

BYZANTINE DIPLOMACY WITH THE OTTOMANS:
ACTORS, OCCASIONS, AND PROCEDURES



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Actors, Occasions, and Procedures

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ABSTRACT

Byzantine Diplomacy with the Ottomans: Actors, Occasions, and Procedures

As an attempt to understand the diplomatic communications of the Byzantine Empire with the Ottomans, this thesis poses questions on the use and role of several methods in this encounter during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It aims to situate the role of Byzantine diplomacy in a broader system of diplomatic networks with multiple challenging actors, thus presenting a practical aspect of foreign politics. By making use primarily of the available narrative histories, both in Byzantine Greek and Ottoman Turkish, which are occasionally underpinned by works from other genres such as epistolographic evidence, rhetorical sources, and official documents, it carries out extensive research on each diplomatic contact and the instruments of diplomatic communication including letter exchanges, political negotiations via embassies, and conclusion of treaties.

The emphasis here lies on the kinds of diplomatic practice constructed in a period when Byzantium was shrinking politically against the growing Ottoman power. More specifically, the thesis, on the one hand, looks into various diplomatic strategies that Byzantium adopted in relation to the Ottoman state and, on the other hand, seeks to lay down the influential roles of the envoys as agents in several diplomatic occasions. For that purpose, the analysis is based on a list of all the recorded diplomatic communications between the two political entities, ranging from an embassy of any sort to a simple messenger carrying the message of the political authority or its representatives. Focusing on their networks, careers, positions, and backgrounds, it is argued that the profile of envoys reveals some idiosyncratic elements and patterns in the selection of the persons in charge.

ÖZET

Bizans'ın Osmanlılar ile Diplomasisi: Aktörler, Ortamlar ve Süreçler

Bizans İmparatorluğu ile Osmanlıların diplomatik iletişimini anlama girişimi olarak bu tez, ondördüncü ve onbeşinci yüzyıllar boyunca gerçekleşen bu karşılaşmada çeşitli yöntemlerin kullanımı ve rolü hakkında sorular ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, dış politikanın tatbiki veçhelerini sunarak Bizans diplomasisinin rolünü birçok zorlu aktörün yer aldığı daha geniş bir sistemde konumlandırmayı hedeflemektedir.

Öncelikle Bizans Yunancası ve Osmanlı Türkçesi olmak üzere mevcut anlatı kaynaklarından faydalanarak ve zaman zaman epistolografik kanıtlar, retorik kaynaklar ve resmî belgeler gibi diğer türlerde eserlerle de desteklenen bu çalışma, her diplomatik temas ve mektup alışverişi, siyasi müzakere ve anlaşma akdi dâhil diplomatik iletişim araçları hakkında kapsamlı bir araştırma yapmaktadır.

Burada vurgu, Bizans'ın büyüyen Osmanlı gücü karşısında siyasi olarak küçüldüğü bir dönemde inşa edilen diplomatik uygulama türleri üzerinedir. Daha hususi olarak bu tez, bir taraftan Bizans'ın Osmanlı Devleti ile ilgili olarak benimsediği çeşitli diplomatik stratejileri incelemekte, diğer taraftan ise, muhtelif diplomatik ortamlarda temsilci olarak elçilerin rollerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, analiz, herhangi bir elçilikten, siyasi otoritenin veya onun temsilcilerinin mesajlarını taşıyan basit bir haberciye kadar iki siyasi oluşum arasındaki kayıtlı tüm diplomatik iletişimlerin bir listesine dayanmaktadır. Ağlarına, kariyerlerine, konumlarına ve geçmiş deneyimlerine odaklanarak elçi profilinin, sorumlu kişinin seçiminde bazı kendine özgü unsurları ve kalıpları ortaya çıkardığı burada ileri sürülmektedir.

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To

Sibel

& our beloved sons,

Mazhar Tuna and Nazım Ateş

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NOTES ON SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

Throughout the thesis, I have adopted a Greek transliteration of Byzantine proper names and terminology except for some common first names as they appear in modern English such as John, George, Constantine or Joseph instead of Ioannes, Georgios, Konstantinos or Ioasaph. For the letter “χ”, I used “ch” as it is the case in Michael. Likewise, I have preferred the commonly used English forms of some place names: Nicomedia, Nicaea, etc. Lastly, for the Ottoman terms and proper names, I have tried to stick to modern Turkish orthography.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“If the Byzantines managed to prolong their life ..., it was largely due to an efficient management of foreign relations – and certainly not to military or economic might, which never ceased declining until the final fall of 1453.”¹
Nicolas Oikonomides

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines Byzantine diplomacy with the Ottomans by investigating thoroughly all attestable means of diplomacy throughout the history of the encounter between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman polity. It aims to situate the role of Byzantine diplomacy in a broader system of diplomatic networks with multiple challenging actors. By making use primarily of the available narrative histories, both in Byzantine Greek and Ottoman Turkish, which are occasionally underpinned by works from other genres such as epistolographic evidence, rhetorical sources, and official documents, it investigates the practical aspect of diplomacy by carrying out extensive research on each diplomatic contact and the instruments of diplomatic communication including letter exchanges, political negotiations via embassies, and conclusion of treaties.

The thesis here puts the emphasis on the kinds of diplomatic practice constructed in a period when Byzantium was shrinking politically against the growing Ottoman power.² More specifically, it, on the one hand, looks into various

¹ Oikonomides, “Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 1204-1453: Means and ends,” 75-76.

² On the political history of the period, the most comprehensive study is Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*.

diplomatic strategies that Byzantium adopted in relation to the Ottoman state and, on the other hand, seeks to lay down the influential roles of the envoys as agents in several diplomatic occasions. For that purpose, the analysis is based on a list of all the recorded diplomatic communications between the two political entities, ranging from an embassy of any sort to a simple messenger carrying the message of the political authority or its representatives. Focusing on their networks, careers, positions, and backgrounds, it is argued that the profile of envoys reveals some idiosyncratic elements and patterns in the selection of the persons in charge.

In that framework, as a tool and technique for implementing foreign policy, Byzantine diplomacy with its neighbors can be understood as a competitive and consistent enterprise.³ What the reader will find throughout the thesis is largely a Byzantine perspective, based primarily on Byzantine sources; only some alternative perspectives from Ottoman authors are presented. As will be shown in the following chapters, the overall state of Byzantine diplomatic approaches towards the surrounding polities, particularly to the Ottomans, was a sign of the crucial role of diplomacy in shaping the political scene of the period. One should bear in mind that the scale and sphere of influences of the polities in question did not remain unchanged. At the time when the Byzantine Empire confronted the Ottomans, it already had a well-constructed and long-standing bureaucratic, diplomatic, and court culture. The tradition in the diplomatic field had long been in practice and the empire had accordingly amassed considerable know-how. On the other hand, the embryonic state of the Ottomans in the early fourteenth century gave way to a gradual

³ Denis A. Zakythinos borrowed this term “techniques of foreign relations” from F. L. Ganshof, *The Middle Ages: A history of international relations*, 283. See Denis A. Zakythinos, “The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy. Rapport de D. Obolensky, II,” 313-315. See also Alexander Kazhdan, “The notion of Byzantine diplomacy,” 6.

sophistication in terms of court culture, diplomatic practices, and ceremonies towards the end of the century, when the state became more centralized and the state apparatus and its bureaucracy became more settled.⁴

Apart from international politics, there is another thing that needs to be considered: the internal factors. As Angeliki E. Laiou argues in her book about Andronikos II's foreign policy, domestic factors set the basis for Byzantine foreign affairs, which were a sort of reflection of the inner dynamics of the empire.⁵

Likewise, Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications must be interpreted in relation to the domestic dynamics of each state. Laiou underlines the impossibility of drawing a political map of the area due to the ever-shifting borders.⁶ With the emergence of centrifugal tendencies during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos in the late thirteenth century, the Byzantine Empire had become a polity that was undergoing territorial losses and, consequently, population and income decline. This eventually had an impact on its last two centuries of struggle to find allies and aid to stand against its foes, primarily the Ottomans. The fourteenth century included decisive developments in the empire's relations with foreign powers. By the mid-fourteenth century, the fragmentation of its territories was so rapid that several imperial authorities ruled from various centers of the empire, such as the empress Yolanda or Irene Palaiologina of Montferrat, who followed her own foreign policy during her stay at Thessalonike between 1303 and 1317, or Manuel II Palaiologos, who ruled over Thessalonike in the 1380s.⁷ During the long reign of Manuel II, the

⁴ On the topic, see Laiou, "The Palaiologoi and the world around them (1261-1400)," 803-833; İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The classical age 1300-1600*; Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*.

⁵ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*.

⁶ Laiou, "Byzantium and neighboring powers: Small-state policies and complexities," 42-53.

⁷ Laiou, "Byzantium and neighboring powers: Small-state policies and complexities," 45.

empire survived thanks to his delicate diplomacy not only with the Ottomans but also with other leading European powers. The final decades of the Byzantine Empire showed relatively less successful diplomatic contacts with the Ottoman state.

In order to contextualize the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communication in the broader frame of Palaiologan diplomacy, one needs to review the initial stages in detail. For that purpose, it is necessary to take a glance at the policy of Michael VIII, the first emperor of the dynasty.

The early Palaiologan period witnessed the superiority of the Byzantine Empire over the polities of the region. A treaty between Michael VIII Palaiologos and William, the prince of the Morea, led to a state of Byzantine superiority and the vassalage of William because the emperor bestowed upon the latter the title of *megas domestikos* (grand domestic). For most of his reign, Michael had the Genoese as a significant Western ally. On the other hand, his Western diplomacy was based on a policy seeking to take advantage of the Papal-Sicilian and Veneto-Genoese rivalries. It enabled him to consolidate his empire despite its military and economic difficulties.⁸

One of the two main purposes of diplomacy in the late Byzantine period was to expel the threat, which was posed by Charles of Anjou against Constantinople. Michael's efforts showed itself in the form of accepting the union of churches at the Council of Lyons (1274). The other purpose was to find allies and military support. Byzantium's military power and consequently its abilities in diplomacy were put to a difficult test as the growing threat from the Ottomans became more and more

⁸ Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West 1258-1282. A study in Byzantine-Latin relations*, 160. On Michael VIII's reign, see also Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 41-89.

apparent following their advance further into the Balkans. Although the Byzantine state remained esteemed in European politics, Western powers were inclined to give military support in return for the union of the churches. Besides the lack of political prestige experienced by the Byzantine Empire at this time, the period witnessed a considerable increase in the power of the Orthodox Patriarchate over the Eastern Christian realm. As an overarching organization for the Byzantine world, the image of the church had even overwhelmed the image of the Byzantine state.⁹

Possessing various political and cultural backgrounds, the contemporaneous polities respected Byzantium, associating it with its long-established cultural prestige. Despite the military, political, and economic decline, the role of Byzantine cultural and social influence stayed firm in the Palaiologan period. This was a result of the imperial vision that was skillfully carried out by diplomacy. In its final centuries, as quoted above from Nicolas Oikonomides, the Byzantine Empire rested on a well-managed system of diplomacy and thus was able to manage a long life.¹⁰ In order to secure the empire's interests, Palaiologan emperors employed all possible means of diplomacy effectively in their dealings with the outlying world. In a political environment that reflected conflicting interests and thus a complex picture

⁹ On the superior role of the church over the political sphere in the late Byzantine period and the argument that as the empire declined the Orthodox church increased its dominion, see Nicol, *Church and society in the last centuries of Byzantium*; Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 299-300; several articles in Angelov (ed.), *Church and society in late Byzantium*; Necipoğlu, "Empire and imperial ideology in the late Byzantine era: Tradition, transformation, and innovation," 292-293. See the article by Ruth Macrides, who challenges this view: Macrides, "Emperor and church in the last centuries of Byzantium," 123-143.

