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THE BYZANTINE ARISTOCRACY AND THE UNION
OF THE CHURCHES (1274-1283):

A PROSOPOGRAPHICAL APPROACH*

VINCENT PUECH

The Union between the Greek and Latin Churches was consummated at the Council of Lyons and proclaimed during its sixth session, on the 6th of July 1274.¹ As is well known, Michael VIII was keen to gratify Pope Gregory X (1271-1276), in the hope of dissuading the king of Sicily, Charles of Anjou, from attacking the Byzantine Empire.² In 1266 Charles of Anjou had received the crown of Sicily from the pope himself, and in 1267 concluded a treaty with Baldwin II, the Latin emperor of Constantinople, who had been expelled by the Greeks in 1261. The Union between the Greek and Latin Churches therefore quashed the religious legitimacy of any restoration of the Latin Empire on Byzantine soil. Two declarations were read by the Greeks during the council. The first was issued by the Byzantine synod and recognized the papal primacy.³ The second was a letter of Michael VIII. He recognized the papal primacy in the same terms but also declared his personal adherence to the Latin orthodoxy, on the condition that the Greek Church be permitted to retain her proper creed. The Union of the Churches was thus consummated on this seemingly-straightforward basis, but also retained a certain ambiguity. For the emperor, the faith of his Church was saved. For the pope, however, all these declarations required the Greeks' adherence to the Latin creed, and in 1276 he accordingly sent ambassadors to obtain from all the oriental clerics an oath of adherence to the Latin creed. For his part, Michael VIII did not formulate such a request but merely demanded adherence to the Union of the Churches referring to the terminology adopted by him. Rejection of the Union was therefore tantamount to the crime of lèse majesté.⁴ The imperial repression took a more radical turn in 1280, when, according to the historian

* I am warmly thanking Ben Jackson, Guillaume Saint-Guillain and Dennis Stathakopoulos for their numerous improvements of my English.

1. B. ROBERG, *Das Zweite Konzil von Lyon (1274)*, Munich 1990.

2. D. J. GEANAKOPOLOS, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West (1258-1282). A study in Byzantine-Latin relations*, Cambridge 1959, pp. 237-245.

3. The papal primacy was recognized in three points: the rank of "first of the bishops", the right to receive appeals for oriental ecclesiastical sentences, the commemoration in the liturgy.

4. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, *Livres I-VI*, ed A. FAILLER and transl. V. LAURENT, 2nd ed., Paris 2006 (*Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae* 24/1-2), p. 505, with the commentary of A. FAILLER, Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère, *Revue des études byzantines* 39, 1981, pp. 145-249, here pp. 225-230. Two *chrysoboulloi* were sent to the bishops and

George Pachymeres, "everybody who was accused of anti-imperial writings, even when they only possessed one of them, was simply threatened with death".⁵ One notes with interest that this hard line coincides precisely with Charles of Anjou's decision to despatch a considerable army in the direction of Macedonia.⁶

The question of Union provoked real political debate in the Byzantine Empire, and it is interesting to consider the reasons for such opposition to the Union of the Churches, when supporting it could have been considered no more than a formal gesture of political allegiance. In particular, one wonders whether the opinions of the Byzantine aristocracy resulted more from hostility towards the Latins or from internal dissensions. Put another way, does religiosity alone suffice to explain anti-unionism? A prosopographical approach to this question must be cautious: one must carefully map religious beliefs, before broadly questioning the political interests of particular individuals or groups.

Our main source for detecting the rifts in Byzantine society surrounding the Union of the Churches is the historian George Pachymeres,⁷ attested in 1265 as patriarchal notary and then in 1277 as *didaskalos* of the apostles.⁸ He also counted himself among the redactors of the Church's *Tomos* which responded to the imperial *Tomos* on Union in 1273.⁹ Like the majority of clerics, he was sceptical of Union, but officially submitted to the emperor after its consummation. He remained somewhat in favour of anti-unionism, however, a leaning which provides us with a unique perspective on our question.¹⁰

The other main source on the subject is the Latin report of the *protonotarios* Ogerius, the chief interpreter of Michael VIII's chancellery. His text was dispatched in 1278 to two imperial ambassadors to the pope¹¹ and complements Pachymeres' views on the nature of aristocratic opposition to the Union and Michael VIII's reaction.¹² From these two precious sources arose a distinct historiographical strand, from which the study of H. Evert-Kappesowa emerged. She suggests a familial and political correlation with opposition to the Union of the Churches from a section of the aristocracy.¹³ This paper attempts to build on this work

to the patriarchal *archontai*, respectively, in 1273 and 1274. In 1273, it was therefore a measure preparing the conclusion of the Union of the Churches.

5. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 621.

6. GEANAKOPIOS, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, pp. 329-330.

7. E. TRAPP *et alii*, *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, 12 vols, Vienna 1976-1996 (quoted hereafter as *PLP*), here vol. IX, no. 22186. See the editor's introduction in GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. XIX-XX.

8. This last office is known from the presence of Pachymeres in the scripted engagement of the *archontai* of the Church of 1277 about the Union: this document reveals the constraint exerted by the emperor on the clerics.

9. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 487.

10. One must note that Pachymeres wrote under the reign of Andronikos II, when the Union had been denounced by the imperial power.

11. OGERIUS, *Report*, ed. R.-J. LOENERTZ, *Mémoire d'Ogier, protonotaire, pour Marco et Marchetto nonces de Michel VIII Paléologue auprès du pape Nicolas III, 1278, printemps-été*, *Orientalia christiana periodica* 31, 1965, pp. 374-408, reprinted in *Id.*, *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca. Articles parus de 1935 à 1966*, Rome 1970, pp. 537-572.

12. The prosopographical study of this document is greatly indebted to D. M. NICOL, *The Greeks and the Union of the Churches. The Report of Ogerius, protonotarius of Michael VIII Palaiologos, in 1280*, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 63, section C, 1, 1962, pp. 1-16.

13. H. EVERT-KAPPELOWA, *La société byzantine et l'Union de Lyon*, *Byzantinoslavica* 10, 1949, pp. 28-41.

using a more systematic prosopography, based on a wider selection of sources. It will not reflect directly on the attitude of clerics and scholars, however, for this subject has been well studied by H. Evert-Kappesowa¹⁴ and C. Constantinides respectively.¹⁵ If necessary, of course, links will be drawn between these clerics and scholars and the aristocracy.

The western branch of the Angelos family shall be studied first because its opposition to Union is conflated with a military alliance with the Latin peoples. In 1276, the sebastokrator John Doukas Angelos¹⁶ settled in Thessaly and convened a council condemning the emperor, the patriarch and the pope as heretics.¹⁷ His half-brother, the despot Nikephoros Angelos, meanwhile, was excommunicated in 1277 by the patriarch for denouncing the Union.¹⁸ Both had independently concluded an alliance with Charles of Anjou, attested in 1275 for John Doukas Angelos¹⁹ and 1277 for Nikephoros Angelos,²⁰ who even declared himself a vassal of the Sicilian king in 1279.²¹ John Doukas Angelos, for his part, launched no fewer than three military attacks against the troops of Michael VIII,²² while a relative of the Angeloi, the parakoimomenos of the Great Seal Gabriel Sphrantzes, was blinded after allegations of anti-unionism in 1280.²³ One observes that the Angeloi used anti-unionism in a more political than religious capacity, however. Indeed, they continued to fight Michael VIII while concluding alliances which might lead to the Latin creed's triumph.

A second family, the Kantakouzenoi, was linked to the Angeloi through Anna Kantakouzene,²⁴ wife of the despot Nikephoros Angelos.²⁵ Eirene-Eulogia Kantakouzene,²⁶

14. EAD., Une page de l'histoire des relations byzantino-latines: le clergé byzantin et l'Union de Lyon (1274-1282), *Byzantinoslavica* 13, 1952-1953, pp. 68-92.

15. C. N. CONSTANTINIDES, Byzantine scholars and the Union of Lyon (1274), in *The making of Byzantine history. Studies dedicated to Donald M. Nicol*, ed. R. BEATON and Ch. ROUECHÉ, London 1993, pp. 86-93. See also I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, Le conflit de l'Union des Églises (1274) et son reflet dans l'enseignement supérieur de Constantinople, *Byzantinoslavica* 56, 1995, pp. 411-422.

16. *PLP*, vol. I, no. 208. Illegitimate son of the despot Michael II Angelos: GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *History*, ed. A. HEISENBERG, *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, vol. I, Leipzig 1903, pp. 1-189, here p. 170.

17. OGERIUS, *Report*, p. 392. D. M. NICOL, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A contribution to the history of Greece in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1984, p. 20.

