

The civil disputes between John V and Andronicus IV through the correspondence of Demetrius Cydones

By Irene Politi*

The failure of diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the West (1369-1371), the continuous expansion of the Turks in Macedonia and Thrace, the battle of Maritsa in 1371, (due to which the Byzantine empire was cut off from its European territories) and the contacts of Andronicus IV with the Turkish emirs, who were not completely controlled by the central Ottoman government, forced John V to change political direction and approach the Ottomans in 1372/3¹.

The Turkish military penetration in the European domain of Byzantium made the position of the emperor precarious. For this reason, John V in 1373/4 went to Thrace, in the camp of Murad I and declared his allegiance to him, transforming informally their relationship proportional to the master and the subordinate. The exact terms of the vassalage are not known, but they were probably related to the organization of a joint fleet of Byzantines and Turks, the emperor's participation in Murad's

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1. Polymnia Katsoni, *Μία έπταετία κρίσιμων γεγονότων. Τò Βυζάντιο στὰ ἔτη 1366-1373*, Thessalonike 2002, p. 110 (hereinafter referred to as: Katsoni, *Μία έπταετία κρίσιμων γεγονότων*); Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, «La conquête d'Andrinople par les Turcs: la pénétration turque en Thrace et la valeur des chroniques ottomans», *TM* 1 (1965), p. 451; C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power*, Basingstoke 2002 p. 29; J. V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, Michigan 2006, p. 406; O. Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome*, London 1972, pp. 185-187, 213-218 (hereinafter referred to as: Halecki, *Empereur*).

military operations in Anatolia, and were probably an extension of the subsequent concessions of Andronicus IV regarding the payment of tax to the Ottomans and the establishment of a Turkish “kadi”² in Constantinople. Demetrius Cydones provided only allusions of the treaty of subjection, wishing through his letters to John V to be able to calm the “barbarian”, although this particular policy of armistice with the Turks did not help the empire and the emperor was remaining unjustly in the camp of Murad I. In addition, Cydones said that the recompense for the unbearable agreement would be a temporary peace, which in fact had no serious effect. Indeed, from 1376 to 1381, the Turkish troops spread rapidly to the Balkans, where many residents of these areas, especially in Thrace, embraced Islam in order to escape the sweeping raids³.

The absence of John V from the capital and his humiliating agreement with the sultan gave the motivation to Andronicus IV to revolt in 1373 against his father in the region of Thrace in collaboration with the son of Murad I, Sawgi/Savcı Bey (Σαουτζής, in Greek), who had the same purpose. According to the Turkish sources, the Ottoman prince Sawgi rebelled against his father in Asia Minor not in 1373 but in 1385 and there is no mention of Andronicus’ involvement in these events, probably in order not to reveal the intrigue of a Muslim offspring with a Christian noble. Ducas also expressed his opinion on the above event, who considered as superficiality and incompetence the will of John

2. W. B. Hallaq, *An Introduction to Islamic law*, Oxford 2009, pp. 175-176; S. A. Somel, *Historical Dictionary of the Ottoman Empire, Ancient Civilizations and Historical Eras*, No. 7, Lanham-Maryland-Oxford 2003, pp. 144-145; Frances Kianka, “Demetrius Kydones and Italy”, *DOP* 49 (1995), p. 107; Nevra Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins. Politics and society in the late empire*, Cambridge 2009, p. 29 (hereinafter referred to as: Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*).

3. Demetrius Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, ed. R. J. Loenertz, *Démétrius Cydonès, Correspondance*, Studi e Testi 186, 208, Vatican 1956, no. 82, p. 115⁴³⁻⁴⁴ (hereinafter referred to as: Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*); idem, *Συμβουλευτικός ἕτερος περὶ Καλλιπόλεως, Αἰτήσαντος τοῦ Μουράτου*, ed. J. P. Migne, *Demetrii Cydonii, Oratio de non Reddenda Callipoli*, PG 154, cols. 1004-1005; *Gregorius papa XI, litteris ad Ioannem V Palaeologum*, Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1375, ed. I. D. Mansi, Lucae 1752, no. 4: “...intelleximus quod iidem Turcae, post factam per te treugam cum ipsis, praefatum civitatem in non parva multitudine intrare, in illaque nonnulla enormia patrare praesumunt...”; N. Oikonomides, “Byzantine Diplomacy from 1204 to 1453”, in: J. Shepard-S. Franklin (ed.), *Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 73-88.

V to convict his son, without a thorough examination of the charges against him. The perspective of the historian is partially correct for the following reasons: Indeed, the fact of the complete submission of the emperor to the sultan becomes apparent through the satisfaction of his most extreme demands. Therefore, after the humiliating behavior to the successor of the Byzantine throne, any reaction of John V to Murad I would be described more as a move to impress the public opinion of the empire. Every substantial action of the Byzantine state from the middle of the 14th century onwards was carried out based on the future reaction of the Muslim leaders. However, from another point of view, the ideological-political gap between Andronicus IV and his father and the disappointment of the former due to the precedence of the second-born Manuel on the throne is more than obvious. So, the absence of John V from the Constantinople and his collaboration with the Turks were good opportunities for Andronicus IV to revolt and then to occupy the throne⁴.

