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An Introduction to Byzantine Political Exile *

Abstract: The Byzantine Empire inherited the Roman politics according to which the one who was to take the power was elected by the Senate, people and army. The role of each above mentioned instance differed during the 5th-10th centuries, due to the influence of political, social and economical factors. After Christianity was adopted it was considered that the emperors were chosen by God through Roman constitutional factors, and his continuity as a leader was conditioned by the Christian virtues. The sovereigns' giving up to Christian model led to their lack of legitimacy, and, under these conditions, their subjects had to remove them. Those dispossessed of power or pretenders who failed in their fight for power were killed or exiled. This study aims at pointing out the way the exile was ordered, with accent on the modalities these operations took place. Another goal resides in the manner in which some geographic places were preferred for political exile and the explanation of their symbolic significance. This approach suggests a new lecture of political ideology, taking into consideration the mechanisms of exclusion from holding the power.

Keywords: exile, Christianity, Roman law, Byzantine law.

The practice of political exile has its origins in exclusion from social groups of those individuals considered evil. There was a custom within the Roman Empire according to which self-exile prevented the application of several sanctions, which was equal to admitting the fault. Several forms of exile were used, the easiest of them being relegation, through which the sentenced one preserved his civil rights and fortune. Byzantine law identified two forms of exile, namely *exoria* and *periorismos*. The major difference between them consisted in the status of the condemned one's properties, respectively in case of *periorismos* the properties were confiscated, while in the case of *exoria* they could be preserved (Kazhdan 770). Exile was done in a remote area where Roman rule was not fully consolidated. There was preferred the exile of the undesirables in border areas, far away both

geographically and culturally. Island destinations were also preferred, as they had the advantage that those in captivity were isolated and easily watched. Thus, the outlaws were taken into a hostile environment, where the lack of possibility to maintain a dialogue led to the impossibility of a socialization which to ensure a platform for rehabilitation. During the Byzantine period, the destinations of exile remained the *borders of the empire* and *the islands* both of them being *less accessible locations*. Throughout the first centuries the favorite destination for sending undesirables was Crimea, and since the 8th century island exile was preferred. The Byzantine islands came to represent the place of exile par excellence for those who proved undesirable for civil or ecclesiastical power. The islands in the northern Aegean Sea, the Marmara Sea and those located near to the coastline of Asia Minor were preferred because they were close to the mainland, so that could be easily controlled and had an adequate prison infrastructure¹. The best known, however, were the Islands of Princes in Propontida, located in front of Constantinople, which had acquired the reputation for political imprisonment; of the nine islands, only four provided conditions conducive to life: Proti, Antigone, Halki and Prinkipo².

Roman lawyers agreed with death sentences especially in cases of particularly serious offense, while for the minor ones they recommended the exile³. Such an attitude had its roots in a series of ancient taboos, such as blood which maculated, or violent death, forecasting the evil. Moreover, capital punishment was strictly linked to the hierarchy of punitive mechanisms and the conception regarding clemency, seen as a political virtue in Roman philosophical reflection. This vein of thought was strongly developed by Christian authors, so that the formal adoption of the new religion was followed by the replacement of executions with physical punishments. At the same time, forms of exclusion were reinterpreted, according to the link between sin and the part of the body involved in its commission. From this point of view, it became essential that those guilty of various crimes to be applied metaphorical mutilations, with emphasis on

¹ Elisabeth Malamut, *Les îles de L'Empire Byzantin (VIII^e-XII^e siècles)*. vol. I (Paris, 1988), 175-177.

² Janin, R. "Les Iles des Princes. Études historique et topographique". *Echos d'Orient*. t. XXIII, 1924, 179

³ Richard A. Bauman, *Crime and Punishment in Ancient Rome*. (London and New York, 1996), 151-152.

sexual organs, nose, eyes, hairiness and ears, after which the exclusion from the community took place⁴.