¹⁰ Oikonomides, "Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 1204-1453: Means and ends," 75-76. Oikonomides argues that the main characteristic of the period is a "constant opposition between a glorified past on the one hand and the cold facts of the time on the other." Ibid., p. 74. See also Necipoğlu, "Empire and imperial ideology in the late Byzantine era: Tradition, transformation, and innovation," 285-288; Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*; Hilsdale, "The timeliness of timelessness: Reconsidering decline in the Palaiologan period," 53-70.

of shifting alliances and networks, the Byzantine Empire constantly searched for the best possible way to keep its borders intact and its political sovereignty undisturbed.

The idea of Byzantine universalism constituted one of the most important pillars of diplomacy in Byzantium during its long history and yet, in the final centuries of the empire, even this tenet began to wane.¹¹ As a central element of Byzantine universalism, the Byzantine Church held sway over a large area outside of the empire. It possessed a long-respected position in world politics, defining the state of affairs in the late Byzantine epoch when the universalist imperial image was utilized as a soft power instrument in places where the empire was not powerful.¹² The “family hierarchy” of Byzantine universalism emphasized the emperor’s single position over the Christian *oikoumene*. However, the disappearance of satellite principalities around Byzantium and the recession of the Byzantine army caused a shock, leading to a direct encounter with more powerful enemies. In this context, the Palaiologan dynasty introduced new approaches to diplomacy that had not been attested previously in Byzantine history.

Thus, in the last two centuries of the empire, diplomatic activity changed forms. The emperor could now set out on a diplomatic journey in person, seeking military or financial support primarily to overcome the threat coming from the Ottomans. As a result of this innovative policy of “personal engagement in diplomatic practice,” emperors were not merely rulers: they became ambassadors.¹³

¹¹ For the topic of Byzantine universalism, see Obolensky, *The Byzantine commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453*; Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine*; Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*.

¹² Kaldellis, “Did the Byzantine Empire have ‘ecumenical’ or ‘universal’ aspirations?” 272-300; especially at 290-291.

¹³ The reasons for this very shift have been studied by many scholars. See, for example, Mergiali-Sahas, “A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile,” 588-604; Malamut, “Les ambassades du dernier empereur de Byzance,” 429-

Just like his predecessors John V and Manuel II, John VIII Palaiologos visited the Western courts in order to gain support for the empire's defense against the Ottoman attacks. This novel tradition has been interpreted as a sign of Byzantine appeal to the West and its derogatory situation in front of the Western courts. Yet, alternatively, it could be read in a positive light and considered to be a stage of transformation to the standards of the Western status-quo.¹⁴ However, this new method of diplomatic communication by personal attendance of the emperor did not dominate the diplomatic contacts of the period under consideration. On the contrary, it was generally diplomats who took part in diplomatic missions with no emperor accompanying them. Indeed, the latter constituted the majority.

Furthermore, the period in question also witnessed the continuation of traditional Byzantine diplomatic methods. These included diplomatic gifts, marriage alliances, and negotiations for military aid, as the basis of foreign relations, which together with discussions regarding the union of the churches became one of the two main purposes in Byzantine diplomacy with the West.¹⁵ Turning to Byzantine diplomatic communications with the Ottomans, one can observe methods similar to those that were used in Byzantine-Western diplomacy. While most diplomatic missions were conducted by imperial officials who acted as envoys, the Byzantine emperors occasionally met with the Ottoman as well as other Turkish rulers in diplomatic contexts in person and they communicated with each other as if they themselves were diplomats.

448; Andriopoulou, "The logistics of a Union: Diplomatic communication through the eyes of Sylvester Syropoulos," 51.

¹⁴ Necipoğlu, "Empire and imperial ideology in the late Byzantine era: Tradition, transformation, and innovation," 291.

¹⁵ Andriopoulou, "The logistics of a Union: Diplomatic communication through the eyes of Sylvester Syropoulos," 51.

Kantakouzenos's account, a unique story of Andronikos III Palaiologos making a journey to Kyzikos after the end of the civil war in 1328 illustrates the role of the Byzantine emperor as an actor in the empire's diplomatic practice. Although Andronikos focused on his aim to see the image of the mother of God located in a church in Hyrtakion, a settlement in Bithynia, his visit had the primary aim of concluding a peace treaty with the ruler of Karasi. At that point, several Byzantine cities had suffered from attacks at the hands of the Karasi troops. The agreement took place at the gates of Pegai.¹⁶ In this way, the Byzantine emperor showed an inclination to travel within the empire's territories, but outside of Constantinople, to attend a diplomatic meeting as early as the late 1320s.¹⁷ Furthermore, during his fight against his brother Musa, Mehmed I received a message from the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, who invited him to Skoutari. In 1412 or 1413, Manuel travelled to the place with his own trireme and accepted the Ottoman prince, who crossed over to the vessel and conversed with the emperor. They eventually set sail for Constantinople, where Mehmed was Manuel's guest.¹⁸ Similar to how they adopted personal diplomacy with the Western powers, the Byzantine emperors acted as ambassadors on various occasions in Byzantine-Ottoman official relations.

Scholars widely adopted the idea that Byzantium lived long thanks to its skill in diplomacy. The know-how in diplomacy has been considered as one of the bases

¹⁶ The city of Pegai served as the metropolitan bishopric for the entire Hellespont area.

¹⁷ John Kantakouzenos, *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, L. Schopen (ed.), vol. I, 339. Hereafter "Kantakouzenos." Dölger, *Regesten der kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453*, vol. 4, no. 2727. Hereafter "Dölger, *Regesten*."

¹⁸ "Ο δὲ βασιλεὺς μαθὼν, ὅτι ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ πέραν, τὰς τριήρεις ἐτοίμους ἔχων περὶ καὶ τῷ Μαχουμέτ ἐντυχὼν καὶ λόγους ἐνόρκους λαβὼν καὶ δούς, περὶ τὸν Μαχουμέτ σὺν αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν." Ducas (Doukas), *Istoria Turco-Bizantină (1341-1462)*, ed. Grecu, Book 19.10, 129. Hereafter "Doukas, ed. Grecu." On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. 5, no. 3331.

of the empire's longevity.¹⁹ Throughout the late Byzantine Empire, it became a dominant feature that the Byzantine emperors established alliances with varying polities to ward off the Turks from their territories. Historical sources reveal many instances of the Byzantines' direct contacts with the Ottomans and other Turkish emirates, through some of which the empire formed alliances in certain matters. Each alliance had its targets and means. Moreover, the efforts seeking political stability and endurance in the face of threatening factors in the region did not have to be in the form of an alliance. As a general policy, the Byzantine Empire avoided costly wars that would often end with defeat. That approach opened the door to diplomatic negotiations and peace talks in diverse forms of communication. As Donald M. Nicol states, "The Byzantines had always known that diplomacy was cheaper and often more successful than war."²⁰ Historicizing that favored method, the writings of John VI Kantakouzenos may present an invaluable example. For example, Kantakouzenos describes the diplomatic endeavors of his sole rule as if they led all the external enemies of the empire to cease waging war against Byzantium. Throughout his account, he always tries to legitimize his actions by referring to his efforts to contribute to peace. For instance, Kantakouzenos sent an embassy to the ruler of the Serbians and asked for a truce because he acknowledged that warfare would be disadvantageous to the empire.²¹

A critical feature of embassies in the late medieval world was the very high number of missions between various polities. For Byzantium, this became more of a

¹⁹ The idea has recently been emphasized by Nicolas Drocourt. See Drocourt, "Byzantine diplomacy," 247-263.

²⁰ Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk, c. 1295-1383*, 175-176.

²¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 81; Kantakouzenos, trans. Miller, *The History of John Cantacuzenus (Book IV): Text, translation and commentary*, Book 4, 150. Hereafter "Kantakouzenos, trans. Miller."

common practice during its later centuries based on the plurality of the actors in contact. The Byzantine emperors of the time busied themselves with finding support against their long-standing foes, the Ottomans. This search for military assistance was intermingled with the negotiations on the union of churches. The period witnessed the frequency of ambassadorial contacts reaching a high level, which indicates two things: it is evidence of a developed network of alliances designating possibilities of communication and a sign of urgent appeal for Byzantine military aid.²²

Diplomacy, for Byzantium, turned out to be performed more extensively than it used to be, as the political unity of the Turks at its Eastern borders became more fragmented. The Byzantine emperors seem to have approached their new neighbors alternately. In this regard, Byzantine diplomacy has always been multi-dimensional. The empire was in contact with varied polities for different motivations and expectations concurrently. All actions in the diplomatic sphere were interconnected and served for the imperial policy in general. Donald M. Nicol states that the entire Byzantine diplomacy in the early Palaiologan period was hardly carried out due to its large scale.²³ The reason for such a situation derived from the plurality of polities that engaged in relations or encountered with the Byzantine Empire. The empire, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, contacted the Papacy, Venetians, Genoese,

²² For some primary studies dealing with the Byzantine diplomatic communication with its various interlocutors during the Palaiologan period, see Mergiali-Sahas, "A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile," 588-604; Malamut, "De 1299 à 1451 au coeur des ambassades byzantines," 79-124; Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*; Korobeinikov, "Diplomatic correspondence between Byzantium and the Mamluk Sultanate in the fourteenth century," 53-74; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 79-95.

²³ Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk*, c. 1295-1383, 10.

Mamluks, Hungary, even Mongols and later with the Turks. What such circumstances brought to Byzantium was evidently its complex mechanism of making allies. Pachymeres describes the empire's situation as "squeezed" between the Turks in the East and the Italians in the West. It could only sustain its existence by "making alliances with the Italians against the Persians [i.e. Turks] and using the Skythians [i.e. the Mongols] to push back the Italians."²⁴ Since a powerful central authority existed neither in the Byzantine Empire nor in the political authorities in Anatolia (i.e. the Seljuk state and the Mongol Empire) by the late thirteenth century, the frontier (uc) begs like Osman in particular got the opportunity to directly contact local power-holders and local imperial officials (i.e. "tekvurs" as mentioned in the Ottoman chronicles).²⁵ There are some indications supporting the existence of Constantinopolitan embassies visiting Turcoman rulers.²⁶ In the preliminary years of the Ottoman appearance in the political atmosphere of the region, therefore, one can observe rather local communications, by contrast to the later communications between the Byzantine and Ottoman capitals as the Ottoman state grew and reached considerable authority across Bithynia.

The attestable diplomatic traffic, as can be observed in the Appendix, intensified when it came to the later periods. In terms of the detectable diplomatic contacts, Manuel II's reign has by far the highest quantity, which is followed by John V. The case for the relatively clear picture of Manuel's reign might have derived

²⁴ Pachymeres, *Relations historiques*, ed. Failler, trans. Laurent, vol. I, Book 1.3, 27 (hereafter "Pachymeres, ed. Failler.") translated into English by Anthony Kaldellis. See Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign lands and peoples in Byzantine literature*, 144.

²⁵ Revolts emerged in the Anatolian territories of the Byzantine Empire. See Kyriakidis, "The revolt of the General Kassianos in Mesothynia (1306)," 165-180. For earlier confrontation, see Tinnefeld, "Pachymeres und Philes als zeugen für ein frühes unternehmen gegen die Osmanen," 46-54.