From the epistolography of Demetrius Cydones is not omitted the revolt of Andronicus IV, which was seen as a key point for the involvement of

4. Laonicus Chalkokondyles, *Ἀπόδειξις Ἱστοριῶν* I, ed. E. Darkò, *Laonici Chalcocondylae, Demonstrationes Historiarum*, vols. I-II, Budapest 1922-1923, pp. 36¹⁻²⁴, 37²⁰, 38, 39¹⁷⁻¹⁹, 41¹⁻¹² (hereinafter referred to as: Chalkokondyles, *Ἀπόδειξις Ἱστοριῶν*, I); *Βραχέα Χρονικά*, ed. P. Schreiner, *Chronica Byzantina Breviora*, vol. I, Wien 1975, no. 9, p. 95, § 24 (hereinafter referred to as: *Br. Χρον.*); Ducas, *Ἱστορία Τουρκο-βυζαντινή*, ed. B. Grecu, *Ducæ, Istorica Turcobyzantina (1341-1462)*, Bucuresti 1958, pp. 71¹⁰⁻²⁵, 73¹⁻²⁴ (hereinafter referred to as: Ducas, *Ἱστορία Τουρκο-βυζαντινή*); George Sfrantzes, *Χρονικόν*, ed. R. Maisano, *Giorgio Sfranze, Chronicon*, [CFHB], Romae 1990, p. 192⁵⁻⁶; Raffayni de Caresinis, *Cancellarii Venetiarum, Chronica AA. (1343-1388)*, ed. E. Pastorello, *RIS* 12. 2, Bologna 1923, p. 32; F. Babinger, *Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte der Türkenherrschaft in Rumelien: (14.-15. Jahrhundert)*, München 1944, pp. 54-58; G. Georgiades-Arnakes, *Οἱ πρῶτοι Ὀθωμανοί. Συμβολὴ στὸ πρόβλημα τῆς πτώσης τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας (1282-1337)*, Athens 1947, pp. 13-14; Katsoni, *Μία ἐπταετία κρίσιμων γεγονότων*, pp. 117, 124; eadem, *Ἀνδρόνικος Δ΄ Παλαιολόγος. Βασιλεία καὶ ἀλληλομαχία*, KBE, Thessalonike 2008, pp. 10-26; R. J. Loenertz, «La première insurrection d'Andronic IV Paléologue (1373). Essai de critique des sources», *EO* 38 (1939), pp. 334-345 (hereinafter referred to as: Loenertz, «La première insurrection d' Andronic IV»); P. Charanis, «Internal strife in Byzantium during the fourteenth century», *Byz* 15 (1941), pp. 293-297 (hereinafter referred to as: Charanis, «Internal strife»); Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur la Province de Qaraman au XVI^e siècle: Étude et Actes*, Leiden 1968, no. 37, pp. 196-197; Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, «Manuel II et l' Islam», *Contacts*, 217 (janvier-mars 2007), p. 3.

foreign forces and the empowerment of Turkish influence in the Byzantine empire, re-inaugurating a period of political uncertainty. The *mesazon*⁵ (Demetrius Cydones) remained loyal to John V, despite the durable rivalry with him, separating his position from the emperor's rebellious son. His information about the revolt is similar to the corresponding historical sources of the period and is therefore considered reliable in terms of the historical context of the events, while at the same time, because of the spontaneous style of some of his letters, the researcher can reveal rich details that are not exist in other Byzantine sources⁶.

The troops of the Turkish ruler clashed with those of the rebellious princes. The suppression of the revolt took place in the region of Thrace and the two men were arrested, imprisoned and blinded, the first one was completely blinded and the second one, along with his son, John VII, were partially blinded with the use of hot vinegar. Andronicus IV was imprisoned together with his wife and John VII in the monastery of Kavleos or in the tower of Anemas and he lost his right to succeed his father, which passed to Manuel II. The Byzantine Short Chronicles report that on September 12, 1373, Andronicus IV was exiled to Lemnos⁷.

5. The *mesazon* was the emperor's confidant entrusted with the administration of the empire. For the office of *mesazon* (Greek: *μεσάζων*), see *ODB*, vol. III, p. 1346; J. Verpeaux, «Contribution a l'étude de l'administration byzantine: *ὁ μεσάζων*», *BSL* 16, 1 (1955), pp. 270-296; H. G. Beck, „Der byzantinische Ministerpräsident“, *BZ* 48, 2 (1955), pp. 309-338; R. J. Loenertz, «Le chancelier impérial à Byzance au XIVe et au XIIIe siècle», *OCP* 26 (1960), pp. 275-300; N. Oikonomides, «La chancellerie impériale de Byzance du 13e au 15e siècle», *REB* 43 (1985), pp. 167-195.

6. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 167, p. 38₁₃₋₂₁: «... οἱ Τοῦρκοι, βαρύτεροι γεγόνασιν ἡμῖν, ἐπαρθέντες τῇ συμμαχίᾳ ἣν τῷ νέῳ βασιλεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πατρὸς συνεμάχησαν... ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ἐξουσίας ἡμεῖς δὲ δουλείας... Ταύτη δὲ καὶ ἡ τῶν Γενουβίσων πρὸς τοὺς Βενετικούς διαφορὰ προσετέθη»; Katsoni, *Μία ἐπταετία κρίσιμων γεγονότων*, pp. 1-6; S. Kyriakides, “The idea of civil war in thirteenth and fourteenth-century-Byzantium”, *ZRVI* 49 (2012), p. 247; G. Kolias, «Ἡ ἀνταρσία Ἰωάννου Ζ' ἐναντίον Ἰωάννου Ε' Παλαιολόγου (1390)», *Ἑλληνικά/Hellenika* 12 (1952), pp. 34-64; S. Papadopoulos, «Ἰωάννης Ζ' ὁ Παλαιολόγος καὶ τὸ χρονικὸν τοῦ Φραντζῆ», *BZ* 32 (1932), pp. 257-262; Dorothea Wendebourg, „Kydones Demetrius (ca. 1324/25-1397/8)“, *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 20 (1990), pp. 359-362.

7. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 80, p. 113₈₋₉; Ducas, *Ἱστορία Τουρκο-βυζαντινῆ*, σ. 71₁₀₋₂₈, 73₂₃₋₂₄: «Ὁ δὲ Μωράτ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔχων υἱοῦς τὸν τε Σαβούτζιον, τὸν προῤῥήθεντα καὶ Κουντουτζῆν καὶ Παγιαζῆτ, ὁ δὲ Κουντουζῆς ισῆλικος ὢν σὺν τῷ Ἀνδρονίκῳ καὶ κατὰ καιρὸν συνὼν αὐτῷ καὶ συνευφραινόμενος ἐῤῥέθη λόγος, ὥς ὁμόσαντες

In 1376, Andronicus and his family escaped from the monastery of Kavleos with the help of the Genoese, the Turks, the Bulgarians and the Serbs, at a time when John V intended to give Tenedos to the Venetians. In the same year, Andronicus invaded Constantinople, imprisoned his father and his brothers. The next year he was crowned emperor and his son John VII received the title of co-emperor. Indeed, the practices of the new emperor worked negatively for Byzantium. These practices launched a new round of Venetian-Genoese conflicts, focusing again on Tenedos and the forced participation of Andronicus IV in them, because the Genoese threatened him that if he did not take their side, he would face the coalition of the two Western powers against the empire. The new military conflicts for the conquest of the island continued and the culmination of these was the assault of the Venetian navy to Constantinople in 1377. The hostilities ended in 1381 with the agreement for the neutrality of Tenedos. According to Cydones, the benefit of the Turks from their participation in the coup of Andronicus IV, was the acquisition of the strategically important city of Kallipolis, after ten years of Byzantine occupation and the dependence of the territorial integrity of the empire, which had been cut off from the European territories, by the Turkish forces. With his policy, Andronicus IV managed to weaken

ἀμφω ἀνταρσίαν εἰσπράξονται... Ὁ Μωράτ ... ἐξορύττει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ... Τὸν δὲ τυφλὸν Ἀνδρόνικον μετὰ τοῦ παιδὸς Ἰωάννου καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς ἐγκλείστους ἐν τῷ πύργῳ τοῦ Ἀνεμᾶ καθείργουσιν»; Chalkokondyles, *Ἀπόδειξις Ἱστοριῶν*, I, 55₉₋₁₂; «Καὶ Ἕλληνες μὲν αὐτῷ ἐφείποντο στρατευόμενοι ἅμα, ὅποι ἂν ἐλαύνει, ὃ τε Ἰωάννου τοῦ βασιλέως Ἑλλήνων παῖς Ἐμμανουήλος καὶ Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου παῖς Ἰωάννης. Τούτους γὰρ ὡς τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ ὄξει ζέοντι περιέχει, παρείχετο αὐτοῖς τὴν δίαίταν ἀμφοῖ»; *Βρ. Χρον.*, I, no. 9, p. 95, § 24-28, p. 96, § 29-31; D. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 1341-1453*, vol. V, München-Berlin 1965, no. 3138, p. 61 (hereinafter referred to as: Dölger, *Regesten*); Vasiliki Nerantzi-Varmazi, *Ἡ Βαλκανικὴ ἐπαρχία κατὰ τοὺς τελευταίους βυζαντινοὺς αἰῶνες*, Thessalonike 1998, pp. 58-65 (hereinafter referred to as: Nerantzi-Varmazi, *Ἡ Βαλκανικὴ ἐπαρχία*); Katsoni, *Ἀνδρόνικος Δ΄ Παλαιολόγος*, pp. 20-26; A. Savvides, «“Τεκφοῦρ”: Οἱ Χριστιανοὶ ἡγεμόνες καὶ στρατιωτικοὶ ἀρχηγοὶ τοῦ βυζαντινοτουρκικοῦ μετώπου (13ος-15ος αἰῶνας)», *Βυζαντιακά/Byzantiaka* 17 (1997), p. 376; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, pp. 119-120; *Χρονικὸν περὶ τῶν Τούρκων Σουλτάνων*, ed. G. Th. Zoras, *Χρονικὸν περὶ τῶν Τούρκων Σουλτάνων (κατὰ Βαρβερινὸν Ἑλληνικὸν Κώδικα 111)*, Athens 1958, p. 25₁₋₁₅; Charanis, “Internal strife”, p. 295.

even more the Byzantine state (politically and militarily), but also to make it entirely dependent on the will of the Venetians, the Genoese and the Turks, who were in its vital space⁸.