According to the Byzantine political theory, God protected those who managed to seize power, as divinity was never wrong, and once on the throne, emperors became the living image of Christ on earth⁵. The success of a revolt was the proof that the dethroned emperor had been a tyrant and such, the leader of the insurrection was considered God's emissary on earth. Those who failed in struggle for power were considered agents of evil, who disturbed the peace of God on earth. After breaking such movements, the imperial government organized rituals of punishment and peace, whereas the combination of forgiveness and imposing fear could best restore order⁶. Thus, the humiliation within triumphal processions through dispossession of capillary hairiness maculated by covering with various waste, putting on the horse or donkey upside down, were forms of downgrading, which replaced the death penalty⁷. After the public denial of legitimating those who aspired to supreme dignity they were usually punished with confiscation of property, imprisonment and sometimes mutilated⁸. Typically, for those who fraudulently were claiming to accede to sovereignty, penalties were executed in public space⁹, in order to clearly emphasize the disproportion between the leader and condemned one¹⁰. When capital sentence could not be avoided, inanimate bodies were to be disposed in water or fire, which had both a purifying and evil role, and could be associated with life and death. From the Christian perspective, the situation above mentioned signified the destruction of bodies by abandoning them into the gloomy abyss of the sea or by exposing to consuming fire, in both

⁴ Evelyne Patlagean, "Byzance et le blason pénal du corps". *Du Châtiment dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique* (Rome, 1982), 432-424.

⁵ Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'Empire Byzantin. Formation, evolution, decadence. Byzance: les pays et les territoires* (London, 1976), 181-182.

⁶ Leonora Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge, 2004), 44-45.

⁷ Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity. Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*. (Paris and Cambridge, 1986), 186.

⁸ Leonora Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge, 2004), 45.

⁹ Cinzia Vismard, *Il supplizio come spettacolo* (Roma, 1990), 10.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Abnormal. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975* (New York, 2003), 94-95.

cases the resurrection perspective thus being canceled. Beheading held in Rome were followed by a parade of bodies in the city, which then ended up in the Tiber, and once the capital moved on the Bosphorus, the role of the river was taken by the sea¹¹. For example, after the repression of Nika revolt in January 532, the usurper Hypatius was arrested and beheaded and his body was thrown into the sea, but it returned to shore and was exposed. Meanwhile, Emperor Justinian I (527-565) seized possessions and exiled the senators who took part in the riot¹².

The same concern for the destruction of bodies was shown after taking power by Phocas (602-610), as a result of an uprising triggered along the Danubian limes¹³. He ordered the execution of Mauricius (582-602) and his sons¹⁴, after which their bodies were thrown into the sea, and heads were raised on a high stand¹⁵. In turn, Phocas was dethroned by Heraclius (610-641), his genitals, right arm and head were cut off and his dismembered body was carried through the city and exposed in the Hippodrome¹⁶. Finally, the corpse was burned in the Forum Bovis along with those of the collaborators of the one considered the most odious tyrant of the whole Byzantine history¹⁷. At the end of the 7th century, after the removal of Justinian II (685-695, 705-711) by Leontios (695-698), two close associates of the former emperor were tied up and carried on the streets, after which they were thrown into the fire¹⁸. Justinian II was refused Christian burial, the beheaded body was thrown into the sea and the head exhibited in Rome and Ravenna¹⁹. Particularly suggestive in this respect are the events that occurred during the removal of Leo V (813-820), on the morning of Christmas in the year 820, when the emperor was attacked

¹¹ Yann Rivière, *Le cachot et les fers. Détention et coercition à Rome* (Paris, 2004), 86-88.

¹² *Chronicon Pascale (284-628 AD)* (Liverpool, 1989), 125-126.

¹³ Teofilact Simocata, *Istorie bizantină. Domnia împăratului Mauricius* (582-602), VIII (București, 1985), 169.

¹⁴ Teofilact Simocata, *Istorie bizantină. Domnia împăratului Mauricius* (582-602), VIII, 170.

¹⁵ Teofilact Simocata, *Istorie bizantină. Domnia împăratului Mauricius* (582-602), VIII, 171.

¹⁶ Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of the Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), 38-45.

¹⁷ Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople. *Short History* (Washington, D. C., 1990), 37.

¹⁸ Constance Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Wisconsin, 1972), 102-111.