²⁶ Zachariadou, "Histoire et legends des premiers Ottomans," 73.

from the fact that his reign lasted long, and the period is well documented not only by several chronicles but also by his illuminating works.

1.2 Scope of the study

Although studies concerning changing aspects of late Byzantine diplomacy and Byzantine foreign relations with the Western polities proliferate, little attention has been directed toward understanding the topic of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications in its entirety. This study prioritizes the Byzantine diplomatic relations with the Ottomans, but at the same time, it partly treats Byzantium's diplomacy with other polities in order to better contextualize Byzantine diplomatic relations in their entirety for the last centuries of the empire.

This thesis searches for problems within this phase of Byzantine diplomacy and accordingly interprets the outcome of the historical evidence. It aims to contribute to the study of Byzantine diplomacy by pointing to its methods, types, and practices concerning the Ottoman state from the very beginning of the encounter between these two polities until, the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453.

The main scope of the research is to reach general conclusions by investigating varying aspects of diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state and revealing a portrait of the late Byzantine and early Ottoman envoys in their mutual dealings. In that context, the individuals occupying the status of official representatives, who are known by name through sources, will be described and discussed by presenting their qualities, professional careers, and networks.

Throughout the text, in order to prevent misconceptions partly deriving from the language of the sources themselves, I prefer to identify diplomats in charge as

“envoys.” The term “envoy” encompasses a wider meaning compared to “ambassador,” which is distinguished from the former term in terms of the limits of authorization during a mission. While an envoy could obtain limited capacity, an ambassador could represent his master and had plenipotentiary power in diplomatic milieus. In this regard, I aim to eliminate the possibility of interpreting the evidence with its face value and incorrectly referring to an embassy by attributing to it stronger and more extensive capacity, which can happen otherwise. Whether they were full-fledged or not, all representatives were ultimately envoys. However, the reader will see occasional use of the term ambassador depending on the context and standing for conveying a stronger implication.

Providing a background for the topic and the period, the lengthy introduction aims to present a literature review for specified and the most essential studies in the scholarship. After that, it treats the primary sources in Greek and Ottoman Turkish in detail, which is followed by the methodological approach and the periodization adopted throughout the thesis.

Chapter 2 deals primarily with various aspects of diplomatic communication. With the exception of ambassadorial diplomacy, which is examined in the following chapters, Chapter 2 focuses on other methods and types of diplomacy observable in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic encounter. The circumstances and policies followed during times of war, tributes and their impacts on pursuing diplomacy, and spies as actors of intelligence are issues to be treated in this chapter. It also includes additional conventional methods such as marriage and hostage diplomacy, and finally sets the frame of diplomacy conducted in the borderlands.

Investigating ambassadorial diplomacy, the subsequent two chapters examine envoys and embassies. Accordingly, Chapter 3 focuses on the selection criteria for

the envoys and tries to seek for a pattern. Covering the longest part in the thesis, a sub-chapter discusses identities and careers of envoys, substantially for the ones that we can follow as they are named in primary sources. This chapter ends with a much shorter sub-chapter in which I make an overview of the diplomatic encounter between the Byzantine local administrators, i.e. *tekvurs*, and the early Ottoman polity.

On the other hand, Chapter 4 puts an emphasis on the essential elements of embassies and how they were formed. It thus examines the *modus operandi* in embassies by particularly analyzing their ceremonial, cultural, logistical aspects. In this part of the thesis, I pay special attention to the following phenomena: language, oaths, and gifts, because they may answer different facets of the diplomatic communication between the two polities.

1.3 State of modern literature on the topic

Since the first use of the word “diplomacy – diplomatika” in the seventeenth century, the term has been used as an equivalent to “the profession or skill of managing international relations.”²⁷ In its broader meaning, the term denotes an entire process in which polities manage their foreign relations through representatives. In other words, it is the conduct of relations between political entities by (official) agents. As the historiography of Byzantine diplomacy so far has shed light on diverse matters in the field, some further identifications have been introduced for a clear definition of the terminology. In this context, Dionysios Zakythinos clarified the term “diplomatic

²⁷ In this study, the term “diplomacy” is taken as it denotes the meaning, which is given in the Oxford English Dictionary as follows: “the profession or skill of managing international relations.” See Waite, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 199.

activity” and came up with a definition that emphasized the “how” in diplomacy. For him, the term encapsulates the practical aspects of diplomacy such as the journeys of envoys and their profiles. Moreover, Zakythinos underlined the term’s distinction from “foreign policy” by stating that the latter deals with “the ‘what’ in diplomacy, political relations themselves and their results.”²⁸ In contrast to studies of foreign policy, therefore, this thesis will attempt to present a detailed picture of Byzantine-Ottoman *diplomatic encounters*.

As for the field of Byzantine studies, the term “diplomacy” has been a topic of a considerable number of studies. Since Dimitri Obolensky’s open call in 1961 for future studies on the diplomatic history of the Byzantine Empire, modern researchers have shown a gradual interest in the topic, which reflected itself both in terms of quantity and the primary sources treated. The pioneering article by Obolensky set the basis of the debate over the principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy. Looking at the empire’s northern neighbors during the early and middle Byzantine epochs, he argued that three main sectors (i.e. the Caucasus, the Crimea, and the Danube) played a role in the implementation of Byzantine diplomacy.²⁹

Although Byzantine diplomacy with its various interlocutors has been a topic in several articles and monographs, no comprehensive attempt had been shown to treat the subject in its entirety until the beginning of the 1990s.³⁰ The Twenty-Fourth

²⁸ Zakythinos, “The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy. Rapport de D. Obolensky, II,” 313-319; also, Oikonomides, “Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 1204-1453: Means and ends,” 73.

²⁹ Obelensky, “The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy,” 45-61.

³⁰ Although they lack a comprehensive view of the whole Palaiologan period, the following studies pre-dating 1990 and chronologically listed according to the publication date, provide excellent analyses with regard to their emphases. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West 1258-1282. A study in Byzantine-Latin relations*; Obelensky, “The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy,” 45-61; Zakythinos, “The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy. Rapport de D. Obolensky, II,” 313-319; Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II*; Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance à Rome*; Lounghis, *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident, depuis la foundation des états barbares jusqu’aux Croisades (407-1096)*; Shepard, “Information, disinformation and delay in Byzantine diplomacy,” 233-293.

Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies in Cambridge in 1990 heralded a new period in the field of studies on Byzantine diplomacy.³¹ Introducing the sophisticated nature of diplomacy in Byzantium, the papers presented in this meeting, which were published two years later, included in-depth analysis and are considered pioneers in the field. Since then, many historians have studied various aspects of diplomacy through a wide range of topics. However, not enough attention has been directed towards the later Byzantine period. Only two articles deal with the later centuries of the empire in the symposium publication. The first one is by Nicolas Oikonomides, who draws an overall picture of Byzantine diplomacy after 1204, yet almost exclusively bases his arguments on the empire's contacts with the West. The other article belongs to Keith Hopwood, who presents a remarkable snapshot of the empire's diplomatic communications in the Palaiologan age by bringing "low-level diplomacy" into the discussion. Using two major primary sources, Pachymeres's and Neşrî's historical accounts, Hopwood contributes to the understanding of the diplomatic contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman principality along the borderlands.

Broadly speaking, in the field of Byzantine diplomacy, research studies into the topic proliferated in the latter half of the 1990s and afterwards.³² Yet, if one

³¹ Shepard and Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine diplomacy. Papers from the 24th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Cambridge, March 1990*.

³² Here is an exemplary bibliography listing the prominent studies: Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*; Drocourt and Becker (eds.), *Ambassadeurs et ambassades au coeur des relations diplomatiques, Rome-Occident Médiéval-Byzance (VIIIe s. avant J.-C. – XIIe s. après J.-C.)*; Beihammer, "Strategies of diplomacy and ambassadors in Byzantine-Muslim relations of the tenth and eleventh centuries," 371-400; Durak, "Diplomacy as performance: Power politics and resistance between the Byzantine and the early Medieval Islamic courts," 157-164; Drocourt, *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore. Les ambassadeurs étrangers dans l'empire byzantin des années 640 à 1204*; Beihammer, *Byzantium and the emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040-1130*; Drocourt and Malamut (eds.), *La diplomatie byzantine, de l'Empire romain aux confins de l'Europe (Ve-XVe s.)*; Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354)," 457-488;

considers the Byzantine diplomatic communications in the Palaiologan age, there are fewer studies, only some of which bear recent dates. In the aforementioned Cambridge symposium publication, Alexander Kazhdan's study on the perception of Byzantine diplomacy takes into consideration local divergences. Summarizing the major contributions so far in the field, his major concern is to highlight all notions of Byzantine diplomatic practice such as the role of symbolic terminology used for describing the "family hierarchy" as the Byzantine emperors became "fathers" of different satellite polities or several instruments of Byzantine diplomacy such as marriage alliances. Moreover, Kazhdan points out the difficulty to decipher the principles in Byzantium's eastern contacts. For him, it stems from the fact that various polities differed greatly in terms of their degree of centralization, which brought about a lack of uniformity among political bodies that eventually makes it hard to draw generalities. For that central reason, Kazhdan suggests that the reader can better understand local particularities by calling all available evidence into play.³³

Another leading scholar in the field of Byzantine diplomacy is the French historian Nicolas Drocourt, who mainly writes on the earlier periods of Byzantium and focuses on varying types of diplomatic contacts. Among his extensive bibliography, mostly emphasizing the middle Byzantine period, his studies on the decisive function of envoys in diplomatic contacts have shed light on the topic.³⁴

Élisabeth Malamut is another French scholar who contributed to the understanding of Byzantine diplomatic relations between the twelfth and the fifteenth

Durak, "Healing gifts: The role of diplomatic gift exchange in the movement of *Materia Medica* between the Byzantine and Islamic worlds," 388-415.

³³ Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy," 3-21.

³⁴ Drocourt, "Passing on political information between major powers: The key role of ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its neighbours," 91-112.

centuries.³⁵ Her two 2002 articles are illuminating in terms of the topic of the present thesis. In “Les ambassades du dernier empereur de Byzance,” she investigates the diplomatic cadre of Constantine XI Palaiologos.³⁶ In the other article, titled “De 1299 à 1451 au coeur des ambassades byzantines,” she considers every attestable envoy of the Byzantine Empire who served in its foreign affairs with various polities including the Ottomans.³⁷ In her more recent article, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” Malamut argues that it was the Ottomans who generally determined which Byzantine envoys would be dispatched for diplomatic missions directed at the Ottoman court.³⁸

In modern historiography, one of the most significant studies in the field of Byzantine diplomacy with the West in its final centuries is Stavroula Andriopoulou’s doctoral dissertation.³⁹ It presents an excellent analysis of the Byzantine diplomats visiting the Western courts and the Papacy. In her study, Andriopoulou developed a profile of the Byzantine ambassadors during the final hundred years of the empire and came up with convincing conclusions on the topic. By investigating the travel and logistical requirements of embassies and the criteria for being a Byzantine ambassador, she was able to bring a comprehensive explanation of how the Byzantine emperors made use of varied diplomatic methods and what kind of foreign policy they pursued. Providing insightful statistics in her appendices, which are

³⁵ For example, Malamut, “Les alliances matrimoniales dans la diplomatie byzantine du 8e au 15e siècle: une stratégie dynastique revisitée sur la longue durée,” 379-454.

³⁶ Malamut, “Les ambassades du dernier empereur de Byzance,” 429-448.

³⁷ Malamut, “De 1299 à 1451 au coeur des ambassades byzantines,” 79-124.