According to Demetrius Cydones, the escape of Andronicus IV was another terrible event, which was added to that of the occupation of Kallipolis by the Turks. Their help in restoring Andronicus to power was “translated” as superiority for the Turks and as a form of slavery for the Byzantines. To his other collaborators, the Genoese, the rebel ceded Tenedos. Thus, began the outbreak of Venetian-Genoese naval conflicts for the conquest of the island. In addition, Cydones, with the usage of the phrase: «τὸ νῦν πάντα καθ’ Ἡράκλειτον ῥεῖν, καὶ μηδὲν μένειν ἐθέλειν», made clear that the winner in the civil war could not be definitively judged⁹.

8. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 137, p. 6₂₉; no. 167, p. 38₁₃₋₃₅; no. 176, p. 49₄₁₋₄₂; no. 242, p. 145₄₋₇; no. 259, p. 163₁₂₋₁₄; *Πατριαρχικοί πίνακες: εἰδήσεις ἱστορικαὶ βιογραφικαὶ περὶ τῶν Πατριαρχῶν Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἀπὸ Ἀνδρέου τοῦ Πρωτοκλήτου μέχρις Ἰωακείμ Γ' τοῦ ἀπὸ Θεσσαλονίκης 36-1884*, ed. M. J. Gedeon, Ἀνασύνταξις κειμένου, φιλολογικὴ ἐπιμέλεια, εὐρετήρια ὑπὸ Νικολάου Λυκ. Φοροπούλου, Athens 1996, p. 439; Chalkokondyles, *Ἀπόδειξις Ἱστοριῶν*, I, pp. 55₄, 57₁₋₁₉; Ducas, *Ἱστορία Τουρκο-βυζαντινῆ*, p. 73₃₋₆; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3152, p. 64; no. 3155, p. 64; no. 3156, p. 65; Manuel Palaeologus, *Λόγος ἐπιτάφιος εἰς τὸν αὐτάδελφον αὐτοῦ δεσπότην πορφυρογέννητον κύριον Θεόδωρον τὸν Παλαιολόγον*, ed. Julian Chrysostomides, *Manuel II Palaeologus Funeral Oration for his Brother Theodore*, [CFHB], Thessalonike 1985, p. 101₁₋₅; Halecki, *Empereur*, pp. 289-322; J. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): a study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, New Brunswick 1969, pp. 30-31; Loenertz, «La première insurrection d'Andronic IV Paléologue», pp. 334-345; Frances Kianka, *Demetrius Cydones (c. 1324-c. 1397): intellectual and diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the West in the 14th century*, Ph. D. Dissertation 32, New York 1981, p. 203 (hereinafter referred to as: Kianka, *Demetrius Cydones*); Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, “John VII (alias Andronicus) Palaeologos”, *DOP* 31 (1977), pp. 339-342; G. T. Dennis, “John VII Palaiologos: A Holy and Just Man”, in: Vasiliki Vlysidou – St. Lampakis (eds.), *Βυζαντινὸ κράτος καὶ κοινωνία: σύγχρονες κατευθύνσεις τῆς ἔρευνας*, E.I.E./National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens 2003, pp. 205-217.

9. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 167, p. 38₂₀₋₃₅; no. 243, pp. 146₁₋₁₅, 147₁₆; «Ὁ μὲν ἡ Πόλις ἡμῖν μετὰ τὴν ὑμετέραν ἀναχώρησιν μετέλαβε σχῆμα παντὸς μάλλον αὐτὸν εἰδέναι σε πέπεισμαι. Ἄ γὰρ παρὼν τότε ἐκώλυες λογιζόμενος εἰκότος ἂν εἰδείης, καὶ ὡς πάντ' ἐκεῖνα νῦν μετὰ προσθήκης ἡμῖν ἐπανῆκε, οὐκ ὄντος οὔτε τοῦ τὴν σὴν τέχνην ἔχοντος οὔτε τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν μμουμένου. Εἰ δὲ δεῖ καμὲ περὶ μεγάλων κακῶν μικρὸν λόγον εἰπεῖν, τοιαῦτα τὰ νῦν ἡμᾶς περιέχοντα, ὡς τοὺς μὲν πολίτας στένειν τοὺς δὲ πολεμίους τέρπεσθαι πείθειν... Τό τε γὰρ μέγεθος τῶν κακῶν οἷς κεχρήμεθα καὶ

Two years after their imprisonment, John V and his sons, Manuel and Theodorus, most likely escaped with the help of the Venetians, due to the cooperation that Andronicus IV had shown in the past with their financial rivals, the Genoese. After their release, they arrived at Murad's territories for help. The Turkish ruler, who sought to cause dissension among the Byzantine rulers in favor of his interests, did not miss the opportunity to become an important regulator of the political normalcy of the Byzantine empire and agreed to help John V to seize the throne, in exchange for higher taxes and the participation of the Byzantine troops in his campaigns. Cydones claimed that the agreement with the Turks was unbearable, but due to this risky move the peace was restored in the state. The recognition of the necessity of Turkish assistance by the –absolutely hostile to the Muslim element– Byzantine scholar, shows that the cooperation with the Ottomans was necessary. In 1379, with the assistance of some Venetian ships and the powerful Turkish army, John V and Manuel II entered Constantinople. For Cydones, the inaction of the Thessalonians was remarkable, because they did not cooperate in the restoration of John. This specific choice was connected with Manuel who, as governor of Thessalonike, was implementing a policy against the Turks and did not raise issues of collaboration with them. Andronicus IV took refuge in Galatas and had as hostages Helena Kantakouzene, her sisters and John VI Kantakouzenos. As might be expected, the foreign factor involved in the new civil conflicts between John V and his eldest son. The Venetians and the Turks sided with John V, while the Genoese sided with Andronicus IV. The allies of John IV besieged the fortress of Galatas and after two years of fighting a compromise was reached between the two sides with the return of Andronicus IV to power. Nevertheless, the forgiveness of Andronicus was not embraced by Manuel II who made the decision to rule in Thessalonike as emperor. In the negotiations for the capitulation of the Byzantines with the Genoese in 1381/2 Cydones was in charge, who in a letter to Manuel II admitted that the “contradiction” and the “labyrinths” of the Genoese were a difficult obstacle in order to