¹⁹ Warren Treadgold, "Seven Byzantine Revolutions and the Chronology of Theophanes". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*. 31. 2 (1990), 217.

by supporters of Michael II in the chapel of St. Stephen in the Grand Palace, his legs and head being cut off²⁰. The mutilated body was taken to the Hippodrome, where he was stripped and carried by a donkey along the track. The disreputable parade continued through the town, then the body was sent to the island Proti, with the former sovereign's wife Theodosia and four sons, who were castrated and forced to take the monastic race²¹. As he had been murdered, it was necessary for Leon V's lifeless body to undergo a public denial of legitimating through desecration and then exiled. The coincidence of how to proceed with the bodies from the political struggle and treatment of those who, although defeated retained their life, is explained by the fact that, regardless of how the upheavals were made, they must have involved an act of collective vengeance on the body.

Exclusion from the community of the overthrown from the throne, or guilty of attempt to supreme power, was accompanied by measures meant to prevent their return. After Heraclios' major victories in the East a series of symbols and practices of Sasanid power were taken over, namely mutilation of tyrants and usurpers, and, at the same time, the stigmatized ones became unfit for the throne. From this perspective, the elimination from the community can be seen as a result of mutilation, because victims of such violence were marginalized by a society that rejected any physical disharmony. In Byzantium, the first such episode occurred in late 637, when Heraclios preferred to avoid the death penalty of his bastard son, Atalarichos, guilty of conspiracy²², making use of nose and arm mutilation, and then sent him to the island Prinkipo²³. Shortly after Heraclios' disappearance, under pressure of people in the capital and Asian troops, the Senate decided to overthrow Heraclonas, the son of the great emperor from his marriage to Martina²⁴. His and his brother's nasal cartilage was amputated, David, the youngest child, was castrated, and Martina, their mother, lost her tongue; after that, they were all sent to spend the rest of their lives in the island of Rhodes²⁵. Stigmatization and isolation of Heraclios' heirs from a marriage

²⁰ Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)* (Stanford, 1988), 224.

²¹ Genesios. *On the reigns of the Emperors*. Trans. Anthony Kaldellis (Cambera, 1998), 22-23.

²² Andreas N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*. vol. II, Trans. Harry T. Hionides (Amsterdam, 1978), 137.

²³ R. Janin, "Les Iles des Princes. Études historique et topographique". *Echos d'Orient*. t. XXIII (1924), 416.

²⁴ Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclios: Emperor of the Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), 294.

²⁵ The Chronicle of John, bishop of Nikiu (London, 1916), 197-198.

considered incestuous inaugurated the practice of preventive removal of aspirants to the throne of the imperial family, considered undesirable by the head of power. Thus, one could think of the example of Constantine IV (668-685) who, in September 681, after having led a period with his brothers, Tiberios and Heraclios and using the pretext of a revolt in thema Anatolikon, had their noses cut off and sent them to exile²⁶. In November 742, after defeating Artavasdos²⁷, the emperor Constantine V (741-775) ordered his and his two sons' blindness, after which they were made to parade in chains in the Hippodrome²⁸, and then exiled together with a large number of rebels²⁹.

Michael I (811-813), who proved unable to face the Bulgarian threats, abdicated on July, 11, 813, and his successor, Leo V forced him to take the habit on the island of Proti, where he survived until 844. The three sons of Michael I were castrated, the last two born being exiled on the same island with their father, while the eldest son was sent to another island³⁰. The revolt of Thomas the Slav³¹, in 820, was the last one in the series of military disturbances caused by Anatolian soldiers in Europe during the 9th century³² and marked a change of attitude towards the vanquished ones. Thus, from now on it will be considered that the humiliating exposure in the triumph and the exile were punishments enough for supporters of the usurpers³³. During the Macedonian period this trend was consolidated, mutilations being increasingly replaced by the withdrawal to the monastery and banishment, without totally abandoning the association of exclusion with mutilation, especially in case of usurpation

²⁶ Andreas N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*. vol. IV, Trans. Harry T. Hionides (Amsterdam, 1978), 135-140.

²⁷ Stephen Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm during the Reign of Constantine V with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources* (Louvain, 1977), 14-20.