18. OGERIUS, *Report*, p. 390.

19. R. FILANGIERI *et alii*, eds, *I registri della cancelleria angioiana*, vol. XII, Naples 1959, p. 187, no. 6.

20. *Ibid.*, vol. XV, Naples 1961, p. 42, no. 171.

21. D. M. NICOL, The relations of Charles of Anjou with Nikephoros of Epiros, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 4, 1972, pp. 170-194, here pp. 186-189.

22. Attacks of 1273 (GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 421-427), probably 1277 (*ibid.*, p. 527) and probably 1282 (*ibid.*, p. 659).

23. *PLP*, vol. XI, no. 27276. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 621-623. Gabriel Sphrantzes was perhaps the son of Sphrantzes, husband of Maria Petraliphaina, who was herself sister-in-law of the despot Michael II Angelos: GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *History*, ed. HEISENBERG, p. 140.

24. *PLP*, vol. V, no. 10933.

25. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 315-317: their wedding probably took place in 1265.

26. *PLP*, vol. IX, no. 21360. Eirene Palaiologina was the wife of the *pinkernes* John Kantakouzenos: GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 155. Eulogia was her monastic name.

Anna's mother and Michael VIII's sister, was one of the leaders of the opposition to the imperial *Tomos* of 1273,²⁷ and was consequently exiled to a fortress in the gulf of Nicomedia. Another daughter of Eirene-Eulogia, Maria, the wife of the Bulgarian tsar Constantine Tikh,²⁸ was aligned with her mother and incited her husband to make war against Michael VIII.²⁹ She also sheltered dissidents, probably in Bulgarian territory. A son of Eirene-Eulogia, John Palaiologos Kantakouzenos, governor of Thessaly, not only refused to attack John Doukas Angelos in 1277, but actually invited him to invade imperial territory.³⁰ A third daughter, Theodora Raoulaina,³¹ was incarcerated and had her property confiscated because of her opposition to the Union of the Churches,³² while a relative of the Kantakouzenoi, Theodore Mouzalon,³³ *logothetes* of the Public Treasure (and acting *mesazon*), also voiced opposition to the Union: according to Pachymeres, he kept his opinions secret as late as 1280, when Michael VIII tested his loyalty by sending him as an ambassador to the pope, a mission he refused.³⁴

The leader of the Kantakouzenos clan, Eirene-Eulogia, was also close to the patriarch Joseph I (1267-1275),³⁵ and together they organised opposition to the imperial *Tomos* of 1273.³⁶ The patriarch maintained an ambivalent attitude, however, in contradiction to his oaths, and he kept his appointment until 1275, when he supported the candidature of John Bekkos as his successor.³⁷ But the monastic relations of Joseph I were more resolute in their opposition to Union. The monk Job Iasites alias Melias was the chief redactor of the Church's *Tomos* responding to the imperial one.³⁸ It was also he who suggested that the patriarch circulate an oath amongst the clerics declaring their opposition to the Union. In 1273, however, he was publicly humiliated in a mock triumph alongside other opponents to the Union and was ultimately exiled to the Sangarios, while Joseph was sent to the Black Sea. It is not by chance that Job Iasites alias Melias is probably to be identified with the author of the *Life of Theodora*.³⁹ This saint, a member of the Petraliphas family, was also the mother of the despot Nikephoros Angelos whom we have seen to be a strong opponent to the Union, and Job Iasites' text undoubtedly helped legitimize the political

27. *Ibid.*, p. 487.

28. *PLP*, vol. VII, no. 16910. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 443.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 545.

30. *PLP*, vol. V, no. 10975. OGERIUS, *Report*, p. 390.

31. *PLP*, vol. V, no. 10943. Theodora Kantakouzene was the wife of the *protobestiarios* John Raoul: GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 153-155.

32. OGERIUS, *Report*, p. 392.

33. *PLP*, vol. VIII, no. 19439. Theodore Mouzalon had been married by Michael VIII to the daughter of a Kantakouzenos: GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 625.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 625-627.

35. *PLP*, vol. IV, no. 9072.

36. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 486.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 529.

38. *PLP*, vol. IV, no. 7959. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 487. V. LAURENT, *Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople. I. Les actes des patriarches*, vol. IV, *Les registres de 1208 à 1309*, Paris 1971, no. 1400, pp. 194-197.