τὰ τῶν Ἡλιάδων δάκρυα μικρόν τι πρὸς τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τοῦ πάθους ἐλέγχει, τοὺς θ' ἐκόντας κρημνιζομένους τίς ἂν ἐλεήσειεν...»; no. 288, p. 208₅₋₁₁; Loenertz, «La première insurrection d'Andronic IV Paléologue», pp. 224-332.

reach an agreement¹⁰. With the end of the Venetian-Genoese disputes, the two Palaiologoi reconciled and the morale of the Byzantines was raised, but in reality, the civil conflicts caused torn and irreparable damage to the already weakened empire¹¹.

In addition, another aspect of the civil strife and the Venetian-Genoese conflicts which unfolds in Cydones' correspondence was the disturbance of the relations between Byzantium and Francesco Gattilusio. Cydones in 1382 had been sent as ambassador to Lemnos to persuade the Genoese ruler of the island to hand over the Thracian city of Ainos to the Byzantine administration. Cydones, in one of his letters to his friend, Gattilusio, in an almost apologetic style, asked him to understand the difficult situation in which he found himself, since he was called to confront him, defending the interests of the empire and not selfish purposes. Also, Gattilusio, at the same time, had been accused of not being faithful to John V. Consequently, Cydones, as a close friend of the Genoese, was trying through his letters to restore him morally. In addition, the *mesazon* in order to maintain the balance between friendship and his political duties, asked him as a friend not to feel bitterness about what was happening, but also not to accuse the Byzantine ruler for his attitude towards him¹².

10. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 218, pp. 98₄₆₋₄₉, 99₆₀₋₆₃: «Ἔδει γὰρ τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον αὐτοῦ προσηλῶσθαι, ἀνελίττοντα τοὺς τῶν Γενοιτῶν Λαβυρίνθους. Ἐπεὶ δὲ κατέστη τὰ πράγματα, καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας πειθομένους ἔσχεν ὁ βασιλεὺς, εὐθὺς ὁ πείσας τὴν τῶν ἀντιλεγόντων ἔδοξα δίκην ὀφείλειν».

11. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 198, pp. 72₁₇₋₂₂, 73₂₄₋₂₅; no. 211, p. 89₂₄₋₃₃; no. 226, p. 123₁₈₉₋₁₉₀; no. 308, pp. 233₈₄₋₈₆, 234₈₇; Nerantzi-Varmazi, *Ἡ Βαλκανικὴ Ἐπαρχία*, p. 64.

12. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 202, p. 79₂₇₋₃₅: «Τὸ δὲ πείθον εἰς λύπης λόγον κοῦφα ταῦτα νομίζειν, ὅτι καὶ τὴν πρεσβείαν καὶ ὧν χάριν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἡμᾶς δεῦρο πέπομφεν, κίνδυνος ἀτέλεστα μεῖναι. Δοκοῦμεν γὰρ ἀντικρυς ἐπὶ βρόχον καλεῖν, εἴξαι βασιλεῖ παραινούντες τὸν αὐτοῦ κηδεστήν, καὶ εἰ μὴ τὴν ἀρχαίαν φιλίαν αἰδούμενος μέχρι γοῦν τινος τῶν ὑπὲρ τῆς Αἴνου λόγων ἠνέσχετο, εὐθὺς ἂν ἡμᾶς μετ' ὀργῆς παρέδωκε τοῖς τῆς χώρας ἐλάσσουσιν. Οὕτω καὶ πρὸς τοῦνομα μόνον ταράττεται τῶν διαλλαγῶν. Τοσοῦτον τοίνυν κακῶν οὔτε ἀνέχεσθαι ῥάδιον, ἀποπηδῆσαί τε βουλομένοις οὐκ εὐχερές»; no. 231, pp. 127₇₋₂₀, 128₂₂₋₂₇, 129₈₋₁₁; no. 242, pp. 145₄₋₇, 146₁₉₋₂₂: «Ὅταν με βασιλεὺς πρὸς σε πέμπει περὶ ὧν ἀλλήλοις ἀμφισβητεῖτε διαλεξόμενον, βουλοίμην ἂν σε μὴ χαλεπαίνειν ἐμοὶ μηδὲ τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων δυσκολίαν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τρέπειν μηδὲ νομίζειν νίκης ὀρεγόμενον τὰς ἀντιλογίας ποιεῖσθαι. Οὕτε γὰρ ἐγὼ φιλόνηκός τις ἄλλως καὶ δύσερις... Ταῦτα τοίνυν εἰδὼς ἀφικνούμενον παρὰ σὲ πρῶως τε δέχου καὶ τοῖς λόγοις μηδεμίαν παραμύγνυ πικρίαν ... ἀγωνίζου μὲν ὑπὲρ