³⁸ Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 79-95.

³⁹ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*.

divided according to the reigns of the emperors, her main concerns are the destinations, sizes of embassies, journeys, and vessels used.

Moreover, there are various catalogues and comprehensive secondary works, which embody a serious amount of data illuminating the extent of the diplomatic relations of Byzantium with other states. Franz Dölger's study, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453*, stands out as the most comprehensive study in the field covering the entirety of Byzantine history.⁴⁰ The study is the most cited and the only catalogue that refers to primary sources in listing the substantial amount of Byzantine diplomatic contacts. Despite its chronological breadth and well-identified discussion of minor circumstances that could be described as diplomatic communication, this study utilizes hardly any non-Byzantine sources. Moreover, in spite of its best aspects, the study needs to be updated due to the problems caused by an inadequate number of primary sources consulted. In terms of the Byzantine contacts with the Ottomans, the study provides only a few references, which can be explained by the fact that the study mainly includes the Byzantine embassies to foreign courts but not the opposite situation. The author usually takes no notice of the Ottoman sources and other sources in different languages such as Clavijo's account. The chronology of this study has been criticized since its publication; however, most of the critics on this issue have not produced convincing evidence and thus added more fuel to the debate. Unless otherwise stated, the present thesis is based on Dölger's chronology as developed in his study. Another catalogue work that is less related to the present topic is Freddy Thiriet's *Régestes*

⁴⁰ Dölger, *Regesten*. Volumes IV and V are devoted to the late Byzantine era.

des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie.⁴¹ It includes an important list of encounters, providing relevant data concerning the Byzantines' and the Ottomans' dealings with Venice.

Some publications offer lists of envoys or highlight a certain period of Byzantine diplomacy with the Ottomans, but these are limited in their scope. One of the motivations for this thesis is the fact that there exists substantial surviving evidence, mainly written in Greek and Ottoman Turkish, concerning unexplored aspects of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomacy that still await extensive research.

Where Ottoman diplomatic communications with other polities are concerned, we may consult a wide range of studies, including comprehensive analyses of Ottoman diplomacy within broad global or regional systems⁴² and more concentrated research investigating Ottoman official contacts with some European powers.⁴³

Regarding studies on the topic in Turkish language, there are a few examples. To begin with, one study focuses on the reign of Murad I, treating the Ottoman ruler's foreign relations with the Byzantine Empire by considering the main Ottoman chronicles from the perspective of political developments and military confrontations.⁴⁴ A PhD dissertation by Fahameddin Başar aims to bring together all relevant passages from the Ottoman narrative sources and discusses the issue of connections between the two states based on the Ottoman military achievements and

⁴¹ Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie*. Hereafter "Thiriet, *Régestes*."

⁴² Hurewitz, "Ottoman diplomacy and the European state system," 141-152.

⁴³ Fabris, "From Adrianople to Constantinople: Venetian-Ottoman diplomatic missions, 1360-1453," 154-200.

⁴⁴ Dağtekin, "I. Murad zamanında Osmanlı-Bizans münasebetlerine genel bir bakış 1361-1389," 189-199.

advancements in the Byzantine territories.⁴⁵ Various aspects of the diplomatic encounter between the two polities have been studied by the late Melek Delilbaşı, who contributed to the understanding of the use of Greek language in the diplomacy of the age.⁴⁶ She also published an article in Turkish on a draft of a treaty to be concluded between the Genoese of Chios and the Aydınoğlu Emirate. This text is very important because it shows how oath taking was practiced by a Turkish emir in an international trade contract.⁴⁷

1.4 Review of primary sources

Recent historiography in the field of Byzantine studies no doubt has emphasized the agency of the Byzantine authors, from whose accounts modern historians derive their interpretations. These authors often did not cover every aspect of a particular instance in history nor present the ‘true’ sequence, role, or details of it. Therefore, as Anthony Kaldellis carefully observed, here comes the matter of seeing the writings of Byzantine authors not just as texts but also as ‘literature,’ or as a means of ‘rhetoric’ when taken in their entirety.⁴⁸ If we consider that point of view and look for a distinction between diverse descriptions of events related to the diplomatic occasions, the authors of a large array of historical accounts should be investigated to better comprehend their points of view, which unequivocally shaped their narratives.

Byzantium confronted the Ottoman state and developed strategies for handling this challenging polity for over one hundred and fifty years. It is not

⁴⁵ Başar, *Osmanlı kaynaklarına göre Osmanlı-Bizans münâsebetleri (1299-1451)*.

⁴⁶ Delilbaşı, “Greek as a diplomatic language in the Turkish chancery,” 145-153; Delilbaşı, “Türk sultan ve beylerine ait Yunanca belgeler hakkında kısa bir inceleme,” 73-84. See also Delilbaşı, “Osmanlı-Bizans ilişkileri,” 122-132.

⁴⁷ Delilbaşı, “Aydınoğlu Hızır Bey’e ait bir ahidnâme taslağı,” 97-109.

⁴⁸ Kaldellis, “The corpus of Byzantine historiography. An interpretive essay,” 220.

difficult, of course, to argue that the Byzantine diplomatic tradition concerning the Ottomans can well be observed in historical evidence. The issue of creating a complete and consistent list of diplomatic contacts is too complex to be resolved by using the historical texts due to serious problems of chronology. The extant diplomatic documents, which are handful, have been kept in various historical literary sources through which we infer information about the contents of the embassies, the individuals engaged, and many other faces of diplomatic communications. As one of the leading scholars in the field of Byzantine diplomacy, Nicolas Drocourt categorizes the Greek sources into two groups: normative and narrative documents. While the former is composed of texts showing a direct testimony by describing ceremonies and official correspondence, the latter consists of narratives and chronicles.⁴⁹ The present thesis makes the most use of both groups as far as possible. Although the historical accounts of various late Byzantine historians outnumber, other genres provide information on various diplomatic contacts that would otherwise be unknown.

Primary sources in the Greek language present a colorful but limited picture of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications. There is certainly a scarcity of original documents of diplomatic communications, itineraries and discussions of envoys, official acts and records of embassies. A few examples from the period in question, exist such as the personal experiences of Theodore Metochites, Andreas Libadenos, and Nikephoros Gregoras, but they do not reveal any traces of the contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans. Compared to all detectable diplomatic contacts, a few official documents and narratives written by the

⁴⁹ Drocourt, "Byzantine diplomacy," 247.

agents of these contacts have survived. The scarcity of direct accounts or official documents by envoys makes historians lean on the narrative sources.

Whatever has been left to us today is mainly transmitted via a variety of literary sources including histories, travel accounts, chronicles, letters, and so on. The works of late Byzantine authors, George Pachymeres, John VI Kantakouzenos, Nikephoros Gregoras, John Kananos, Sylvester Syropoulos, Nikolaos Sekoundinos, Doukas, Laonikos Chalkokondyles, George Sphrantzes, Michael Kritoboulos are consulted beside other genres of Byzantine literature, such as letters by John V Palaiologos, Demetrios Kydones, Manuel II Palaiologos, short and anonymous chronicles, a panegyric work by Cardinal Isidore to Manuel II and John VIII, and so forth.

In this study, as already indicated, the overwhelming majority of the selected cases and arguments revolves around the works of the genre of histories. Although late Byzantine historiography did not have an audience as extensive as the earlier centuries, the works in question still carried the conventional features and the genre preserved its place in literary circles similar to the preceding centuries.⁵⁰

Due to discrepancies and inconsistencies of later sources of Ottoman historiography from the sixteenth century and beyond, I used the Ottoman chronicles produced either during the first half of the fifteenth century or in the last quarter of the fifteenth century as part of Bayezid II's project of composing histories covering the early Ottoman periods.

In addition to the sources in Greek and Ottoman Turkish, there are also sources in other languages, such as the historical accounts of Ignatius of Smolensk,

⁵⁰ Croke, "Uncovering Byzantium's historiographical audience," 52.

Clavijo, Pero Tafur, Nicolò Barbaro, and so on. In this study, the modern English translations of such sources are consulted. With partly varying emphases, all these sources provide information on several aspects of the diplomatic encounters between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state in their historical contexts.

Among the late Byzantine histories, in order to better present the major trends and tendencies of explaining events as well as for the sake of chronological uniformity of the contexts of each historical account, I try to bring together major ones and accordingly make two compartments. One of these phases is represented by three authors (i.e. Pachymeres, Gregoras, Kantakouzenos) since they all finalized their works in the early phases of the Byzantine-Ottoman confrontation, whereas the other selection consists of the Byzantine historians (i.e. Doukas, Chalkokondyles, Sphrantzes) who witnessed the last decades of the Byzantine Empire and completed their narratives in the second half of the fifteenth century.

In or around the year 1300, the early Ottomans were growing their power in the Seljuk borderlands, consolidating their political control over the regions in Bithynia. The silence of the Byzantine sources about the Turkish emirates in Anatolia began to be removed during the initial years following 1300. Pachymeres abandoned treating the emergence of beyliks across their borders and started to give the names of the Turkish chiefdoms including Osman (or Atman (Ἀτμᾶν) as called by Pachymeres), because these small polities began to be considered as actors in the new political scene.⁵¹

⁵¹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 347. See Gregoras, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* (Schopen and Bekker, Eds.), Book 7, 173-174. Hereafter “Gregoras.” See also Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman prehistory*, 15-17; Tinnefeld, “Pachymeres und Philes als zeugen für ein frühes unternehmen gegen die Osmanen,” 46-54.

On the other hand, Byzantine histories present a few details about the political events of the period. Not many documents survived in Ottoman Turkish dealing with the reign of Osman. Nevertheless, the lack of detailed information in Byzantine historical accounts compels the historian to lean on the Ottoman sources for the early fourteenth century.⁵²

We may begin with a general overview of the lives, works, perceptions, and political tendencies of major authors. This may enable the reader to evaluate the production, subjectivity, and eventual contribution of the works by these authors to the understanding of late Byzantine diplomatic history. In terms of the chronological division according to the dates of composition of the works, it is possible to talk about two distinct phases. The first one consists of the works by Pachymeres, Gregoras, and Kantakouzenos. They portrayed a conventional barbarian profile for the newly emerging foe of the Byzantine Empire. Their texts abound in attributions not only to “pillaging” as the main political motivation of the Ottomans but also to “uncivilized custom” and inclination to licentiousness as common elements of this newly emerging culture. As a widespread feature in Byzantine literary works, one may observe a notion of regarding Byzantine culture as superior and all the rest of the world as inferior. Aware of the military and political decline of the empire, especially Pachymeres and Gregoras detected the reasons and underlined the mismanagement of the state affairs. Providing a similar causal background, Kantakouzenos, on the other hand, presented the circumstances and their irreversible consequences that led him to take decisions in imperial administration.⁵³ The

⁵² Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman prehistory*, 82. See also Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes des règnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I*, 59-77.

⁵³ See Ševčenko, “The decline of Byzantium seen through the eyes of its intellectuals,” 167-186.

Byzantines were thinking of the approaching end of the world. The panic appeared among the inhabitants of Constantinople. This mentality showed itself in various historical texts.⁵⁴ Against the backdrop of such a decline in the political and military capacity of the empire, these primary sources present contemporary views of events in diplomatic contexts and actually tell their readers that the Byzantine Empire was no longer a challenging authority across the region. The following section aims to investigate the authors' way of narrating events and their points of view on the Turks and more particularly on the Ottomans.