39. S. PÉTRIDÈS, Le moine Job, *Échos d'Orient* 15, 1912, pp. 40-48.

pretensions of the Angeloi.⁴⁰ Another Iasites, Michael, deacon of the patriarchate, was equally opposed to Union.⁴¹ Indeed it seems as though the whole Iasites family was acquainted with the patriarch Joseph I. Before his accession to the patriarchate, Joseph had been hegoumenos of the Galesion, a monastery situated near Ephesos, a town where yet another Iasites had been metropolitan at the beginning of the 13th century.⁴² In addition, two monks of the Galesion, Meletios⁴³ and Galaktion,⁴⁴ both close to Joseph I, were arrested because of their opposition to Union and later incarcerated in the island of Skyros, perhaps in 1276-1279.⁴⁵ Probably in 1281, the two monks were sentenced by the imperial tribunal: Meletios had his tongue cut out and Galaktion was blinded.⁴⁶

The Arsenites, already an opposition movement to Michael VIII,⁴⁷ continued their hostility to the emperor by rejecting the Union of the Churches. The Arsenite cause was first used by the Angeloi to reinforce their opposition to Union. Indeed, a second council was convened in 1278 by the two brothers John Doukas Angelos and Nikephoros Angelos,⁴⁸ recognizing the legitimacy of the patriarch Arsenios while at the same time condemning the Latin heresy. Thessaly, governed by the sebastokrator John Doukas Angelos, seems to have been at the heart of this Arsenite opposition to the Union of the Churches. Indeed, Manuel Raoul, governor of Thessaly in 1276-1277,⁴⁹ was among the western governors who betrayed Michael VIII for John Doukas Angelos,⁵⁰ and was duly incarcerated by the emperor, at the latest in 1278.⁵¹ Manuel's brother, Isaac, also a governor in the West, similarly betrayed Michael VIII, probably after the imperial defeat in Thessaly in 1277-1278⁵² and was incarcerated sometime before 1279.⁵³ One notes that Manuel and

40. É. PATLAGEAN, Une sainte souveraine grecque : Théodora impératrice d'Épire (XIII^e siècle), *Byzantinoslavica* 56, 1995, pp. 453-460.

41. *PLP*, vol. IV, no. 7960. V. LAURENT and J. DARROUZÈS, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyon (1273-1277)*, Paris 1976, p. 471.

42. G. FEDALTO, *Hierarchia ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. I, *Patriarchatus Constantinopolitanus*, Padua 1988, p. 115: Iasites attested as metropolitan of Ephesos from 1217 to circa 1224.

43. *PLP*, vol. VII, no. 17753. D. STIERNON, Mèlèce, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, vol. XI/1, Paris 1978, pp. 972-975. Meletios wrote a treatise against the Latins, who are denounced as guilty of about forty deviations, in particular the *filioque* and the use of unleavened bread.

44. *PLP*, vol. II, no. 3473.

45. In 1279-1281, Meletios was sent to Rome to the pope's judgment. On the other hand, the island of Skyros was retaken by Michael VIII, probably in 1276-1277: R.-J. LOENERTZ, *Les Ghisi, dynastes vénitiens dans l'Archipel, 1207-1390*, Florence 1975, pp. 53-54.

46. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 617.

47. The origins of the arsenite opposition to Michael VIII are to be found in the conflict between the party of the Laskarids and that of the Palaiologoi during the reign of Theodore II and the patriarchate of Arsenios Autoreianos: V. PUECH, The Aristocracy and the Empire of Nicaea, in *Identities and allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, ed. J. HERRIN and G. SAINT-GUILLAIN, Farnham - Burlington, Vermont 2011, pp. 69-80, here pp. 76-77.

48. V. GRUMEL, En Orient après le II^e concile de Lyon, *Échos d'Orient* 24, 1925, pp. 321-325.

49. *PLP*, vol. X, no. 24132. F. MIKLOSICH and J. MÜLLER, eds, *Acta et diplomata Graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, vol. IV, Vienna 1871, pp. 419-421, nos. XXXVII-XXXVIII.

50. OGERIUS, *Report*, p. 390.

51. *Ibid.* The text mentions his incarceration with no date but we know that it was written in 1278.

52. *PLP*, vol. X, no. 24120. OGERIUS, *Report*, p. 390.

53. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 581.