A more thorough study of the correspondence of Demetrius Cydones can present not only the political but also the social dimension of the problems that caused during the conflict between the two Palaiologoi. Radenos, a friend of the aforementioned, had left Constantinople during the period of civil strife due to the bad social conditions, i.e. the dissolution of the city, the non-observance of the laws, the deaths, the plague and the profiteering as a consequence of the naval battles in the territorial waters of Byzantium¹³. The result of the generalized social decline was the appearance of speculators, whom Cydones named in his letters. Chremylos and Iros were two of them, who disoriented the Byzantine population through the use of flattery and suddenly became rich by taking advantage of what was happening with the two “lords” (John V and Andronicus IV). Cydones was in favor of John V and blamed Andronicus for the misfortunes of the empire and for the destructive civil war. He also did not stop emphasizing the beneficence of Helena Kantakouzene and Manuel II towards him and the efforts of his enemies who were trying to calumniate him. Beyond that, *the mesazon* repeatedly referred to the slanders against him, probably in order to maintain the imperial favor, if we take into account that he had experienced the dissatisfaction of John V during the second civil war and also after the failure of the diplomatic mission of 1369-1371¹⁴. On the contrary, Helena Kantakouzene kept a balanced attitude in the dispute between John V

τῶν δοκούντων τήρει δ' ὡς νόμος καὶ τῷ πρεσβευτῇ τὴν τιμὴν»; W. Miller, “The Gattilusi of Lesbos (1355-1462?)”, *BZ* 22 (1913), pp. 406-447.

13. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 169, p. 41₁₀₋₂₀; no. 170, p. 43₃₈₋₄₃; no. 171, p. 43₆₋₇; no. 172, p. 44₄₋₉; no. 173, p. 44₄₋₅; no. 174, p. 47_{35-36, 53-57}; «Ἀλγῶν δὴ τῷ λοιμῷ καὶ τοῖς ὑπ' ἐκείνου τετρωμένοις τῶν φίλων... Τὰ γοῦν παρ' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν μόνα καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας, εἴτε εὐτελείας χρὴ λέγειν εἴτε αἰσχροκερδείας –οὐ γὰρ φιλοτιμίας καὶ φιλαρχίας ἂν εἴποιμι– καὶ τὸ μόνον παρὰ ταῖς ἡμετέραις πόλεσιν τὴν ἀρετὴν ἄτιμον εἶναι, ἐπὶ τὰ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων αἰσχιστά καὶ τοῖς νόμοις πολέμια τὴν ταύτης μετενεχθῆναι τιμὴν...».

14. Idem, no. 114, p. 152₄₋₁₉; no. 116, p. 154₁₀₋₃₈; no. 166, p. 37₄₀₋₄₉; no. 169, p. 42₂₉₋₅₁; Judith Ryder, *The career and writings of Demetrius Kydones: a study of fourteenth-century Byzantine politics, religion and society*, Leiden 2010, p. 56 (hereinafter referred to as: Ryder, *The career and writings of Demetrius Kydones*); Halecki, *Empereur*, pp. 232-233; Kianka, *Demetrius Cydones*, pp. 107, 186-188; Sophia Mergiali, *L'enseignement et les lettrés pendant l' époque des Paléologues (1261-1453)*. Société des Amis du Peuple, Centre d'Études byzantines, Athènes 1996, p. 121 (hereinafter referred to as: Mergiali, *L'enseignement*).

and Andronicus IV, according to Cydones. The mother of Andronicus was friendly on both sides of the strife, even when the outcome of the father-son conflict had been decided¹⁵.

With persistent efforts, the Byzantine official managed to return to the political scene of Byzantium, but his relationship with the emperor had not been fully restored. According to a letter, written between the years 1380-1382, he asked from John V to compensate him for his services, while in another letter, intended for Manuel II, he referred to his removal from the office of *mesazon* in 1373. Specifically, Cydones expressed his sorrow that, although he assisted in the efforts to resolve the problems with the Genoese, not only didn't receive commendations for his contribution to the empire, but he was discredited for his refusal to support the pro-Turkish policy of the Byzantine state. That's why, after all, his only consolation was the return of Manuel II to Constantinople. In addition, he mentioned that the Genoese did not cooperate on the iss. of Tenedos and they made false promises of a future alliance pretending to celebrate the unity with the Turks. The report that the Turks preferred the abstention of Cydones from the political life, reveals his influence on the events of the period and the knowledge of this influence from the Turkish side¹⁶.

15. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 222, pp. 103⁴⁻¹⁰, 104¹⁹⁻²⁸, 105⁵⁸⁻⁶²; Frances Kianka, "The letters of Cydones to Helena Kantakouzene Palaiologina", *DOP* 46 (1992), pp. 155-164; Sophia Mergiali-Sahas, «Τὸ ἄλλο πρόσωπο τῆς αὐτοκρατορικῆς διπλωματίας: ὁ Βυζαντινὸς αὐτοκράτορας στὸν ρόλο τοῦ πρεσβευτῆ τὸν 14ο καὶ 15ο αἰ.», *Βυζαντιακά/Byzantiaka* 25 (2005/06), pp. 243-244; G. T. Dennis, "The Byzantines as revealed in their letters", in: J. Duffy – J. Peradotto (eds.), *Gonimos: Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75*, Buffalo-New York 1988, pp. 155-165.

16. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 138, p. 7¹⁹⁻²⁰; no. 139, p. 8⁴⁻⁹; no. 206, p. 84³¹⁻³³; no. 211, p. 88⁴⁻⁹; no. 218, p. 99⁶³⁻⁶⁴: «Καὶ νῦν ἀντὶ τῶν προσδοκηθέντων μετὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἀριστείων τῶν τοῖς κακοῖς προσηκόντων ἐκκληρονόμησα»; no. 219, p. 100²⁰⁻³⁴: «... Οἱ ἔμποροι ... αἰσχύνεσθαι τε ὁμολογοῦσιν εἰς τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ὄψιν ὀρώντες, καὶ μανίαν τὸν μέχρι τοῦδε πόλεμον οὐκ ὀκνοῦσι καλεῖν. Καὶ σὺν ὄρκοις ἐπαγγελίας ταῖς εἰς τὸ μέλλον συμμαχίας ὑπὲρ τῆς προτέρας ἀηδίας ἀπολογήσεσθαι, καὶ ὅλως συνάψειν ἡμῖν καὶ αὐτοὺς ὑπισχνοῦνται, καὶ ὡς ὑπὲρ πατρίδος τὰ ὅπλα ὑπὲρ τῆς μεγάλης Πόλεως θήσεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῶν Τούρκων ἡμῖν ἡρεμεῖ, καὶ προσποιοῦνται κάκεῖνοι τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐορτάζειν ὁμόνοϊαν»; no. 221, p. 103³⁵⁻³⁹; no. 237, p. 138¹³⁻¹⁶; Frances Kianka, "Byzantine-Papal diplomacy: The Role of Demetrius Cydones", *IHR* 7 (1985), p. 209; R. J. Loenertz, «Notes sur le règne de Manuel II à Thessalonique 1381/82-1387», *BZ* 50 (1957), pp. 390-396; idem, «Manuel Paléologue et

Apart from Cydones, the ambassador John Asanes also faced problems during the period of the civil disputes between John V and Andronicus IV. Asanes was sent on a diplomatic mission to Venice during the Venetian-Genoese conflicts, but his traces disappeared, as he cut off communication with the Byzantine empire. His disappearance caused fears and raised suspicions of the central administration for possible desertion to the Venetians. Thanks to Cydones' help, Asanis' name was not tarnished by the slanderers¹⁷.

Demetrius Cydones during his career had acquired many enemies and for this he had to take care not to be disparaged by them. It was not uncommon for the *mesazon* to present himself as a victim of the circumstances, mainly because of his deviation from the Orthodox doctrine, but also to maintain the imperial favor, something he did in a remarkable way. Despite his occasional withdrawal from politics, he emerged as an important protagonist of the Byzantine government for about forty years. In fact, the opinion of Cydones was unexpectedly appreciated even by the strictly Orthodox Kantakouzenos. For instance, the Byzantine official didn't hesitate to show his dissatisfaction with the division of unity between the "brothers", when Matthew Kantakouzenos was crowned emperor and not the legal heir to the throne, John V.

Cydones' collaboration with three emperors revealed his adaptability to the changing political life, but also the recognition of his abilities by the leadership of Byzantium. His complaints about the occasional hostile attitude of John V against him had a logical basis, because the failures of the alliance with the West also resulted in his dismissal from his

Démétrius Cydonès. Remarques sue leurs correspondences», *EO* 36 (1937), pp. 271-287; Mergiali-Saha, *L'enseignement*, p. 117.

17. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 264, p. 177¹²⁶⁻¹³¹: «Ἐκείνους τοίνυν ἐννοῶν καὶ τὰς ὁμοίας φυλαττόμενος τύχας, σπούδασον ἐπανελθὼν φανῆναι μὲν βασιλεῖ, ἐμφράξαι δὲ καὶ τὰ στόματα τῶν εἰς τὰ σὰ κεκηνότων καὶ ταῖς κρύβδην συκοφαντίαις εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἔλξειν πιστευόντων ἐκεῖνα, ἐμπλῆσαι δὲ ἡδονῆς καὶ τοὺς φίλους, σφόδρα μὲν ὑπὲρ σοῦ δεδιότας σφόδρα δὲ ἡσθησομένους τῇ ἐπανόδῳ, τῶν φόβων αὐτοῖς πεπαυμένων»; no. 267, pp. 180²¹⁻²⁵, 181²⁶⁻⁶¹, 182⁶²⁻¹⁰¹, 183¹⁰⁵⁻¹⁰⁷: «Ὡς ἐγὼ δέδοικα μὴ σοι τὸ ἀργεῖν ἀρχὴ γένηται κακουργίας, καὶ τῷ πόρρῳ τῆς τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν συνηθείας γενέσθαι λάθης τῇ τῶν πονηρῶν συνουσίᾳ διαφθαρεῖς»; no. 221, p. 103³⁴⁻⁴¹; no. 222, pp. 103⁴⁻¹⁰, 104¹⁸⁻²⁸, 105⁵⁰⁻⁶⁰; Sp. Lampros, «Τρεῖς ἐπιστολαὶ τοῦ Κυδωνῆ πρὸς τὸν Ἀσάνην», *NE* 1, 1 (1904), pp. 72-88.