First of all, George Pachymeres (1242-ca.1310), a man with an ecclesiastical background, wrote an account entitled Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι (*Syngraphikai historiai* = "Historical narration"⁵⁵). Pachymeres's extensive work, in thirteen books, covers the years between 1256 and 1307/8. The author probably died shortly after 1307. The source represents an excellent example to the historiography of the period. Pachymeres's Attic prose is sometimes hard to decipher for modern scholars. His work and Nikephoros Gregoras's history (Pachymeres was among Gregoras's primary sources) are no doubt the two most important Byzantine sources for the early decades of the Byzantine confrontation with the Ottomans. In fact, Pachymeres narrates the events concerning different Turkish emirates, their relations with Byzantium, and the embassies exchanged.⁵⁶ He had a critical tone when discussing

⁵⁴ See Ševčenko, "Alexius Makrembolites' dialogue between the rich and the poor," 187-228. See also Kydonēs, "Oratio de non reddenda Callipoli petente Amurate," col. 1013 A-B.

⁵⁵ The early years in the Byzantine-Ottoman encounter must be investigated in other contemporary sources as well. Ramon Muntaner's account is certainly one of them. This Spanish chronicler accompanied the Catalans in their great company and wrote about their affairs after they were accepted by Andronikos II Palaiologos. See *The Chronicle of Muntaner*, trans. Goodenough. There is a recent translation of the text: *The Catalan expedition to the East: From the Chronicle of Ramon Muntaner*, trans. Hughes.

⁵⁶ In Pachymeres, ambassadors are termed as οἱ πρέσβεις (e.g. Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 661) and embassy as ἡ πρεσβεία (e.g. τὴν πρεσβείαν in Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 661).

the affairs of the Palaiologan emperors. Lamenting for the empire that he thinks was faced with a difficult situation against the Latin West and the Turks in the East, his account focuses on difficulties in the economy, politics, and troubles in religious issues.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, we may say that there is no favoritism to a certain ruler or particular hatred for any individual.⁵⁸ He is rather an author who kept a certain distance between himself and the emperors of the time. Byzantine historians generally follow a topos that is widely utilized, arguing that they portray themselves as objective towards the ‘realities’ of the past, which they discuss in their works. Likewise, in the *prooimion* of his account, Pachymeres defines his approach that his way of presenting events does not include exaggeration, but his account rests mostly on his eyewitness testimony, or otherwise, he includes details only once he confirms them with other sources.⁵⁹ Although his critical approach derives from his aim of following objectivity in his account, the way he displayed events depended on his own choices and thus reflected his own perspective.

In the *Historia*, Pachymeres simply narrates how quick and disastrous were these early Turkish attacks so that even the emperor could not make plans. He defines the Turks as they subsisted on brigandage and they were warlike people, who became the masters of mountains.⁶⁰ More importantly, he attributes a slippery/unsteady character to the Turks’ claiming that they were not eager to abide by agreements. Given that the descriptions of non-Byzantines bear many literary

⁵⁷ Neville, *Guide to Byzantine historical writing*, 237.

⁵⁸ Lampakis, “Some considerations on the historiographical work of Georgios Pachymeris,” 133-138; Cassidy, *A translation and historical commentary of Book One and Book Two of the Historia of Geōrgios Pachymerēs*, xvi-xviii; Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 260-263.

⁵⁹ This is a frequent literary topos used widely by the Byzantine historians. Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. I, 23.

⁶⁰ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. I, 33.

topoi in Byzantine sources, these attributions to the Turks are not unusual.

Lamenting for bitter circumstances, Pachymeres underlines the destructive and cruel features of many Turkish tribes, who are named in the text. These attributions, therefore, are not just pointing to the Ottomans, but to the invading Turks in general in Western Anatolia.⁶¹

Sources do not specifically reveal an instance in which the Byzantine Empire managed to reach a long-lasting compromise with the Turks. For Pachymeres, there was no way to make a deal with the Turks, it would even have been in vain. He relates this with their character that their chieftains allowed them to pillage and gain booty. The way he draws characteristics for the Turks had a crucial role in shaping the way he narrates events. Pachymeres mentions an important detail about an attack against Prousa by the Turks prior to its fall. In 1306, the city was saved from the Turks by the payment of a heavy tribute. It was a shadow of peace but not a real peace, as Pachymeres calls it.⁶² Pachymeres has a clear distinction between “real” peace and temporal peace.

While Pachymeres talks about an irreparable event that happened in the region of Mysia around Mount Olympos probably in the summer of 1305, he inserts his thoughts about the state of being in peace with reference to the Bible:

But everything had become hard to bear to the point in which one could recognize, in these facts, the Lord’s word about the beginning of the anguishes. If other nations had not lived somehow peacefully (εἰρηνάως) according to their wishes, we might have expected the end of the world. Yet as the stability was still prolonged for the other nations, this observation kept us from thinking. But this announcement was intended for the ones who did evil things and who displayed their wickedness, harshness, their violence as well as all the similar vices for it. Indeed, on

⁶¹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 423-425. Pachymeres names the Turkish groups in the region as follows: “Ἀμούριοι ταῦτα καὶ Ἀτμᾶνες, Ἀτῖναι τε καὶ Ἀλυσύραι, καὶ Μανταχίαι καὶ Σαλαμπάζιδες καὶ Ἀλάιδες καὶ Ἀμνηράναι καὶ Λαμίσαι, Σφονδύλαι τε καὶ Παγδῖναι καὶ πᾶν ἄλλο χεῖριστον καὶ ἐπίρρητον ὄνομα.”

⁶² Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 657: “ὀνόματι σκιὰν εἰρήνης οὐκ εἰρήνην παρὰ τῶν Περσῶν.”

the one hand, if the irremediable happened without our wish, and on the other hand, we acted out of wickedness so that they claimed that the situation was a call for more piety and the others claimed that it was because of the bad luck in Roman affairs and to the transgression of the powerful, which ruined everything.⁶³

By referring to “God’s word,” Pachymeres here explains that if nations cannot find a way to live peacefully, the end of the world awaits humanity. This sentence would be an example of how peace should be maintained according to him. For Pachymeres, this statement was intended for nations that acted in wickedness and cruelty. He is somehow eulogizing the peace and underlining that any counteractions might cause its loss.⁶⁴

Nikephoros Gregoras (ca.1290/4-1358/61) is another author of the period, whose *Ρωμαϊκή Ιστορία* (Roman History) covers the years between 1204 and 1359. Born and raised in Herakleia Pontike, he pursued a career in Constantinople. The historian became a pupil of the patriarch John Glykys and Theodore Metochites.⁶⁵ Climbing up the bureaucratic ladder, he became Andronikos II’s advisor. In 1326, he attended an imperial embassy to King Stefan Uroš III Dečanski of Serbia. His experience shows an excellent example of narrating the toils in an ambassadorial mission.

The deposition of Andronikos II Palaiologos from the Byzantine throne consequently brought disfavor to Gregoras, who continued to live in Constantinople and indulged in scientific studies there. Although he had a career in the bureaucracy during the last years of Andronikos III Palaiologos and the first years of the emperor

⁶³ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 635. The translation belongs to me. All the translations throughout the thesis, unless otherwise stated, belong to me.

⁶⁴ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 635.

⁶⁵ Gregoras. There is a complete translation of the work into German: Nikephoros Gregoras, *Rhömäische Geschichte, Historia Rhomaike*, van Dieten (trans.). Hereafter “Gregoras, trans. van Dieten.”

John VI Kantakouzenos, we see him voicing his anti-Palamite thoughts in the late 1340s. His stance against Hesychasm resulted in house confinement for several years. At some point in his account, Gregoras brings a common contemporary genre in the shape of dialogue into play. We observe him as if having been informed about the events and political atmosphere between the years 1351 and 1354 during his imprisonment by his fictive person named Agathangelos, who is claimed to be the author's ex-student and best friend. The dialogue form resumed in chapters 24 through 28. It is uncertain whether this figure was a literary tool ornamenting the narrative; however, it seems consistent that what he provides conforms with the main anti-Palamite opinions of Gregoras.⁶⁶ Throughout the parts in which Gregoras narrates from the mouth of Agathangelos, the Palamite doctrines are discussed and consequently opposed, since, as Gregoras thinks, it caused a great destruction to the Church. Gregoras's so-called informant underlines that the followers of the Orthodox thought prevailed in the areas outside of the Christian realm.⁶⁷

The *Roman History* was written over a long period (from the early 1330s until ca. 1358) with different considerations and in various phases of its author's life. Gregoras's text is considered unfinished. He did not have enough time to polish it.⁶⁸ In earlier books of his long account, the narrative is more homogenous, presenting political and ecclesiastical subjects at equal levels. Gregoras's confinement brought his anti-Palamite discourse to the front. The ecclesiastical topics and the author's argument of how harmful Hesychasm had become for the empire shifted the focus of the text and occupied the overwhelming parts of the later phases of his account.

⁶⁶ Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign lands and peoples in Byzantine literature*, 149, 156.

⁶⁷ Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign lands and peoples in Byzantine literature*, 152.

⁶⁸ Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, vol. I, 41.

Gregoras explains how his account's flow had to change as the negative developments in ecclesiastical history forced him to deal with them rather than express political processes as he had planned at the outset. Yet in the end, we have a complex set of historical and ecclesiastical history as the author identifies his work.⁶⁹

Leaving aside his anti-Palamite discourse, we may say that throughout the text Gregoras pointedly opposes the use of mercenaries for the empire's security. He thought the use of mercenaries was insecure and it caused a great burden for the imperial treasury. Gregoras did not hesitate to reserve some passages putting forward his criticism on Kantakouzenos's overall policy in relation with the Turks in Anatolia. The historian did this as he transmitted John V's opinions regarding John VI's diplomacy towards these people. As he narrated, Eirene, John VI Kantakouzenos's wife and John V's mother-in-law, visited John V in Thessalonike and was given a speech by the latter. Accordingly, John V argued that Kantakouzenos gave many pledges to be able to establish alliances with the emir of Aydinoglu. Instead of submitting to God, as Gregoras alludes, he turned to the barbarians and made them all lead against the Byzantines.⁷⁰ Gregoras said that Kantakouzenos was heading the barbarian army of Orhan against John V Palaiologos, who thought that he himself was the actual successor of Andronikos III.⁷¹ While Kantakouzenos gives reasons for those alliances as they aimed for Byzantine interests, these passages in Gregoras show suspicions about whether Kantakouzenos's policy towards the Turks had such purposes. Gregoras explained how Kantakouzenos was hated by the Byzantines due to his alliance with the

⁶⁹ Gregoras, vol. III, 501-502.

⁷⁰ Gregoras, vol. I, 317; vol. III, 158-163, 166-167.

⁷¹ Gregoras, vol. III, 171.

Turks.⁷² There are further passages in his account that clearly indicate his critical view against Kantakouzenos. In the part in which Gregoras narrated Palamas's captivity among the Ottomans, he mentioned that he tried to explain his opinions on the matter and Palamas's arguments to the emperor Kantakouzenos which made the latter angered and shocked. The historian described him as the corruptor of the church and the fervent supporter of the evil. One should carefully analyze Gregoras's thoughts depending on at which stage of his life he wrote these passages, because his place in the eyes of Byzantine emperors alternated in different periods and vice versa.