Isaac Raoul were the brothers-in-law of Theodora Kantakouzene Raoulaina,⁵⁴ a staunch opponent of the Union, as we have seen. In 1280, Michael VIII had the Raoul brothers tortured, a decision probably precipitated by the dramatic military events earlier that year. As he could not extract anything from the two men, however, he had them blinded.⁵⁵ In fact, the Raoul had most probably been sheltering two monks, Lazarios Gorianites⁵⁶ and Makarios alias the Dove.⁵⁷ Indeed, Pachymeres describes the punishment of all these individuals in the same chapter,⁵⁸ and recounts elsewhere how Makarios was accused of "inciting the western *archontai* against the emperor" and was arrested by the *mezas doux* Licario, commander of a fleet in Europe, who discovered Makarios outside the empire's frontiers. Such evidence serves to link Makarios' behaviour with the Raoul brothers.⁵⁹ Lazarios Gorianites, meanwhile, was a member of a Thessalian family⁶⁰ acquainted with the Angeloi from the beginning of the 13th century.⁶¹ One may also consider the orator of the Great Church Manuel Holobolos, an Arsenite incarcerated in the Hyakinthos monastery at Nicaea in 1273 after being forced to participate in a humiliating mock triumph held in Constantinople because of his opposition to the Union.⁶² His niece also endured the same fate, indicating the familial nature of the Holobolos' opposition to imperial power. One notes that Manuel Holobolos also tutored a certain Thomas Gorianites, *doulos* of Michael VIII,⁶³ suggesting a possible link with the aforementioned Gorianites family.

The Tarchaneiotai were the other great Arsenite family opposed to the Union of the Churches. The first case to consider is that of Andronikos Tarchaneiotos: the son-in-law of John Doukas Angelos,⁶⁴ he sought refuge in Thessaly in 1270-1271.⁶⁵ One must also

54. S. FASSOULAKIS, *The Byzantine family of Raoul-Ralles*, Athens 1973, p. 19.

55. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed. FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 611. On the contrary, John Kantakouzenos submitted to the emperor to avoid to be blinded.

56. *PLP*, vol. II, no. 4321.

57. *Ibid.*, vol. IX, no. 22465.

58. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed. FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 611-621.

59. The Arsenite sympathies of the Raoul during this period may be inferred from their links with the monks Makarios and Lazarios Gorianites. Indeed, in a speech given in 1304, Andronikos II mentions those Arsenites who became schismatics only after the conclusion of Union: GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. IV, *Livres X-XIII*, ed. and transl. A. FAILLER, Paris 1999, pp. 509-521. As the main individuals quoted here by the emperor were Makarios and Lazarios, it seems we can join the Raoul to them. Indeed, Theodora Raoulaina and Isaac Raoul were undoubtedly Arsenites under Andronikos II: GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. III, *Livres VII-IX*, ed. and transl. A. FAILLER, Paris 1999, pp. 71 and 233.

60. Another Gorianites originating from Thessaly was metropolitan of Serres in 1219: V. G. VASIL'EVSKY, *Epirotica saeculi XIII*, *Vizantijskij vremennik* 3, 1896, pp. 233-299, here p. 276.

61. Nikephoros Gorianites was *mesazon* of Theodore Angelos between 1217 and 1222: N. A. BEES and H. BEES-SEFERLIS, *Unedierte Schriftstücke aus der Kanzlei des Johannes Apokaukos des metropolitzen von Naupaktos* (in Aetolien), *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 21, 1976, pp. 57-324, here pp. 90, 102, 116 and 118.

62. *PLP*, vol. IX, no. 21047. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed. FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 501-505. The historian says that the place of incarceration was chosen "by a so-called favour". It must allude to Holobolos' attachment to an illustrious Lascarid site of memory: the tomb of the emperor Theodore I was situated in the Hyakinthos monastery at Nicaea.

63. *PLP*, vol. II, no. 4320.

64. *Ibid.*, vol. XI, no. 27475. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed. FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 401.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 419.

add however Andronikos' mother, Maria-Martha Tarchaneiotissa,⁶⁶ who was another sister of Michael VIII, as well as her other son John Tarchaneiotēs⁶⁷ and her daughter Theodora:⁶⁸ all three refused the Union.⁶⁹

A study of the Laskaris family, who represented the core of the Arsenite schism, and its Bithynian connection, also reveals hostility to the Union of the Churches. The case of the monk Neilos Erichiotes Laskaris is well known:⁷⁰ because of his opposition to the Union he was allegedly forced into a sea journey of a biblical length of forty days.⁷¹ One may also add the case of Theoleptos, the future metropolitan of Philadelphia, however.⁷² A deacon, born in Nicaea, Theoleptos found himself in various Bithynian monasteries during the crisis, denounced the Union in 1275, and was accordingly arrested and beaten on Michael VIII's order. When he was eventually released, he once again took refuge in the region of Nicaea where, for eight years, he championed the orthodoxy of the city's inhabitants. The hostility towards Unionism of a number of people related to the Laskaris is also attested in the 13th century additions to the *Oracles of Leo the Wise* (attributed to the 10th century emperor Leo VI). Cyril Mango demonstrated that these additions were systematically inserted to favour the Laskaris, for they attribute the recovery of Constantinople to Theodore II.⁷³ Immediately after this assertion, moreover, the text denounces the Union consummated under his successor Michael VIII, in particular the alleged use of unleavened bread.