²⁸ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary Cyril Mango and Roger Scott with the assistance of Geoffrey Greatrex (Oxford, 1997), 581.

²⁹ Alfred Lombard, *Constantin V, empereur des romains (740-775)* (Paris, 1902), 29-30.

³⁰ Jean Skylitzes, *Empereurs of Constantinople*. Texte traduit par Bernard Flusin et annoté par Jean-Claude Cheynet (Paris, 2003), 9.

³¹ J. B. Bury, "The Identity of Thomas the Slavonian". *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* (1892), 56-59.

³² Walter Emil Jr. Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest (471-843). An Interpretation* (Amsterdam, 1981), 261.

³³ Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity. Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Paris and Cambridge, 1986), 186.

attempts³⁴. For example, the two sons of Roman I Lekapenos (920-944), Stephen and Constantine, exiled their father on the island of Proti where he was forced to take the habit, and he afterwards seized power and ruled between December, 20, 944 and January, 27, 945³⁵. City population rose against the usurpers and in defense of Constantine VII Porfirogenetos (913-959), who arrested them in January 27, 945 and sent them on the island of Proti, where they had previously exiled their father³⁶. Since the middle of the 11th century the forced monastic reclusion tended to replace mutilations in the imperial family, and was seen as the main way of salvation for rulers who agreed to leave the throne under the pressure the opposition.

Between 963 and 1100 there took place 130 riots, but not all of them aimed at dethroning the emperors, many being only the expression of financial aristocracy's discontent against the central government measures, especially in tax matters³⁷. Since the mid 11th century dispossession of property and placing under strict supervision of imperial agents became a current position in relation to the opposition. For political dissidence during this century, the sanctions were applied gradually, depending on the seriousness of the facts, and they consisted in confiscation of property, exile, blindness and execution³⁸. However, non-violent penalties increasingly replaced the death penalty, and those who participated in plots were confiscated the properties and sent to exile³⁹. For example, in 1029 Michael Bourtzes plotted for Constantine Diogenes, against Roman IV (1068-1071) and after the failure of the plot, he was beaten and carried in a disreputable parade on Mese, the main street in Constantinople, and then sent to exile⁴⁰. His sons, Theognoste and Samuel, also participants in the plot, had the same fate, but returned in active life, enjoying an important

³⁴ Jean-Claude Cheynet, *The Byzantine Aristocracy (8th-13th Centuries). The Byzantine Aristocracy and Its Military Function* (Ashgate, 2006), 16-17.

³⁵ Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium* (Cambridge, 1929), 232.

³⁶ Steven Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign. A Study of Tenth-Century Byzantium*, 233-234.

³⁷ Leonora Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge, 2004), 44.

³⁸ Speros Vryonis, "Byzantium: the Social Basis of Decline in the Eleventh Century". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*. 2. 2, (1959), 160.

³⁹ Koichi Inoue, "The Rebellion of Isaakios Komnenos and the Provincial Aristocratic Oikoi". *Byzantinoslavica*. LIV, f. 2, (1993), 274.

⁴⁰ Jean-Claude Cheynet, Jean-François Vannier, *Études prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986), 32.

military career⁴¹. In August 1034 the plot of Constantine Delassenos failed, he went to the island of Proti in Propontida, and his son in law, Constantine Ducas, was imprisoned in a fortress⁴². Together with Constantin Delassenos his nephew, Adrian Delassenos, son of Theophylact Delassenos, was also exiled⁴³. Constantine X (1059-1067) punished those who conspired in 1061 with exile, imprisonment and confiscation of property⁴⁴. The tendencies of seizing the power from the outside widened during the 11th century due to the dissolution of the Macedonian family⁴⁵. Serious military defeats led to radical consequences, striking in this respect being the tragic destiny of Roman IV Diogenes (1068-1071), the emperor defeated at Manzikert⁴⁶. Seeking to regain power after release from Seljuk captivity, the ruler was arrested by the envoys of Michael VII (1071-1078) and blinded, in June, 26, 1071, despite having agreed to take the monastic race. He soon died after the torture, in August 4, the same year, at the monastery he had founded on the island of Proti⁴⁷. Since 1204, most rebellions, except for some notable ones, like that of John VI Cantacuzenos' (1347-1354), were led by members of the ruling family (Angelov 118). After the defeat of Andronikos II (1328-1341), he was imprisoned in a monastery, where he died in February 13, 1332, sick and blind. At the same time, Andronikos III (1282-1328) ordered reprisals against intimates of his grandfather, the main target being Theodor Metochites, and his considerable wealth was confiscated on account of the imperial treasury, and he was sent to exile⁴⁸.

