20. Nicene Empire

Reigning Nicaean emperor Theodor I Lascari

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<th>Emperor</th>
<th>Venice</th>
<th>Latin Empire</th>
<th>“Pocket Kingdoms”</th>
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<td>Michael</td>
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<td>Michael Angelos, ruler of coastal Nicaean Empire</td>
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<td>Baldwin</td>
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<td>Baldwin of Venice and Duke of Naples</td>
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<td>Baldwin</td>
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<td>Baldwin, count of Aversa and ruler of Calabria</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>Study of Affairs</td>
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Despotate of Epirus

Michael Angelos Komnenos Doukas
• illegitimate son of John Angelos Komnenos
  — who was Sebastokrator, and first cousin of the Emperors Isaac II and Alexios III
• held office under the Empire as governor of the districts of Epirus and Thessaly with the title of Dux
Spring 1205 Michael raised an army to fight the Crusaders in Peloponnese
• met little resistance
Bulgarian Intervention

• A group of Byzantine land-owners in Thrace ask for Bulgarian help.
1205 King Kalojan beats Latin forces at Adrianople and take Baldwin captive
• demonstrates weakness and disunity of Latin Empire
1224 Latin Kingdom of Thessalonica captured by Epirus
  – 1230 Epirus came under Bulgarian control
Epirus Limps Along

- slowly disintegrated through the 13th and 14th centuries coming under the control of the restored Byzantine Empire c. 1340

Empire of Trebizond (1204-1461)

- remained independent 20 years after Ottomans conquer Byzantines
- begun by a splinter of the Komnenoi family
  - Alexios Komnenos
- Enjoyed significant support from Georgia
  - military and economic
Diverse population

Cultural peculiarities of Trebizond

Empire’s culture determined by two elements:
1. the ruling dynasty’s relationship to Constantinople
   - led to cultural forms strongly associated with the glories of that former world capital
2. empire’s geographical relationship to the Christian kingdoms of the Caucasus
   - Georgia and Armenia
   - Muslim Turkmen and the Persian Empire
     - Terminus of Silk Road
The Late Trepezuntine Empire

- has been called a ‘Greek emirate’
- ‘mainstream’ Byzantine culture no longer existed by the fourteenth century,
- only various tributaries that ran off from that original source, and Trebizond’s
- culture was a particular tributary that “admitted Byzantine water”
- but also sources from the Caucasus, Anatolia, and Persia.
Amulet Roll 14th C. Trebizond

- Greek texts on the obverse and Arabic on the reverse
- a series of very fine illustrations on the Greek side
- Demonstrates the cosmopolitan nature of late Byzantine kingdoms

Empire of Nicaea (1204-61)

1204 Byzantine emperor fled Constantinople while crusaders besieged the capital
- Theodore I Laskaris (1204–1222)
  - son-in-law of Emperor Alexius III Angelus
- flees to city of Nicaea (today Iznik) in Bithynia
  - proclaimed emperor
- quickly recreates Byzantine administrative structure

1208 Nicaean candidate is officially recognized as Patriarch
Latins responded to strength of Nicaea by making a secret pact with Turkish Sultan.

Theodore defeated the Turks in battle.

Latins and Venetians eventually sign a treaty establishing boundaries.

Crusaders vs. Kingdom of Nicaea:

- Latins responded to strength of Nicaea by making a secret pact with Turkish Sultan.
- Theodore defeated the Turks in battle.
- Latins and Venetians eventually sign a treaty establishing boundaries.

13th-century manuscript depicting the Crusader siege, possibly the Byzantine capital at Nicaea.
Emperors of Nicaea

Theodore I Laskaris (1204–1222)
John III Ducas Vatatzes (1222–1254)
Theodore II Laskaris (1254–1258)
John IV Laskaris (1258–1261) [7 years old]
Michael VIII Palaeologus (1259–61)
  • co-emperor 1259–1261
    – Emperor of restored Byzantine Empire (1261–1282)

Theodore II Laskaris

• wrote an Encomium to the city of Nicaea
• Theodore II considered Tryphon his patron saint
• said that the saint often visited Theodore in his dreams encouraging and advising him
• he had seen the saint leading his fighting troops.
• Tryphon had special cult of the saint in Nicaea at the time.
Treaty of Nympitaeum

13 March 1261
• Genoa agrees to serve as mercenary force for Michael Palaeologus
• receive islands and ports
• the closing of the Black Sea to all foreign ships except those of Genoa
• incurred the wrath of the Pope
  – profit prevailed

Capture of Constantinople

Nicaean general Alexius Strategopulus
• released from Epirot prison
• went with small force in Thrace to keep Bulgarians in check
• make a demonstration to Latin garrison in Constantinople
• saw that Venetian ships were absent
  – mad dash for capital
  – takes it without a fight

Michael VIII Palaeologus crowned Emperor

• crowned as Byzantine Emperor in H. Sophia
• general Alexius Strategopulus given a triumph in the City
• John IV (co-emperor) was blinded
• Michael makes his own son co-emperor
Coin issued by Michael VIII Palaeologus to celebrate the liberation of Constantinople from the Latin army, and the restoration of the Roman/Byzantine Empire.

Byzantine Empire in 1265

Increased awareness of “Hellenism” in foreign correspondence

- still used Romoi in official ceremonies
- Terms such as graikoi and hellenes used in official correspondence
  - rising awareness of ethnic distinction
- letter to Epirus states that “Hellenes” cannot have two emperors
  - post 1204 = proto-Hellenic nationalism