.* 99. 27-100. 6 [Bonn 127. 14-21]).*

It is noted that the imperial and ecclesiastical authorities were spending a huge sum of gold to release slaves, hostages, or prisoners of war; and there exist numerous examples of such cases (e.g. Patoura 1994, 24, and n. 22; Koukoules 1949, 173-175). In the case under consideration, it may be of some importance to say here that though the Turkish leader offered both captives and ransom to free himself, Diogenes refused to accept, violating in this way the prescriptions of Byzantine military textbooks (Leo VI *Taktika* 384, par. 9. The same textbook also refers to the use of enemy captives for safe marches through hostile territories. Ibid. 172-174, par. 48). Undoubtedly his decision mirrors the unrelenting harshness of his character. Attaleiates states that the troops were reluctant to advance on command due to the lack of pay and emoluments (Vryonis 2003, 23-25; Haldon 2003, 58-59). In a council of war, the author had proposed that the army should march deeper into Anatolia, arguing that the collection of ransoms and spoils would raise the soldiers' morale (Attal. *Hist.* 102. 13-16 [Bonn 131. 1-4]). Yet, the emperor did not pay any attention to these words. It is reasonable to conjecture that his decision against the release of captives had negative effects on the army, mainly on the native soldiers, fearing that the same fate would befall them, if they were captured by the Turks.

As to Manuel Komnenos, we read in the *Historia* that Diogenes seemed to rejoice at the successes of his general. Yet, no one could say how he truly felt (Attal. *Hist.* 108. 20-22 [Bonn 139. 12-15]). See discussion in Tsolakakis 1969, 195). Unlike Attaleiates, the Continuator of John Skylitzes, one of Zonaras' sources (Karagiannopoulos 1987, 321; Tsolakakis 1964, 83), declares directly that a considerable part of the Byzantine army was sent off to Hierapolis (Manbij) due to the emperor's envy of Komnenos (Skyl. *Cont.* 139. 19-24). The military manuals, however, forbid feelings which might cause envy, recommending instead the emulation and imitation of

generals successful in battle (Leo VI *Taktika* 630, par. 43). It is questionable what the reaction of other officers was upon the news that Komnenos' army was wiped out at Sebasteia (Sivas). It may not be a mere coincidence that Constantine Manasses and the anonymous chronicler of the *Historia Imperatorum* chronologically place the entrance of officers into the conspiracy of the Doukai just before Diogenes departed from the capital to meet his fate in the conflict with the sultan. The events of his doomed campaign in 1071 come next in our discussion.

In the *Epitome Historion*, there are three points that merit some attention. Zonaras states that Diogenes “advanced as far as in the theme of Anatolikon, but, contrary to custom, he was distancing himself.” (ἀλλὰ προήει ἕως τοῦ θέματος τῶν ἀνατολικῶν, φειδωλίας ἐχόμενος παρὰ τὸ εἰωθός. Zonar. *Ep. Hist.* 696. 8-10). Attaleiates points out that the emperor adopted an aloof attitude towards “everyone around him” (περὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀμφ’ αὐτὸν. *Attal. Hist.* 112. 16-17 [Bonn 144. 20-21]); and further down we learn that, “several times, he was distancing himself from the army [to stay] in his own quarters, displaying his own properties and setting [issues that concern] costlier constructions.” (διαφόρως ἀποξενῶν ἑαυτὸν τοῦ στρατοῦ εἰς τὰς οἰκείας ἐπαύλεις καὶ κτημάτων ἐπιδείξεις οἰκείων καὶ πολυτελεστέρων οἰκοδομῶν διατάξεις. *Ibid.* 113. 14-16 [Bonn 146. 2-4]). Diogenes' staying in his splendid properties, entirely isolated from the army camp, is another act against the recommendations of military textbooks which talk about frugality and simplicity of needs (Leo VI *Taktika* 16, par. 5). This provocative attitude could not maintain his men's morale and motivation. On the contrary, it apparently sparked negative feelings amongst them.