Although sending to exile meant the final disposal from the social body, this practice was often viewed as having a provisional character. Thus, in August 15, 695 Justinian II was deposed from power by

⁴¹ Jean-Claude Cheynet, Jean-François Vannier, *Études prosopographiques*, 33-34.

⁴² Demetrios Polemis, I. *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*, London, 1968), 29.

⁴³ Jean-Claude Cheynet, Jean-François Vannier, *Études prosopographiques* (Paris, 1986), 87.

⁴⁴ Demetrios Polemis, I. *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*, 31.

⁴⁵ Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990), 173.

⁴⁶ Romilly Jenkins, *Byzantium. The Imperial Centuries (AD 610-1071)* (London, 1966), 372-373.

⁴⁷ Mihail Psellos, *Cronografia. Un veac de istorie bizantină (976-1077)*, VIII. Trad. Radu Alexandrescu (Iași, 1998), 193.

⁴⁸ Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (London, 1972), 169.

Leontios and banished to Cherson, from where he managed to seize the throne in 705⁴⁹. In his turn, Leontios was overthrown by Tiberios Apsimaros (698-705), who had his nose cut off, and exiled him to the Monastery of Delmatos⁵⁰. After returning to the throne, in the spring of 705, Justinian II⁵¹ ordered the uprooting of Leontios from monastic race and the capture of Apsimaros⁵². The two participated in chains to the triumphal procession of the restored emperor, after which they were executed, the ruler unwilling to risk leaving them alive so to have the possibility of returning to the throne, as he himself had done⁵³. Justinian II was removed by Philippicos Bardanes (711-713), who had been sent to Crimea by Tiberios III Apsimaros as he revealed a story about a dream that predicted him becoming emperor⁵⁴. From this distant exile he unleashed an insurrection and took power, but he was soon deposed and blinded during the revolt in Constantinople, on June, 3rd, 713⁵⁵. Anastasios II (713-715) came to the throne, but in November 715⁵⁶ he was forced to accept the monastic reclusion in Thessaloniki, and in June 719 was executed in Constantinople by order of Leon III (717-741), after a group of magnates in Helladic thema tried to restore him in the head of the Empire⁵⁷. In August, 25, 765, 19 senior officials were exposed in the arena, being accused of high treason and plot. The main accused, Constantine Podopagouros, *patricius* and *logothetēs tou dromon* (logothete of the Dromos) and Strategicus, high officer, were beheaded and their accomplices blinded and banished. Emperor Constantine V ordered that, for several years, they were beaten by the officials especially brought for this mission in

⁴⁹ Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople. *Short History* (Washington, D. C., 1990), 97.

⁵⁰ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary Cyril Mango and Roger Scott with the assistance of Geoffrey Greatrex (Oxford, 1997), 517.

⁵¹ Constance Head, "On the Date of Justinian II's Restoration". *Byzantion*. XXXIX (1969), 104-107.

⁵² Treadgold, Warren. "Seven Byzantine Revolutions and the Chronology of Theophanes". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*. 31. 2 (1990), 212-213.

⁵³ Constance Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium* (Wisconsin, 1972), 116-117.

⁵⁴ Graham V. Summer, "Philippicus, Anastasius II and Theodosius III". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*. 17. 3 (1976), 287-289.

⁵⁵ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*. Translated with Introduction and Commentary Cyril Mango and Roger Scott with the assistance of Geoffrey Greatrex (Oxford, 1997), 533.

⁵⁶ Gilbert Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre. Etude sur le „césaropapisme” byzantin* (Paris, 1996), 92-93.