In addition, the circle of the empress Theodora, the wife of Michael VIII,⁷⁴ included some individuals hostile to the Union of the Churches, most notably the monk John, the spiritual father of the empress.⁷⁵ In 1275 John was exiled from the imperial court because of his religious opinions, but remained free, almost certainly because the empress protected him. One might also consider Constantine Akropolites,⁷⁶ the son of the historian George who was himself loyal to the emperor, and indeed was one of his ambassadors to the Council of Lyons in 1274.⁷⁷ Constantine Akropolites was the husband of Maria Komnene

66. *PLP*, vol. IX, no. 21389. Maria Palaiologina was the wife of the *mezas domestikos* Nikephoros Tarchaneiotēs: GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *History*, ed. HEISENBERG, p. 55. Martha was her monastic name.

67. *PLP*, vol. XI, no. 27487.

68. *Ibid.*, vol. XI, no. 27510.

69. OGERIUS, *Report*, pp. 391-392.

70. *PLP*, vol. VIII, no. 20021. The monk Neilos Erichiotes (or Hierychiotes) was a member of the Laskaris family, "having well-born and rich ancestors, descended from an imperial race, that of the Laskarides" (γεννήτορας ἔχων εὐγενεῖς καὶ πλουσίους ἐκ βασιλικῆς φυλῆς, τῆς τῶν Λασκάρων, καταγομένους): P. ARABANTINOS, Βίος τοῦ Ὁσίου Νείλου τοῦ κτίτορος τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς τοῦ Γηρομερίου, *Πανδώρα* 15, 1864-1865, pp. 471-473, here p. 471.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 472.

72. *PLP*, vol. IV, no. 7509. See the translator's introduction in THÉOLEPTE DE PHILADELPHIE, *Lettres à une princesse, Discours monastiques*, transl. M.-H. CONGOURDEAU, Paris 2001, pp. 8-10.

73. C. MANGO, The legend of Leo the Wise, *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 6, 1960, pp. 59-94, here p. 67.

74. *PLP*, vol. IX, no. 21380.

75. *Ibid.*, vol. IV, no. 8609. V. LAURENT, La personnalité de Jean d'Héraclée (1250-1328), oncle et précepteur de Nicéphore Grégoras, *Ἑλληνικά* 3, 1930, pp. 297-315.

76. *PLP*, vol. I, no. 520.

77. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed. FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 493.

Tornikina⁷⁸ and is described as an anti-unionist by Pachymeres in his narration of the year 1280.⁷⁹ The unity of this group stems from its proximity to the Batatzes family, which was that of the empress Theodora and, of course, of her great-uncle, the emperor John III.⁸⁰ The coherence of this familial network is aptly demonstrated by the existence of other opponents to Michael VIII. Though we cannot know whether the following individuals were hostile to the Union, they were all in conflict with the emperor during the period of unionism and, more precisely, in 1280. Intriguingly, the empress Theodora managed to sway Michael VIII concerning the punishments meted out to three persons. A certain Kaloeidas, a steward of the empress's treasury accused of possessing a text hostile to the emperor,⁸¹ had his nose slit, whereas Michael VIII had originally intended to have him blinded. Kaloeidas belonged to a family from the Smyrna region,⁸² where the empress apparently possessed some land.⁸³ The two others were suspected of conspiring to undermine imperial power in Bithynia during the year 1280. The first was the aforementioned John Angelos,⁸⁴ brother of the despot Nikephoros Angelos and son-in-law of the sebastokrator Constantine Tornikes,⁸⁵ who was deprived of his dignity, incarcerated and blinded. The second was the *protostrator* Michael Strategopoulos,⁸⁶ probably the son of Constantine Strategopoulos and an unknown Batatzina, a niece of John III,⁸⁷ and the husband of Anna Raoulaina, the sister of the Arsenite anti-unionists Manuel and Isaac Raoul.⁸⁸ It seems the emperor decided to have him blinded, but his wife, a cousin of Strategopoulos, dissuaded him from inflicting so severe a punishment.⁸⁹ Instead, Strategopoulos was denounced together with a scholar called George son of Pachomios, and accused of "alleged knowledge of the imperial reigns from books". One finds here the same irrational suspicion of divination levelled against the niece of Manuel Holobolos (although some anti-unionists probably did speculate about the end of Michael VIII's reign). Finally, a certain Tornikios Kotanitzes

78. D. M. NICOL, Constantine Akropolites. A prosopographical note, *Dumbarton Oaks papers* 19, 1965, pp. 249-253, here p. 251.

79. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 625.

80. Theodora was the great-niece of John III and the daughter of John Batatzes, himself the son of the sebastokrator Isaac Batatzes, brother of the emperor: GEORGE AKROPOLITES, *History*, ed. HEISENBERG, p. 101.

81. *PLP*, vol. V, no. 10556. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 621.

82. George Kaloeidas was *sebastos* and *prokathemenos* of Smyrna in 1257-1287: H. AHRWEILER, L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317), particulièrement au XIII^e siècle, *Travaux et mémoires* 1, 1965, pp. 1-204, here p. 157. His widow Eirene had gifted fields and olive trees situated in this region to the Lembiotissa monastery between 1282 and 1293: MIKLOSICH and MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata*, vol. IV, pp. 102-103.

83. F. MIKLOSICH and J. MÜLLER, *Acta et diplomata Graeca mediæ aevi sacra et profana*, vol. VI, Vienna 1890, pp. 227-229.

84. *PLP*, vol. I, no. 205. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, pp. 613-615.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

86. *PLP*, vol. XI, no. 26898.

87. See the editors' note in GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 615, n. 9, completed and corrected in A. FAILLER, Pachymeriana altera, *Revue des études byzantines* 46, 1988, pp. 67-83, here pp. 68-75.

88. FASSOULAKIS, *The Byzantine family of Raoul-Ralles*, p. 32.

89. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 617.

rose up against Michael VIII in 1280 in the region of Serres in Macedonia⁹⁰, but was defeated by the younger son of Michael VIII, Constantine Palaiologos, to whom he swore an oath ending his rebellion. However instead of being blinded, he was allowed to retreat to a monastery. On the whole, then, we are facing a large familial network enmeshing the Batatzai, Strategopouloi, Tornikai/Tornikioi with families including some prominent anti-unionists, namely the Angeloi, Kantakouzenoi, Mouzalones, Tarchaneiotai and Raoul.

On coming to power at the end of 1282, Michael VIII's son, Andronikos II, immediately set about reversing the Union of the Churches. This, it seems, was fundamentally a political decision, since the young emperor, who had been co-ruler with his father, had always shared the latter's religious views. Andronikos II's decision was actually informed by changing diplomatic circumstances.⁹¹ In March 1282, during the famous Sicilian Vespers, Charles of Anjou was removed by Peter III of Aragon, with the financial support of Michael VIII (who died that December). The western military threat was therefore significantly reduced, with the result that, at the beginning of Andronikos II's reign, those who had opposed Michael VIII's Unionism made a spectacular return to power.

That is how Theodore Mouzalon, *mezas logothetes* and *mesazon*, came to play the role of a principal minister for the new sovereign. Though originally opposed to the Union, as we have seen, Mouzalon had finally submitted to the emperor around 1280, even publishing a dogmatic treatise trumpeting the perfect orthodoxy of the Latins. Sensing the tide had turned, however, he solemnly burned his writings prior to becoming Andronikos II's ambassador to the synod of 1283 which dismissed the patriarch John Bekkos.⁹² Pachymeres attributes a key role in Bekkos' deposition to both Mouzalon and his in-law Eirene-Eulogia Kantakouzene, Michael VIII's sister.⁹³ Her daughters also returned to grace at that time: Theodora Kantakouzene Raoulaina and Anna, wife of the despot Nikephoros Angelos.⁹⁴ Indeed, it is especially noteworthy that the latter chose to cooperate with Andronikos II from 1284 to 1289,⁹⁵ despite her husband's previous hostility to Michael VIII.

Another relative of the Angeloi, Maria Petraliphaina,⁹⁶ widow of Sphrantzes, also suddenly became closer to Andronikos II. Indeed, it was one of her familiars, the bishop of Kozyle in Epiros, who consecrated the new patriarch Gregory II of Cyprus in 1283.⁹⁷ This bishop had formerly been the private cleric of Maria Petraliphaina's second husband, the Latin Philippe Chinard, himself formerly an admiral under king Manfred of Sicily.⁹⁸ We therefore have additional evidence that hostility to the Union of the Churches can be correlated with proximity to Latin people.