The next point is related to the unruly behaviour of the German mercenaries in the army which laid waste the land of local provincials. Their plundering and looting caused Diogenes' forceful reaction: “Here (i.e. at Krya Pege), he inflicted harder punishments for wrong doings on several *Nemitzoi*.” (ἔνθα τισὶ τῶν Νεμίτζων ἀπηνέστερον προσηνέχθη δι’ ἀδικήματα. Zonar. *Ep. Hist.* 696. 15-16). The Continuator of Skylitzes refers to soldiers in general (Κειρομένης δὲ τῆς χώρας καὶ ἐρημουμένης παρὰ τῶν στρατιωτῶν. *Skyl. Cont.* 143. 27), while Attaleiates says that this plundering was carried out, “by [indigenous] soldiers, but mostly by mercenaries and foreigners.” (ἐκ τῶν στρατιωτῶν καὶ μᾶλλον ἐκ τοῦ μισθοφορικοῦ καὶ ἀλλογενοῦς (*Attal. Hist.* 114. 1-2 [Bonn 146. 20-21])). The context, though, makes it evident that only the *Nemitzoi* were punished. The military manuals recommend that, “a soldier stealing anything whatever at any place shall restore it twofold and shall be dismissed from the service.” (ὁ στρατιότης κλέπτων ἐν οἴωδῆποτε τόπω τὸ οἰονοῦν εἶδος, τὸ διπλάσιον παρέχει καὶ τῆς στρατείας ἀποβάλλεται. See, Ashburner 1926, 109). In our case, it is unknown what punishment was inflicted on them; but the usage in the text of the comparative form ἀπηνέστερον (rougher or harsher) rather than the neuter ἀπηνές illustrates that their punishment was severe (*Attal. Hist.* 114. 3-4 [Bonn 146. 23]; *Skyl. Cont.* 143. 27-144. 1). This is not the sole occasion that Attaleiates is critical of Diogenes. After the surrender of Mantzikert, a soldier was punished for the theft of a mule. The emperor did not impose a fine on the convicted person. He ordered instead that his nose be cut off. For the author, that punishment was disproportionate (ἄμετρος) and impious (οὐκ εὐσεβής) (*Attal. Hist.* 118. 13-24 [Bonn 152. 21-153. 10]). Also, see discussion in Haldon 2002, 283). More than this, the sentence was executed publicly, although the *Taktika* of Leo VI (32-34, par. 28; 568-570) warns that unjust punishments instil enmity and strike fear into soldiers.

The last point concerns the sultan's ambassadors who negotiated a peace treaty with the emperor before the battle at Mantzikert. By Zonaras' account, the latter “received them in no friendly way at all”, talking to them “in an even more arrogant manner” (Zonar. *Ep. Hist.* 699. 14-15; 700. 4; *Attal. Hist.* 123. 10-12 [Bonn 159. 12-14]). This attitude to ambassadors is highly disapproved in military manuals (Leo VI *Taktika* 548, par. 33). That the emperor is portrayed as arrogant by nature has been mentioned earlier. The way he treated the ambassadors should not

come as a surprise to us. Likewise, Psellos says that after the end of the first campaign the emperor, “utterly disregarded the magistrates, he was alienated from advisers [...], and used himself as his own adviser and consultant for everything.” (καὶ τῶν ἐν τέλει καταπεφρονήκει· καὶ τῶν συμβούλων ἀφόμενος [...] ἑαυτῷ πρὸς πᾶν ὀτιοῦν ἐχρήτο καὶ συμβούλω καὶ παραινέτη. Psel. Chron. 268. 135. 2-4). Further down we read: “From then onwards, his boasting [grew] louder and his insolence [became] greater, because he directed two military expeditions. For this reason he [stopped] paying attention to others, while the wicked people he consulted, had completely veered him off a straight line.” (ἐντεῦθεν οὖν αὐτῷ πλείων ὁ κόμπος· καὶ μεῖζον τὸ φρύγμα, ὅτι δις ἐστρατήγησε. καὶ λόγος αὐτῷ τῶν πάντων οὐδεὶς· ἀλλὰ καὶ παραινέταις χρώμενος κακοήθεσιν, τῆς εὐθείας πάντη ἐξετράπετο. Ibid. 269. 138. 4-7). The situation did not, in fact, change over time, for the emperor, as Psellos notes, continued, “to pay no heed to others’ opinions about his plans.” (μὴ γνώμας παρά του λαμβάνειν τῶν πράξεων. Ibid. 270. 140. 2-3). Though it is maintained that Psellos criticises Diogenes severely (Vryonis 1992, 128; Cheynet 1980, 418), Attaleiates seems to corroborate his close contemporary. In the section recounting the campaign of 1069, he is telling us that the emperor, “remained in the camp for three days, apparently because he was satisfied with this victory (i.e. it was against a Turkish group in the provinces of Larissa), or was boasting of it.” (Τριημερέυσας δ’ ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ὁ βασιλεὺς, τῷ προτερήματι τούτῳ κόρον δῆθεν λαβὼν ἢ μεγαλαυχῶν. Attal. Hist. 100. 7-8 [Bonn 127. 22-23]). That Attaleiates made use of Psellos’ *Chronographia* to articulate his own positions has been satisfactorily discussed by Krallis 2006, 167-191; 2012, 81-100). The emperor’s arrogant and snobbish manner is further shown in his refusal to meet at the palace court Chrysoskoulos, the brother-in-law of Alp Arslan (Byen. Hyle. Hist. 101.5). Finally, their meeting took place after many days had gone by (Attal. Hist. 110. 21-23 [Bonn 142. 9-11]). The reason is unclear, but it most probably relates to Diogenes’ feelings of envy towards Manuel Komnenos.