On many occasions, Gregoras narrates his fictive friend Agathangelos's views about Kantakouzenos and his friendly policy towards the Turks. According to Gregoras, Kantakouzenos's appeals were taken seriously by the allying Turkish tribes, whose chieftains were obeying him as if they were his slaves.⁷³ One of the most striking critiques lies in Book 28. Here, he wrote that Kantakouzenos sought the Byzantine throne for which he robbed the people and handed their money to the barbarian and his "godless son-in-law" Orhan. He continued: "He [Kantakouzenos] became one manifest temple robber who gave sacred treasures to demons." For him, Kantakouzenos's policy brought a complete surrender of the Byzantine people to the hands of the Ottomans.⁷⁴ Orhan's warriors were already resident in the European soil before 1354. Gregoras wrote that Kantakouzenos settled some Turks and gave them some cities in the Chersonese, which they used as their bases for operations in

⁷² Gregoras, vol. III, 178.

⁷³ Gregoras, vol. I, 597-598.

⁷⁴ Gregoras, vol. III, 200. See also, Gregoras, vol. III, 196-199. As Gregoras transmits Matthew Kantakouzenos's words concerning his father's call for the Turks: "He was forced to call the barbarians (ἀνάγκασζόμενος εἰς βοήθειαν προσκαλεῖται βαρβάρους)." Gregoras, vol. III, 207.

Thrace.⁷⁵ Gregoras informs about the Turkish individuals at the Byzantine court, a very interesting piece of information, that Kantakouzenos allowed many of them to practice their religious rituals, which all by itself made the patriarch Kallistos very angry.⁷⁶

In the first decades of the fourteenth century, financial strait was causing difficult times in paying off the requirements of the state. The countryside suffered an uncontested devastation, peasants did not contribute well to the self-sufficiency of the empire. Moreover, the empire increasingly became a tributary state. Gregoras did not trust in the steps that the neighboring nations took for peace, neither the Serbs nor the Turks. For him, such a peace was alleged and could not be permanent.

Moreover, Gregoras criticized the way Andronikos II conducted a policy of raising more taxes to pay mercenaries and sending tributes timely to several addresses. He did not approve Andronikos II's policies because he thought that they were not in line with God's will. Although he gained the emperor's favor, he later sided with Andronikos III, the emperor's grandson, in the civil war during 1321-1328. His method of historiography is theocratic, emphasizing God's will on the events.

Gregoras's narrative is annalistic and follows a strict chronological order. He focuses on the periods and events in which he was mainly an eyewitness. In the opening of Book 12 in *Romaike Historia*, he states that most of the events he included are the ones he personally witnessed, otherwise, he depended on the authors who were actual witnesses.⁷⁷ We do not know when exactly Gregoras penned it,

⁷⁵ Gregoras, vol. III, 203.

⁷⁶ Gregoras, vol. III, 202-203. See also Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, 159-160, f.n. 359.

⁷⁷ Gregoras, vol. I, 569.

however, there seems to have been different phases of writing in different time spans of the author. Gregoras accepts that humans are responsible for their actions and thinks that God observes the actions of humans and punishes them according to their deeds.⁷⁸ One can notice a general tendency towards connecting major unfavorable events to an astronomical phenomenon or a natural disaster.

His approach to the Turks is consistent throughout the text. There are places where he criticizes them as being savage people, devastating everything they came across. Describing a compelling circumstance in spring 1337 following an incursion of Scythian groups well into Thrace, he mentions that they came across some Turks who crossed the Hellespont and happened to be there acting like robbers. He likened the encounter to a dog fight.⁷⁹ Furthermore, as another expression, we hear the author speaking of licentious acts or some vulgar characteristics of the Turks.

John Kantakouzenos (ca. 1295-1383; r. 1347-1354) left us a historical account, his *Ἱστορίαι* (Histories), a unique source which was written by an emperor describing the events of his own reign.⁸⁰ The only edition of the work was done by Ludvig Schopen in 1828 in three volumes.⁸¹ Comprised of four books covering the period between 1320 and 1356, his own manuscript must have been completed in around 1369 while he was living in retirement as a monk.⁸²

⁷⁸ Kazhdan, "L'histoire de Cantacuzène en tant qu'œuvre littéraire," 320-325.

⁷⁹ Gregoras, vol. I, 535.

⁸⁰ See Kazhdan, "L'Histoire de Cantacuzène en tant qu'œuvre littéraire," 279-335. Also see Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460*.

⁸¹ The English translations of some parts of the *Histories* by Kantakouzenos are as follows: Miller, *The History of John Cantacuzenus (Book IV): Text, translation and commentary*; Trone, *The History of John Kantakouzenos: Text, translation and commentary (Book I)* hereafter "Kantakouzenos, trans. Trone;" McLaughlin, *An annotated translation of John Kantakouzenos' Histories, Book III, chapters 1-30* hereafter "Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin." For a broad overview of political developments as well as his writings in general, see Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk, c. 1295-1383*.

⁸² Neville, *Guide to Byzantine historical writing*, 266-272.

After supporting Andronikos III against his grandfather Andronikos II during the civil war (1321-1328), Kantakouzenos became *megas domestikos* (the head of the army) following the deposition of Andronikos II. He became a leading figure in Andronikos III's court until the latter's sudden death in 1341, when a six-year-long civil war broke out between Andronikos's widow Anna of Savoy and Alexios Apokaukos in Constantinople ruling as regents of the nine-year-old John V Palaiologos on the one hand and John Kantakouzenos claiming for the throne in Didymoteichon on the other hand.

His monumental work has been regarded as an apologia, not exactly in the form of memoirs since it shares features from narrative histories of late Byzantine historiography.⁸³ The entire testimony to one of the most important parts of Byzantine history is narrated from the prism of a man who apparently justifies his actions and presents failures but with an emphasis on the prevailing role of the greedy opponents or disadvantageous circumstances.⁸⁴ Self-insertion of the author in the narrative and conscious omission of some historical events leads the reader to a more critical perspective while approaching the work.

Kantakouzenos had a lack of interest in the affairs of other countries.⁸⁵ He incorporated topics on foreign powers so long as they related to the history of Byzantium and mostly if they went around himself.

Kantakouzenos was a man of diplomacy. His skill in forming friendships and alliances was not only explained by himself but it was also pointed out by his

⁸³ Angelou, "Subversion and duplicity in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos," 263-79; Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin, 19-20.

⁸⁴ A general literature on the author and his work in question has recently been compiled in a PhD dissertation. See Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin, 14-94.

⁸⁵ Laiou, "Italy and the Italians in the political geography of the Byzantines (14th Century)," 82-83.

contemporaries.⁸⁶ During the civil war of 1341-1347, the regency government in Constantinople was backed by the Bulgarians, whereas Kantakouzenos had an alliance with Umur. We find Kantakouzenos in the later years of the civil war trying to consolidate his power by seeking further allies among the Turks, primarily the Ottomans.⁸⁷

His narrative circles around a central concern: personal recollections. It has been argued that there are many places in Kantakouzenos's history where one can read his testimony in a "distorted mirror," which was transmitted through his skillful adaptation of classical texts. Written in classicizing high style, not in a much-elaborated style though, he utilized explanatory speeches reminiscent of Thucydides.⁸⁸ The *Historiai* provides useful information in diplomatic history of the Byzantine Empire in the fourteenth century. What partly differs from other historians of his age is the use of direct speech. This presents in many places an opportunity to learn about dialogues that possibly took place during diplomatic encounters. Throughout the source, the author reports many speeches performed or messages delivered by envoys. Kantakouzenos reflects his own views via various speakers and their standpoints instead of directly making a point.⁸⁹

Besides diplomatic communications with Orhan, which constitute our main concern here, several missions to the Serbian court, contacts with the Pope in 1347,

⁸⁶ The events of the period are narrated in Enverî's *Düsturname*. Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le destân d'Umûr pacha (Düsturname-i Enverî)*; Öztürk, *Fatih devri kaynaklarından Düstûrnâme-i Enverî. Osmanlı Tarihi kısmı (1299-1466)*.

⁸⁷ Kantakouzenos mentions these alliances. For example, in Kantakouzenos, II, 498-499. See also Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin, 325 and Weiss, *Joannes Kantakouzenos: Aristokrat, staatsmann, kaiser und mönch in der gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14. jahrhundert*.

⁸⁸ Mango, "Byzantine literature as a distorting mirror." See Kazhdan, "L'Histoire de Cantacuzene en tant qu'oeuvre littéraire," 279-335. For a recent analysis on the influence of Thucydidean style on the late Byzantine historians, see also Kennedy and Kaldellis, "Thucydides in Byzantium," 258-259.

⁸⁹ Angelou, "Subversion and duplicity in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos," 264.

and exchange of letters and embassies with the Mamluk sultan in 1349 are among other prominent records in Kantakouzenos's work.⁹⁰

Kantakouzenos depicts his attitude toward the 'barbarians' and evaluates his foreign policy by pointing out his strong image in the eyes of the neighboring powers. Speaking of the bad straits that the Byzantines were faced with, Kantakouzenos describes the situation in his address to the public as follows:

Each one of us must reflect and bring forward some plan which will improve the situation and which will free us both from the present evil and that which is yet to come. For the Triballians, along with the Mysians and the Persians, and whatever other realms border on ours are not content with what they seized during the hostilities, but once they have come to despise us, they certainly will not wish to check their desire for gain. I would be very happy to see that day come on which we could punish those people who have committed all those outrages against us. Even during the war, I did not choose an alliance with barbarians against Romans willingly, but I was forced to do this by those who were making war. For they readily offered cities and country districts and persuaded the Triballians, the Mysians, and whomever else they could, to wage war on me with all their might. Moreover, the barbarians knew in their hearts that, if I came to power, they would not only acquire none of our territory, but they would be forced to return what had been seized. But, if the others gained power, they would use them like slaves. For these reasons they fought together vehemently. At all events, my opponents did not last long without trying the Persians. They first introduced them as allies against me, and later, not once or twice but many times, they attempted to provoke war against me by handing over much money and promising much too. In the face of such force from enemies surrounding me on all sides, and without any force of my own, I was very much afraid that the enemy would take as allies those whom they had not as yet contacted. I was forced to look on an alliance and friendship with these barbarians as a desirable goal.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Korobeinikov, "Diplomatic correspondence between Byzantium and the Mamluk Sultanate in the fourteenth century," 61-64; Kantakouzenos, trans. Miller, 381-387. See also, Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin, 34 ff.

⁹¹ Kantakouzenos, trans. Miller, 173-174. In the commentary, Miller gives us the whole picture in a nutshell: "Cantacuzenus here attempts to defend his reliance upon Umur and his Turkish soldiers who saved the emperor in the military operations of 1343. It was only as a result of Umur's support that Cantacuzenus was able to return to Didymoteichus from the West and regain the upper hand in Thrace. Turkish troops were resented by the Byzantines as non-Christians and, as Cantacuzenus admits, they caused great damage by destroying fields and capturing peasants for the slave market. Cantacuzenus maintains here that Anna's advisors were the first to introduce Turkish troops into the conflict. Previously, in an embassy to Anna sent from Berrhoia in 1343 the emperor had claimed that Apokaukos first brought Turkish auxiliaries into Europe in the spring of 1343. However, both Gregoras and Cantacuzenus report the sudden appearance of Umur's troops in the winter of 1342-43

During his public speech shortly after he was crowned in Constantinople, Kantakouzenos mentions conspiracies and plots against his rule and tries to justify his authority by underlining his rightness and his private contributions to peace in the empire.⁹² Some modern historians viewed Kantakouzenos's deeds in a positive framework. According to Donald M. Nicol, he "tried to save the ship of the Byzantine church and state before it plunged headlong into the final hundred years of its millennial existence."⁹³

Kantakouzenos explains the reason behind his diplomatic efforts in 1341-1342. Kantakouzenos here elucidates how he handled the situation after the emperor's death. All his efforts aimed to provide security for the empress while he went to military campaigns to the West. He claims that he did not want the empress to be bothered by troublesome wars by the neighboring Turks.⁹⁴ Whether it is a self-justification or not, one should consider his intention when trying to understand the treaty with Orhan. He told us that he concluded treaties with the neighboring barbarians. The following quotation from his account depicts his purpose well:

(...) there is nobody at all who could claim that I preferred some private interest of my own should prevail over what was beneficial to the public. But I made peace with some, benefiting the commonwealth, and I was preparing to make war on others on their [the public's] behalf, without suspecting danger from those close to me.⁹⁵

which brought an end to the siege of Didymoteichus by the anti-Cantacuzenists. The account of the Turkish chronicler, Enveri, reports an embassy sent from Cantacuzenus to Umur in the fall of 1342. As Lemerle suggests, it seems unlikely that Umur would appear at a crucial point in the military operations of Thrace, namely the siege of Didymoteichus, without some call for help. However, Lemerle suspects that the embassy came not directly from Cantacuzenus as Enveri states, but from the Cantacuzenists besieged in Didymoteichus, though perhaps at the suggestion of the emperor." Kantakouzenos, trans. Miller, 294-295.