office, but most of the time his allusions were the best solution in order to victimize himself and shirk his responsibilities for the consequences of his pro-Western policies. For the *mesazon*, the real enemies of the state were the Turks. That's why he characterized them as "barbarians", "beasts", "enemies", "sacrilegious" and described their presence in the most unfavorable way. It is worth mentioning that in contrast to the 1340s, 1350s and 1360s, when his references to the Turks were mainly brief and non-detailed, from 1370 onwards, more and more of his letters were extensively devoted to the Turkish danger, disclosing the focus on the constant escalation of this problem¹⁸.

The final blow to the complete dependence of the empire on the Turks came from John V. Specifically, the emperor gave to the sultan more opportunities to intervene in the internal affairs of Byzantium, frustrated by the failure of diplomatic relations with the West and perhaps more motivated from his precarious position due to the conflict with his eldest son, which had started several years ago and focused not only on the different political approach of the two sides but also on the hostilities for the throne. It is becoming clear that the ineffective military cooperation with the Europeans and maybe the lack of trust in them, if we consider that they were giving priority to their financial interests and secondarily to their common Christian identity in order to face the Turkish threat, led Andronicus IV and the pro-Western supporter –for a certain period– John V in agreement (willingly but also unwillingly) with the Turkish element. Certainly, even the Westerners maintained a defensive, if not positive, attitude towards the Turks because of their undeniable political and military power. This is proved not only by the cooperation between the Turkish and the Venetian troops for the dethronement of Andronicus IV, but also by the agreement for the attack of the Byzantines on enemies of the Genoese, with the Turks being excluded from this agreement. The Turks, through their military superiority, became significant regulators of

18. Cydones, *Ἐπιστολαί*, no. 15, p. 43₉; no. 16, p. 45₄₂; no. 19, p. 48₁₀; no. 252, p. 157₁₂; no. 43, p. 77₁₅₋₁₇; no. 46, p. 79₁₃; no. 143, p. 13₁₆; no. 63, p. 96₁₉; Ryder, *The career and writings of Demetrius Kydones*, p. 57.

the political life of the Byzantine empire and determinant factors of the action of the Christian states of Europe¹⁹.

Although Demetrius Cydones did not abandon his pro-Western beliefs, he gradually began to admit indirectly through his letters that the acts of the West were anything but helpful. Representative examples of the above are the following passages: «οἱ ἔμποροι ... καὶ μανίαν τὸν μέχρι τοῦδε πόλεμον οὐκ ὀκνοῦσι καλεῖν. Καὶ σὺν ὄρκοις ἐπαγγελίαι ταῖς εἰς τὸ μέλλον συμμαχίαις ὑπὲρ τῆς προτέρας ἀηδίας ἀπολογήσεσθαι ... ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν Τούρκων ἡμῖν ἡρεμεῖ, καὶ προσποιοῦνται κἀκεῖνοι τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐορτάζειν ὁμόνοιαν». Six years after the civil strife he realized that «τὸ τῶν πειρατῶν γένος οἰκοῦν τοὺς αὐτῇ χρωμένους ὥσπερ ἀδικοῦντας ἀμύνεται καὶ πάντα βλάπτειν ἐπιχειρεῖ...». Either with friendly or hostile treatment towards the Turks, the above rulers failed to defend the empire from the sweeping raids of those. The Turkish army was expanding rapidly to the remaining vital lands of the empire, looting cities, capturing the local population, slaughtering indiscriminately and disrupting the daily life of Byzantium. For the epistolographer, the only salvation of the Byzantine empire was Manuel II with his policy against the Turkish threat²⁰.

19. D. M. Nicol, *Οἱ τελευταῖοι αἰῶνες τοῦ Βυζαντίου, 1261-1453*, (transl. St. Komnenos), Athens 2010, p. 442 [=D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, Cambridge 1993].

20. Cydones, *Επιστολαί*, no. 219, p. 100₂₀₋₂₈; no. 352, p. 294₁₂₋₁₃; no. 243, pp. 147₁₂₋₁₅, 148₃₂₋₃₉; no. 247, p. 151₂₅₋₄₂; no. 248, p. 153₃₄₋₃₇; no. 220, pp. 101₂₉₋₃₁, 102₃₂₋₃₄; no. 273, p. 191₁₄₋₂₃; no. 282, p. 202₆₋₁₁; no. 304, p. 224₂₀₋₂₇; no. 309, p. 233₇₅₋₇₇; no. 312, p. 238₂₀₋₂₂; no. 394, p. 348₂₁₋₂₃; no. 262, p. 168₃₃₋₄₁; no. 309, p. 231₁₆; A. Aggelou, «Ὁ Μανουὴλ Παλαιολόγος καὶ τὸ Ἰσλάμ», in: *Λόγια καὶ Δημῶδης Γραμματεία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Μεσαίωνα. Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Εὐδόξο Θ. Τσολάκη. Πρακτικὰ Θ' Ἐπιστημονικῆς Συνάντησης (11-13 Μαΐου 2000)*, Thessalonike 2003, pp. 211-222.