To conclude: the condition of the army when the emperor conducted his 1068 campaign is colourfully depicted by Attaleiates, explaining that the soldiers were unpaid and deprived of weapons (Attal. Hist. 81. 22-82. 15 [Bonn 103. 3-104. 3]). Their bad condition is directly linked to bad morale. According to Tsoungarakis (2003, 284), a) they were aware of their inability to face Turkish forces, and b) they had put personal interests above the common good. Diogenes sought to reverse this situation. He facilitated the recruitment of young soldiers, “encouraging them [with distribution of] dignities and gifts”. In a very short time he managed to organise an army that, says Attaleiates, was a match for the Seljuks in battle (στρατιὰν ἀξιόμαχον) (Attal. Hist. 82. 24-31 [Bonn 104. 13-19]). Did the measures make things better? The answer is rather negative. Two examples in the *Historia* illustrate the bad state of readiness of the army on the eve of the battle at Mantzikert. The first deals with Bryennios’ failure to drive off a Turkish detachment that harassed the foragers scouring the countryside for supplies. Upon news of his defeat, the emperor “summoned an assembly and gave a public oration – contrary to custom – using too harsher words.” (ἐκκλησίαν δὲ συστησάμενος ἐδημηγόρησε τὰ περὶ τοῦ πολέμου παρὰ τὸ εἰωθός, ἤψατο δὲ καὶ τραχυτέρων ῥημάτων. Ibid. 119. 20-22 [Bonn 154. 14-16]). The use of harsh and abusive language, as military manuals underline, does not inspire the men’s courage or tenacity (Leo VI *Taktika* 20, par. 12; 626, par. 22). A remark on the emperor’s unawareness of why Bryennios called on reinforcements is indicative of Attaleiates’ disagreement with this attitude (Ibid. 119. 19-20 [Bonn 154. 13-14]). The second example manifests the psychological consequences for Byzantines to hear, during the night, the Seljuks gallop around the camp and shoot their arrows inside. Attaleiates gives a vivid picture of the situation: “everyone spent the night staying awake and having their eyes open; for who could fall asleep when the danger of the [enemy] sword drawn out was virtually pointed out to them?” (ὡς ἅπαντας διανυκτερεῦσαι ἠνεωργμένοις καὶ ἀγρόπνοις τοῖς ὄμμασι. Τίς γὰρ ἂν καὶ εἶχεν εἰς ὕπνον τραπῆναι, τοῦ κινδύνου τὴν ῥομφαίαν ἐσπασμένην μονονουχὶ προδεικνύοντος;. Ibid. 121. 24-27 [Bonn 157. 12-15]). It is

most probable that Diogenes was well aware of the terror that had overcome his men; hence he personally took part in the actual battle, although the military textbooks prescribe against it except if the men's morale is fragile (Leo VI *Taktika* 590, par. 153; 290, par. 3). Yet, there are no reports that he tried to boost their self-confidence. His aloof and severe behaviour made his generals turn from him, and his soldiers reluctant to fight wars, fearing for their own lives. On this basis, we can conclude that the sultan had already obtained the psychological advantage over the Byzantines who fought at Mantzikert. The consequences of going into battle with no sleep and enough rest are presented in Kekaumenos' *Strategikon* (Tsoungarakis 1996, 90-94, par. 27), the textbook which takes the form of admonishments to his son. As to whether or not Diogenes could have delayed or perhaps avoided the battle, it will form the subject of another study.