⁹² Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 74-78. Matthew Kantakouzenos says that his father was forced to call barbarians, as Gregoras narrated. Gregoras, vol. III, 207.

⁹³ Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk*, c. 1295-1383, 4.

⁹⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 88.

⁹⁵ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 210.

The time gap that begins from the mid-14th century onwards following the histories of Gregoras and Kantakouzenos, Byzantine historiographical tradition is interrupted for about a century until the composition of the histories of four distinguished historians -all representing post-Byzantine contexts in one sense- namely Doukas, Chalkokondyles, Kritoboulos, and Sphrantzes. The writings of these authors represent the final examples of a long tradition of drawing up history in Byzantium.

This group of historians constitutes the second phase in late Byzantine historiography, which is represented here with the following accounts: Laonikos Chalkokondyles's *Histories*, Doukas's *Historia Turco-Byzantina*, George Sphrantzes's *Chronicon Minus*, and finally Michael Kritoboulos's *Histories*. These sources shed important light on the events of the period in question and thus they provide invaluable insights to reconstruct the diplomatic history of late Byzantium particularly because, as far as the historiography of the period is concerned, they are the richest sources especially in terms of the identification of diplomatic representatives.⁹⁶ Although all these four narratives were written much later and have many errors, both chronological and content-based, these sources are prominent due to the fact that they occasionally refer to embassies exchanged, treaties, alliances, sometimes the contents or quotations of imperial letters/speeches on particular

⁹⁶ George Sphrantzes, *Giorgio Sfranze: Cronaca*, ed. Maisano. Hereafter "Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano." English translation of the work is published by Philippides, *The fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle by George Sphrantzes, 1401-1477*. Hereafter "Sphrantzes, trans. Philippides." Ducas (Doukas), *Istoria Turco-Bizantină (1341-1462)*, ed. Grecu. Hereafter "Doukas, ed. Grecu." English translation of the work is published by Magoulias, *Decline and fall of Byzantium to the Ottomans*. Hereafter "Doukas, trans. Magoulias." Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. Darkó. Hereafter "Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó." English translation of the work is published by Kaldellis, *Laonikos Chalkokondyles. The Histories*. Hereafter "Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis." Kritoboulos, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae*, ed. Reinsch. Hereafter "Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch." English translation of the work is published by Riggs, *History of Mehmed the conqueror*. Hereafter "Kritoboulos, trans. Riggs."

occasions, and so forth. Due to their professional background in diplomacy and the fact that they took part in several diplomatic missions, what the authors of these sources provide about diplomatic encounters might have more likely reflected correct information because much of the data consist of unbiased description of the elements such as venues, conditions, and actors during the contacts in question. Sometimes sources complete each other. There are a few consistent ones, which might have derived from the use of different sources or the author's choice. Furthermore, despite the jumble that can be observed for the narratives of Doukas or Aşıkpaşazade particularly for the 1390s, I compared the references with other available sources. In case of scarcity of other sources talking on a specific encounter, I tried to be critical and at the end was able to put each reference fitting into a "more reliable" chronology in the Appendix.

Our historical sources enlightening the events of the period in question reflect a consistent character in a sense that they were mostly written by authors who participated or were engaged in diplomatic contacts personally. This made the accounts of these historians much more important that they were already well acquainted with diplomatic processes and the jargon of the field. To begin with Doukas, writing in Genoese-occupied New Phokaia working as the secretary of the podestà Giovanni Adorno in the 1420s and then for the Gattilusio family in Lesbos when we see him a couple of times visiting the Ottoman court and generals for diplomatic purposes in the 1450s, represented this type of a historian. Even though most of his writings in his *Ἱστορία (Historia Turco-Byzantina)*, which covers the history between 1341 and 1462, concern more regional affairs and events mostly restricted to the region of Ionia and the realm of the Aydinoglu emirate possibly due

to the friendly relations between Kantakouzenos and the emirs of Aydin, Doukas does also give information particularly on Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic relations.

Only known by his family name, Doukas had a cultural legacy coming from his ancestors. His grandfather Michael Doukas was one of the great supporters of John VI Kantakouzenos during the civil war. The historian Doukas's dislike of the Palaiologan emperors is because they caused the flight of the Doukas family from Constantinople. Throughout his account one can observe harsh criticisms against the Palaiologoi. In addition to such a familial background, Doukas served Genoese patrons throughout his life. His historical account should not be viewed by overlooking this point.

We have little information on the life of the author. Thanks to his own writings, it is known that he was the secretary to the podestà Giovanni Adorno in Genoese New Phokaia sometime between 1405 and 1424. He had a dwelling there in 1421, at the time of Murad II's accession. Doukas himself was even entrusted with diplomatic missions to the Ottoman court several times.⁹⁷ Having composed two letters from the mouth of the podestà in Turkish to be sent to Murad II regarding the transportation of the Turkish fleet pursuing the pretender Mustafa (known as Düzme or Düzmece Mustafa in Ottoman historiography), the author was engaged in diplomatic communications from earlier onwards.⁹⁸ The account is also useful for some envoys' profiles. He gives considerable information about Theologos Korax and the grand vizier Bayezid. His experience in diplomacy is not limited with that obviously. He was employed several times either at secretarial level or as himself a

⁹⁷ See, for example, Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 44.7, 419.

⁹⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.8, 211.

messenger or an envoy.⁹⁹ As his account illustrates his good command of the field of diplomacy in action, what he presents is indeed worthy regarding our topic. We see him *inter alia* occasionally as a tribute presenter to the Ottoman sultan. Having been employed as an envoy of the Genoese podestà of Lesbos in 1455, Doukas was sent to deliver the annual tribute to Mehmed II.¹⁰⁰ The encounter bears interesting details, and it is indicative for the fact that we learn how the early Ottoman court was receiving foreign embassies.

Defending the church union, Doukas was very much in favor of the Latins. His aristocratic background reveals itself when he approaches John VI Kantakouzenos in a very positive manner. As a genuine characteristic of Doukas's work, frequent references to the diplomatic intrigues between the Byzantine and Ottoman rulers occupy a considerable place. Moreover, Doukas's narrative has a statist perspective, concentrating on military and political events. The action in the narration is almost always dominated by political actions.¹⁰¹

Contrary to Sphrantzes, whom we will mention a little later, Doukas has a vivid attitude of explaining the wraths upon the Christians by divine providence. His depictions of certain individuals are noteworthy because they can give a clue about who is praised by him and who is hated in his history. For most of the accounts he was either the first-hand source or was the one who gathered first-hand testimonies. Doukas's source of information varied from Turkish soldiers to Genoese merchants and alike thanks to his knowledge of both Turkish and Italian. His laments for the fall of Constantinople, on which he claims that he listened to the eyewitnesses, might

⁹⁹ Miller, "The historians Doukas and Phrantzes," 64.

¹⁰⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 44.1-4, 411-417.

¹⁰¹ Kinloch, "Stories of emperors, sultans, and cities: comparing protagonists in the histories of Doukas and Leonardo Bruni," 201-202. See also Kinloch, "Reframing medieval Anatolia, Caucasia, and the Aegean: Narratives, states, and cities," 6-21.

be a sign of his very negative sentiments about the Ottomans. Contrary to his general distaste of the Ottomans and their dealings, Doukas indeed constructs a relatively positive image for certain Ottoman rulers. Except for the parts in which Murad II is praised by some virtuous qualities, in several places throughout his work, Doukas reflects a very hostile attitude towards the Ottomans and Islam. His hatred particularly against Bayezid seems apparent in the work.

In the diplomatic contacts that took place during the reigns of these ‘favored’ Ottoman rulers, Doukas prefers to display the positive aspects of Murad II’s foreign policy and thus adopts a more tranquil position in his description of the events in general and the agents in particular during the reign of the Ottoman ruler. In Doukas’s representation of Murad II, the Ottoman ruler is portrayed as he kept his promises, abided by oaths given mutually, and approached peacefully not only his own people but also the Christian population.¹⁰²

Nikolaos Chalkokondyles, whose pen name was Laonikos, wrote a history comprising a detailed treatment of events starting from the creation until the mid-1460s with ethnographic and geographic descriptions of peoples and countries. His monumental work is not completed. The abrupt break in his *Ἀποδείξεις ιστοριῶν* (*Histories*) could be dated sometime between 1464 and 1468.¹⁰³ An apparent imitation or partly adaptation of the Herodotean and Thucydidean style of history writing enriched by ethnographic details can be observable throughout the work. His tendency to Neopaganism revealed itself in his preference of naming the Byzantines “Greeks.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.6, 285.

¹⁰³ Kaldellis, “The date of Laonikos Chalkokondyles’ *Histories*,” 111-136.

¹⁰⁴ Kaldellis, *A new Herodotos: Laonikos Chalkokondyles on the Ottoman Empire, the fall of Byzantium, and the emergence of the West*. See also “Introduction” in Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, esp. vii-xvi. Also see, Kennedy and Kaldellis, “Thucydides in Byzantium,” 258-259

Adopting an unbiased approach to every religion and polity and collecting a wide range of historical knowledge via different means, Chalkokondyles created a kind of world history by reserving coherent and compact parts to detailed descriptions.¹⁰⁵ When we come to the issue of diplomacy, Chalkokondyles, being quite experienced in conducting diplomatic communication in the service of the despot of the Peloponnese, has a sense of narrating each individual contact even though most of them are told in passing without providing full details. What he provides for the identities of individuals employed in the field seems satisfactory compared to other Byzantine narrative sources.

Moreover, as a Byzantine from the island of Imbros, Michael Kritoboulos had a genealogy coming from the notables of the island. Consequently, he built up a career as a scholar. Belonging to a distinguished network of intellectuals including George-Gennadios Scholarios, Kritoboulos wrote a very detailed account of the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans and treated in his book (*Ἐνυγγραφή Ἱστοριῶν*) the events between 1451 and 1467. His account reveals his experiences as a diplomat who engaged in various negotiations over the handover of several islands on the Aegean Sea to the Ottomans. Thanks to Mehmed II, to whom this account was dedicated, he was appointed as the governor of Imbros and possessed a bureaucratic career in the Ottoman state. Underlining his Greek γένος, the author portrays himself and his people as victims of misfortunes. Yet, on the other hand, his narrative has patriotic indications. In the overall assessment of his history, according to Deither Roderich Reinsch, the transition of power from the Byzantines to the Ottomans “did

and Akışık, *Self and other in the Renaissance: Laonikos Chalkokondyles and the late Byzantine intellectuals*, 4-10.