⁵⁷ Graham V. Summer, "Philippicus, Anastasius II and Theodosius III". *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*. 17. 3 (1976), 291.

the islands they were exiled⁵⁸. An emblematic case in this regard took place in the summer of 784, when Constantine VI (780-797) faced the defeated commanders at Marcellae, who decided to proclaim Constantine V's son, Nicephoros, though he was clergy. Emperor had him blind and his four brothers' tongues cut off⁵⁹. Although these gestures were intended to produce a final removal from power, during the reign of Michael I, Constantine V's sons were used as a source of legitimacy, and a group of soldiers planned to release them from the island located near the capital, the fact determined the emperor to transfer them to the another island to the western Marmara Sea⁶⁰. In 803 the rebel Bardanes Turcos entered a monastery on the island of Proti, hoping to escape the imperial sanction. After several weeks the soldiers of Nicephoros I (802-811) blinded him although he had taken the monastic race, and died under Leo V, one of those who had betrayed him in an attempt to seize the throne⁶¹. During the Macedonian period the tendency of avoiding physical violence, and thus mutilations, increased the perception of exile as a temporary state. Thus, conspirationist trends were sometimes exacerbated, and several scenarios were plotted in the period of reclusion. Suggestive in this regard are the events of the 8th decade of the 10th century, when Bardas Phocas proclaimed himself emperor, but agreed to surrender, along with his entourage in return for a promise that they would be let unharmed. The usurper was exiled to the island of Kyos and many confiscations of properties took place on behalf of the rebels. Leo Phocas, the rebel's father, and Nicephor Phocas, his brother, were sentenced to death but John Tzimisce pardoned them, and had them apparently blinded⁶² and exiled to Lesbos⁶³. Leo Phocas continued plotting and escaped confinement, trying to raise the capital for the benefit of his son Nicephor, taking advantage of the battles between Byzantines and Russians, but the two men were captured and effectively blinded⁶⁴, then imprisoned in a monastery of Proti island⁶⁵.

⁵⁸ Lombard, Alfred. *Constantin V, empereur des romains (740-775)* (Paris, 1902), 146.

⁵⁹ Treadgold, Warren. *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)* (Stanford, 1988), 101-102.

⁶⁰ Treadgold, Warren. *The Byzantine Revival (780-842)* (Stanford, 1988), 182.

⁶¹ R.Janin, "Les Iles des Princes. Études historique et topographique". *Echos d'Orient*. t. XXIII (1924), 184-185.

⁶² Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990), 24.

⁶³ R.Janin, "Les Iles des Princes. Études historique et topographique". *Echos d'Orient*. t. XXIII (1924), 189.

⁶⁴ Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990), 25.

During the Macedonian period, the tendency regarding the avoidance of physical violence, and thus of mutilation, accentuated the perception of exile as a provisional state, exacerbating the conspiracy scenarios shaped in confinement. Suggestive in this regard were the actions of Leon Tornikios, strategist of Melitene, who took part, during the first half of 1047, in a revolt against Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055), the last husband of Empress Zoe⁶⁵. According to Michael Psellos, the emperor decided to prevent any hostile action on his part and sent him in Iberia, but rumors of the hostile intentions of Tornikios came to no end, so he decided to force him take the habit⁶⁷. In September 1047 he started an insurrection and was proclaimed emperor at Adrianople⁶⁸. After failing before Constantinople he was left by his supporters and captured together with John Vatatzes, his latest partisan⁶⁹, both blinded and crucified on Christmas of 1047⁷⁰. In 1261, Michael VIII Palaeologus (1261-1282) decided to punish the literate Michael Holobolos as he had disagreed with the mutilation of the lips and tongue of John IV Lascaris (1258-1261), in the service of whose he was⁷¹. After the torture, he was closed in Prodromos monastery in Constantinople, but in 1265 Michael VIII recalled him from confinement, due to his exceptional rhetorical abilities. Holobolos recited the panegyrics dedicated to the emperor on Christmas, three of them, in successive years, surviving the time⁷². After the abdication of John Catacuzenos V (1347-1354), his son Matthew continued to use the imperial title from the position of master of Moreea. The other son, Manuel, who was governor of Moreea between 1349 and 1355, received as compensation the island of Lemnos⁷³. Matthew did not give up the throne of Constantinople

⁶⁵ R. Janin, "Les Iles des Princes. Études historique et topographique". *Echos d'Orient*. t. XXIII (1924), 189.