## REFERENCES

### Ancient Sources

- Attal. *Hist.* (= Attaleiates, *Historia*) Text: *Michaelis Attaliateae Historia*. Ed. E. T. Tsolakis. Athens 2011 (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 50). Text: *Michaelis Attalioetae Historia*. Eds. W. B. de Psesle & I. Bekker. Bonn 1853 (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae).
- Byen. *Hyle.Hist.* (= Bryennios, *Hyle Historias*). Text and translation: *Nicéphore Bryennios Histoire*. Ed. P. Gautier. Brussels 1975 (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 9).
- Hamart. *Chron. Breve.* (= Hamartolos, *Chronicon Breve*) Text: *Georgius Monachus, Chronicon Breve*. Ed. E. De Muralto. Paris 1863 (Patrologia Graeca 110).
- Historia Imperatorum*. URL: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/bbb/0596/215r/0/Sequence-40>. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, cod. 596, ff. 215r.17-215v.8.
- Κεκαυμένος, *Στρατηγικόν*. Text and translation: D. Tsoungarakis. Athens 1996.
- Leo VI *Taktika*. Text and translation: *The Taktika of Leo VI*. Ed. G. Dennis. Washington D.C. 2010 (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 49).
- Manas. *Brev. Chron.* (= Manasses, *Breviarium chronicum*) *Constantini Manassis: Breviarium chronicum*. Ed. O. Lampsides. Athens 1996 (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 36/I-II).
- Peri Stratotikon Epitimon*. W. Ashburner (1926). "The Byzantine Mutiny Act". *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 46 (1926) 80-109.
- Psel. *Chron.* (= Psellos, *Chronographia*) Text: *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*. Ed. D. R. Reinsch. Berlin – Boston 2014 (Millennium Studies 51/I-II).
- Skout. *Syn. Chron.* (= Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*). Text: *Anonymou Synopsis Chronike*. Ed.: K. Sathas. Paris 1894 [repr. Athens 1972] (Mesaionike Bibliothek 7).
- Skyl. *Cont.* (= Skylitzes *Continuatus*). Text: *Η συνέχεια της Χρονογραφίας του Ιωάννου Σκυλίτση (Ioannes Skylitzes Continuatus)*. Ed. E. Th. Tsolakis. Thessaloniki 1968.
- Zonar. *Ep.Hist.* (= Zonaras, *Epitome Historion*) Text: *Ioannis Zonarae epitomae historiarum libri XIII-XVIII*. Ed. T. Büttner-Wobst. Bonn 1841-1897 (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae I-III).

### Modern Literature

- Beihammer A. D. (2017). *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca.1040-1130*. London – New York 2017.
- Cheyne J.-C. (1980). "Mantzikert: une désastre militaire?". *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 410-438.
- Cheyne J.-C. (1990). *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*. Paris 1990 (Byzantina Sorbonensia 9).
- Cheyne J.-C. (1996) "Les arméniens de l'empire en Orient de Constantin X à Alexis Comnène (1059-1081)". Eds. J.-C. Cheyne et al., *L'Arménie et Byzance: histoire et culture*. Paris (1996) 67-78.
- Dédéyan G. (1975). "L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle". *Byzantion* 45 (1975) 41-117.
- Garsoïan N. G. (1998). "The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire". Eds. H. Arhweiler – A. Laiou, *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*. Washington D. C. (1998) 53-124.
- Haldon J. (2002). "The *Krites tou Stratopedou*: A New Office for a New Situation?". *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002) 279-286.
- Haldon J. (2003). "Approaches to an Alternative Military History of the Period ca. 1025-1071". Ed. V.