90. *PLP*, vol. VI, no. 13317. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. I-II, ed FAILLER and transl. LAURENT, p. 599.

91. A.E. LAIOU, *Constantinople and the Latins. The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, Cambridge 1972, pp. 1-2.

92. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. III, ed and transl. FAILLER, pp. 35-37.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

95. A. FAILLER, Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère (livre VII-XIII), *Revue des études byzantines* 48, 1990, pp. 5-87, here p. 9. A.E. LAIOU, *Constantinople and the Latins*, p. 40.

96. *PLP*, vol. XI, no. 27269.

97. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. III, ed and transl. FAILLER, p. 55.

98. *PLP*, vol. XII, no. 29835. P.J. ALEXANDER, A chrysobull of the emperor Andronicus II in favor of the see of Kanina in Albania, *Byzantion* 15, 1940-1941, pp. 167-207, here p. 200. By this time, Chinard was long dead, murdered in 1266 on the order of the despot Michael II Angelos of Epiros.

Even the erstwhile patriarch Joseph I, though old and ill, was briefly restored to the patriarchal throne in 1283, between John Bekkos' deposition and the accession of Gregory II (George of Cyprus).⁹⁹ One recalls that Joseph had been protected by Eirene-Eulogia Kantakouzene, and with him returned the two monks of his circle, Meletios and Galaktion.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, many of the most vociferous opponents to Union found themselves restored at the beginning of Andronikos II's reign. The orator of the Great Church Manuel Holobolos was invited by Andronikos II to attend the synod of Blachernae in 1283.¹⁰¹ The deacon Theoleptos was made metropolitan of Philadelphia,¹⁰² while Constantine Akropolites achieved the rank of *logothetes* of the treasury.

The empress mother Theodora, Michael VIII's widow, gave her public support to the denunciation of Union. The synod required from her a profession of faith, which led to the issue of a *chrysoboullos* in 1283.¹⁰³ Those associated with the empress were also rewarded. Michael Strategopoulos, for example, appeared for Andronikos II during the deposition of the unionist bishops in 1283, with Pachymeres recording that he was accompanied by those who "surrounded" him, an expression probably alluding to a part of his family.¹⁰⁴

To conclude, it can be affirmed that opposition to the Union of the Churches under Michael VIII was principally the work of a vast network of aristocratic families otherwise closely associated with the emperor. Without doubt, the main members of this network hoped for the fall of Michael VIII, possibly on account of his religious policy. In many cases, family or client connections reflected shared religious opinions. Indeed, the cohesive effect of such factors in unifying a segment of the aristocracy is especially striking given that Michael VIII otherwise enjoyed overwhelming support for Unionism from the rest of the aristocracy. Nevertheless, the religious question should not be seen simply as a pretext for political opposition. Indeed, the anti-Unionist opponents to Michael VIII came back to power under Andronikos II precisely on the occasion of the denunciation of this religious policy. Neither were these families permanently opposed or permanently supportive of the Palaiologos dynasty, and indeed they can't be seen as permanent opponents to the Palaiologos dynasty. It is striking however that some of them later distanced themselves from Andronikos II. This was particularly true of the Angeloi, who renewed their pacts with the Latin rulers, and of the Arsenites who still desired the posthumous rehabilitation of the patriarch Arsenios. In the political history of the late Byzantine world, family or client solidarities and religious beliefs can neither be opposed or correlated in a mechanical way: the conflict surrounding the Union of the Churches shows rather in which complex ways they were interplaying.

99. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. III, ed and transl. FAILLER, p. 25.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 29. Galaktion sprinkled the building and the icons of Saint-Sophia with holy water, so the Great Church would be purified after the Union with the Latins.

101. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

102. See the translator's introduction in THÉOLEPTE DE PHILADELPHIE, *Lettres à une princesse, Discours monastiques*, pp. 11-13.

103. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. III, ed and transl. FAILLER, p. 67; S. PÉTRIDÈS, *Chrysobulle de l'impératrice Théodora (1283)*, *Échos d'Orient* 14, 1911, pp. 25-28.

104. GEORGES PACHYMÉRÈS, *Relations historiques*, vol. III, ed and transl. FAILLER, p. 63.