⁶⁶ Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990), 59.

⁶⁷ Mihail Psellos, *Cronografia. Un veac de istorie bizantină (976-1077)*, VI. Trad. Radu Alexandrescu (Iași, 1998), 106.

⁶⁸ Mihail Psellos, *Cronografia. Un veac de istorie bizantină (976-1077)*, VI, 107.

⁶⁹ Mihail Psellos, *Cronografia. Un veac de istorie bizantină (976-1077)*, VI, 113.

⁷⁰ Michel Attaliatès, "Histoire". Traduction française par Henri Grégoire. *Byzantion*. XIV (1958), 343.

⁷¹ Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (New York, 2007), 44-45.

⁷² Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 45.

⁷³ Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (London, 1972), 256.

and, in 1356 decided to take act and headed the capital of the empire. He relied on the military support offered by Orchan and the Serbian Governor of the cities in western Thrace. Soon, however, Serbian and Turkish soldiers began to fight among themselves so that the Greek and Turkish soldiers abandoned the claimant. Accordingly, Matthew was captured by the Serbs, and John V (1341-1376, 1379-1391) redeemed him and sent him for a while in the island Tenedos, and in 1357 moved him, together with his wife and family in the island of Lesbos. From there he heard about a daring plot aiming at seizing the imperial palace in Constantinople and capturing of John V's family, so as to obtain his own release this way. The plot failed and in December 1357 Matthew agreed to give up any claim to the imperial title in a ceremony in the presence of John V and the patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem. His sons John and Demetrios received the titles of despot and sebastocrator. That time on no representative of Catacuzenos family did not claim the imperial dignity⁷⁴. John V forced his son Manuel to accept the exile in the island of Lemnos. He became associated to the throne in 1373, and after the first insurrection of his brother, Andronikos IV (1376-1379), he was imprisoned along with his father and his brother, Theodore. With the support of Murad I and the Venetians, John V and his two sons were restored⁷⁵. In April-May 1381 the hostilities between John V and Andronikos IV ended, and the emperor recognized the hereditary rights for his rebellious son and the latter's son, John VII (1390). Manuel was given the city of Thessaloniki and its territory for the lifetime, and from this position he faced Murad I, but in April 1387 the city surrendered and Emperor John V refused to host Manuel. Abandoned by the West and rejected by the Christian East, Manuel accepted the offer of reconciliation and peace with Murad I and went to Bursa, where he met the Ottoman emir. After that moment, his father exiled him in Lemnos, but did not take his inheritance rights, only temporarily removing him from sphere of power between 1387 and 1389. The main source, Demetrios Cydones's letters, revealed that the sending into exile occurred in autumn or winter of 1387⁷⁶. That episode was not of particular importance for Byzantine political history, except for the fact that the future emperor Manuel II (1391-1425) embraced the policy of his father, John V. From this

⁷⁴ Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 256-257.

⁷⁵ Raymond-J. Loenertz, "L'exil de Manuel II Paléologue à Lemnos 1387-1389". *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*. XXXVIII, f. I (1972), 116.

⁷⁶ Raymond-J. Loenertz, "L'exil de Manuel II Paléologue à Lemnos 1387-1389". *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*. XXXVIII, f. I (1972), 123-124.

perspective, however, it revealed that the exile was designed as a form of temporary exclusion, which sought to discipline the members of the imperial family.

Based on these occurrences, one may say that exile was not perceived as an irreversible situation, unable to be totally replaced by any other penalty. This type of exclusion was conceived rather as provisional state, whereas the far one remained in the possession of society or power, as a potential target, likely to be reactivated in critical moments. By this mechanism of invoking a potential hazard there was regularly targeted the restoration of solidarity between rulers and subjects, which represented an expression of the strategy of symbolic recognition. Thus, the exile cannot, however, be treated as an abandon, as the community of those who had been excluded retained their, which was seen therefore as a form of captivity.

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