- Vlyssidou, *The Empire in Crisis(?) Byzantium in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century (1025 -1081)*. Athens 2003 (45-74).
- Hunger H. (1978). *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*. Vol. I. Munich 1978.
- Jeffreys M. (1974). "The Nature and Origins of the Political Verse". *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 28 (1974) 143-195.
- Karagiannopoulos I. (1987). *Πηγαί της Βυζαντινής ιστορίας*. Thessaloniki 1987.
- Koukoules Ph. (1949). *Βυζαντινών βίος και πολιτισμός*. Vol. 3. Athens 1949.
- Krallis D. (2006). "Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos". Eds. Ch. Barber & D. Jenkins, *Reading Michael Psellos*. Leiden – Boston (2006) 167-191.
- Krallis D. (2012). *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in the Eleventh-Century Byzantium*. Tempe 2012 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 42).
- Leveniotis G. A. (2004). *Το στασιαστικό κίνημα του Νορμανδού Ουρσελίου (Ursel de Bailleul) στην Μικρά Ασία (1073-1076)*. Thessaloniki 2004.
- Macrides R. (1996). "The Historian in the History". Ed. C. N. Constantinides *et al.*, *Fillelen, Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*. Venice (1996) 205-224.
- Nilsson I. & Nyström E. (2009). "To Compose, Read, and Use a Byzantine Text: Aspects of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses". *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 33/1 (2009) 42-60.
- Nilsson I. (2006). "To Narrate the Events of the Past: on Byzantine Historians, and Historians on Byzantium". Ed. J. Burke *et al.*, *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*. Leiden – Boston (Byzantina Australiensia 16) (2006) 47-58.
- Ostrogorsky G. (1969). *History of the Byzantine State*. Trans. J. Hussey. New Brunswick – New Jersey 1969.
- Patoura S. (1994). *Οι αιχμάλωτοι ως παράγοντες επικοινωνίας και πληροφόρησης (4ος-10ος αι.)*. Athens 1994.
- Sakel D. (2009). "Anonymi *Historia Imperatorum*, parte prima. Introduzione, testo critico, versione italiana italiana, note e indici a cura di Francesca Iadevaia. Messina 2000". *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 102/1 (2009) 242-245.
- Sakel D. (2017). "Again on the *Historia Imperatorum* – and on the Mantzikert Campaign". *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 110/1 (2017) 141-148.
- Shepard J. (1975). "Byzantinorussica". *Revue des études byzantines* 33 (1975) 211-225.
- Tsolakis E. Th. (1964). "Το πρόβλημα του Συνεχιστή της Χρονογραφίας του Ιωάννου Σκυλίτη". *Hellenika* 18 (1964) 79-83.
- Tsolakis E. Th. (1969). "Ο Μιχαήλ Ατταλειάτης ως κριτικός των επιχειρήσεων και της τακτικής του πολέμου". *Byzantina* 1 (1969) 187-204.
- Tsoungarakis D. (2003). "Η Αυτοκρατορία σε κρίση και η οπτική των συγχρόνων: μια ανάγνωση των μαρτυριών". Ed. V. Vlyssidou, *The Empire in Crisis(?) Byzantium in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century (1025 -1081)*. Athens (2003) 275-290.
- Vratimos A. (2013). "Eudokia Makrembolitissa: Was she Implicated in the Removal of her Husband, Romanos IV Diogenes, from Power?". *Revue des études byzantines* 71 (2013) 277-284.
- Vryonis Sp. jr. (1971). *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1971.
- Vryonis Sp. Jr. (1992). "The Greek and Arabic Sources on the Battle of Mantzikert, 1071 A.D.". Ed. Sp. Vryonis, Jr., *Byzantine Studies, Essays on the Slavic World and the Eleventh Century*. New York (1992) 125-140.
- Vryonis Sp. jr. (2003). "The Eleventh Century: was there a Crisis in the Empire? The Decline of Quality and Quantity in the Byzantine Armed Forces". Ed. V. Vlyssidou, *The Empire in Crisis(?) Byzantium in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century (1025 -1081)* (2003) 17-43.
- Zafeiris K. (2011). "The Issue of the Authorship of the *Synopsis Chronike* and Theodore Skoutariotes". *Revue des études byzantines* 69 (2011) 253-263.