¹⁰⁵ Nicoloudis, “Observations on the possible sources of Laonikos Chalkokondyles’ *Demonstrations of Histories*,” 75-82.

not mean the opening up of an abyss of enmity, neither did it mean building a bridge of friendship and mutual understanding between Ottomans and Byzantines, between Turks and Greeks.”¹⁰⁶

Kritoboulos’s account is noteworthy because it provides details of the diplomatic occasions of the period in question. He gives further insights that some diplomatic gains of the Ottoman state allowed its eventual success against the Byzantine Empire. To give an example, according to Kritoboulos, thanks to the contribution of the annual tributes (φόροις ἐπετείοις) to the wealth of the state, Mehmed thought that his army became capable of besieging Constantinople.¹⁰⁷ There is plenty of mention regarding the diplomatic contacts between Constantine XI and Mehmed II, which illuminates how diplomacy was conducted before and during the siege of Constantinople.¹⁰⁸

As the last Byzantine narrator to be used in this thesis, George Sphrantzes was an experienced man in the field of diplomacy from his earlier age. Having entered the service of Manuel II at an early age in 1418 as in charge of the emperor’s chamber, he occupied a busy role between several courts. While the authentic *Chronicon Minus* was written by Sphrantzes, *Chronicon Maius* was the work of a sixteenth century author Makarios Melissenos, the metropolitan of Monemvasia,¹⁰⁹ his account is situated in a manuscript that includes two distinct chronicles following each other. Sphrantzes cites various occasions and the events in which he actively participated as an ambassador. After Manuel II’s death, he became involved in the

¹⁰⁶ Reinsch, “Kritobulos of Imbros – Learned historian, Ottoman raya and Byzantine patriot,” 297-311, the quotation is from p. 308. See also the introductory chapters in Reinsch’s edition of Kritoboulos’s *History*.

¹⁰⁷ Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, 33-34.

¹⁰⁸ Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, 19-21.

¹⁰⁹ Loenertz, “Autor de *Chronicon Maius* attribué à Georges Phrantzes,” 273-311.

emperor's son and future emperor Constantine's circle and consequently became a very close friend and a diplomat for the latter.¹¹⁰ His account indeed is full of occasions proving that. Throughout the work, it seems undeniable that Sphrantzes generally admired the last Byzantine emperor and his deeds. In overall, Sphrantzes's *Chronicon Minus* is important for my study because it bears personal testimony of an active Byzantine diplomat. The *Chronicon Minus*, covering the period between 1401 and 1477 (the events of 1401-1412 are summarized) also includes a prologue. The contents of the work has been accepted that they are based on his personal diary with not many details about historical events, whereas the *Chronicon Maius*, a later compilation by Melissenos is an extended version of the previous one with more digressions about the Ottomans. He elaborated Sphrantzes's work by providing more details on the Palaiologan dynasty, the siege and Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, and the political history of the Morea. The *Chronicon Maius* is also known as Pseudo-Sphrantzes.¹¹¹ Despite the fact that he was described as a plagiarist and a counterfeiter, Makarios must be considered as a prominent literary figure. His way of narrating the events show that he is not just a direct translator of the sources he used, such as Bishop Leonardo Giustiniani's account on the siege of Constantinople, but he also elaborated on them.¹¹² However, due to matters of

¹¹⁰ Sphrantzes explains his career after the death of Manuel II. See Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 15, 30-36.

¹¹¹ Dölger, "Ein literarischer und diplomatischer Fälscher des 16. Jahrhunderts: Metropolit Makarios von Monembasia," 25-36; Neville, *Guide to Byzantine historical writing*, 302-303.

¹¹² The problem of the "originality" of the siege section of *Chronicon Maius* was first raised by Margaret Carroll in a series of articles: Carroll, "Notes on the Authorship of the 'siege' section of the *Chronicon Maius* of Pseudo-Phrantzes, Book III, 1. Corresponding omissions in the *Maius* and *Minus*," 28-44; Carroll, "Notes on the authorship of the 'siege' section of the *Chronicon Maius* of Pseudo-Phrantzes, Book III, 3. Comparison of interpolations," 5-22; Carroll, "Notes on the authorship of the 'siege' section of the *Chronicon Maus* of Pseudo-Phrantzes, Book III, IV. The significance of discontinuity in the *Minus*," 30-38. Carroll's views are rejected by Philippides, "The fall of Constantinople: Bishop Leonard and the Greek accounts," 289-290.

reliability and the fact that it was composed much later, *Chronicon Maius* has not been used in this thesis.

The autobiographical quality of *Chronicon Minus* reveals many details about the author's experience in diplomatic occasions, which contributes considerably to the knowledge of the period's diplomatic practices. The work's plain and more or less chronological order devoid of digressions and pretensions does not present the events by emphasizing the role of divine providence as opposed to Makarios's style, which claims as a traditional Byzantine way that the God's wrath occurred due to the sins of the Christians living in the Empire.

Coming from the well-known family of Sphrantzes, George Sphrantzes's father and uncle served as tutors for several imperial members. Various other members of the Sphrantzes family have been attested in the fifteenth century. Among them there were two σύγκλητοι (members of the senate at Constantinople).¹¹³ Sphrantzes, a close friend of Constantine XI Palaiologos, actually served the last three Byzantine emperors.¹¹⁴ For that regard, what he composed is one of the vivid narratives of the empire's last decades. As a significant example of a historian-diplomat, the author draws attention to the prominent developments of his age. In 1432, he was given the title of *protovestiarios*. After serving John VIII Palaiologos, Sphrantzes became a close associate of the despot of the Morea, Constantine, the ultimate Byzantine emperor, for whom he led some embassies to the Ottoman court and to Constantinople.

Sphrantzes's visit to the Ottoman court of Murad II in 1424 constituted one of the greatest steps in his career because he became known to the Ottoman court by

¹¹³ Laurent, "Sphrantzès et non Phrantzès: à nouveau!" 170-171.

¹¹⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 15.5, 34.

this mission, which might have prepared his second employment to the Ottomans five years later.¹¹⁵ The following short list of Sphrantzes's experiences in diplomatic missions may reveal his engagement in the field: He travelled to Murad II as an ambassador in 1429, he was sent to Lesbos to negotiate the marriage alliance between Constantine XI and Dorino Gattilusio in 1440, he visited Murad II's court as ambassador in 1444, he was employed as ambassador to Murad II and submitted for approval the selection of Constantine as the emperor in 1448, and in the following year he travelled to Georgia and Trebizond in search of a marriage alliance for Constantine. He continued to serve as a diplomat after 1453. In 1455, he travelled to Venice as an ambassador for the despot Thomas of the Morea.¹¹⁶

Sphrantzes uses "less emotional" expressions when he depicts the Ottoman rulers. For example, he describes Mehmed II as God's executioner. Sphrantzes's "soft" style in identifying particularly Mehmed II might have derived from his personal memories and experience with regard to the sultan. Once Constantinople was lost to Mehmed's troops, Sphrantzes and his family were confined, later on his son was executed. As is also known, he had a daughter named Tamara, who was taken into the harem of Mehmed II and became one of his wives in 1456.¹¹⁷

To sum up, we can make a sweeping overview. The historical narratives of Doukas and Sphrantzes present a dramatic confrontation between the Byzantines' troubles and almost permanent Ottoman onslaughts. They both mainly concentrate on political and military aspects of the events of the period despite occasional

¹¹⁵ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.

¹¹⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 37.10, 146; trans. Philippides, Book 37.10, 75.

¹¹⁷ Sphrantzes, trans. Philippides, "Introduction," 10-13; Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, table XXVII. Although Alderson's study has been criticized in various points, it still constitutes an important contribution. See Pierce, *The imperial harem: Women and sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, 15, f.n. 1 (292).

chronological errors. Sometimes authors tell a full conversation during a diplomatic negotiation, the contents of letters in detail or particular expressions of the agents at the time of reception. Sometimes, the accounts give information on how an envoy required his master's consent and final approval upon a particular diplomatic request.¹¹⁸ The encounters provide us clues about the practice of rituals, swearing pledges, the customs, and hierarchy and so on about the conduct of diplomatic communication. Besides all these, in addition, Doukas's and Chalkokondyles's accounts give us many aspects of diplomatic communications that will be considered in writing my thesis: the limits of accomplishment, physical difficulties that envoys encountered, ideal ambassadors or qualities of ambassadors, and so on.

Moreover, regarding the particularities of these four main fifteenth century histories, we may make some further comments. Chalkokondyles's text among them seems more superficial when it comes to the agents who took part in diplomatic correspondence, whereas Doukas and Sphrantzes are more precise, and they more frequently provide names of individuals engaged in diplomatic activities. However, one can find more references to individual diplomatic contacts in Chalkokondyles and Sphrantzes than in Doukas. On the other hand, it is sometimes very hard to distinguish the terms of an agreement, for instance, from an event unrelated to a diplomatic contact. The primary sources may not put a clear distinction between the two. While explaining the requirements of a treaty, the narratives may digress by presenting another phenomenon that did not have any connection with the treaty in question. This may lead the reader to make wrong assumptions. In order to avoid

¹¹⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 43.1-5, 401-405.

such a possibility, one needs to distinguish each reference by comparing it with other sources as well.

Apart from the histories, which sometimes were embedded in rhetorical practices of the authors in question (e.g. the histories of John VI Kantakouzenos, that have been treated so far, in fact, the instruments of the history of Byzantine diplomacy show a great variety. This thesis, albeit the narrative histories as its main genre of primary sources, utilizes some other genres, too. Among them comes the epistolographic sources. Although letters are imbued with rhetorical expressions, details or sequence of events or traces of individual experiences can be observed in letters. They can also be revealing for the field of diplomatic communications of the Byzantine Empire in the Palaiologan period as some letter collections, such as the one of Manuel II Palaiologos, present excellent examples of the coexistence of public and private faces of the parties in correspondence.¹¹⁹

Moreover, despite its scarcity in the final centuries of Byzantine Empire, the late Byzantine official documents can be counted among the important genres. The official records do not show a uniformity because most of them were lost and could not reach our time. Nevertheless, some official documents are helpful in reconstructing particular phases of the Byzantine diplomatic communications.

Traveler accounts, in addition, present various instances in which we as readers are provided with different aspects of political or cultural phenomena that played an important role in the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic encounter. In this regard, the accounts of Ibn Battuta, Clavijo, and some others illuminate both

¹¹⁹ Mullett, "Epistolography," 882-893.

Byzantine and Ottoman practice by describing especially venues in which diplomatic delegations were accepted.¹²⁰

Short chronicles constitute another genre. As the chronological notes, they appear on the margins or blank folia of a Greek manuscript. These brief historical evidence mention significant moments in history, mostly events and prominent developments, with sometimes-invaluable data regarding the diplomatic history of Byzantium.

Until this very moment, this part has attempted to make an overview of the histories that were created in Byzantine -or post-Byzantine- contexts with inclusion of the works written up until the 1470s at the latest. At this point, it is time to describe important particularities of the Ottoman sources. All in all, the primary sources for the early confrontation of the Byzantine Empire with the then-small Turcoman principality of the Ottomans do not inform the historian much about the diplomatic contacts performed on behalf of the rulers. The low intensity of the diplomatic activity was perhaps the actual case for the first half of the fourteenth century. The Ottoman sources are quite rich in presenting a lively picture of Ottoman diplomatic relations with local Byzantine authorities.¹²¹ The scarcity of evidence is observable in the Ottoman sources in pointing out the embassies exchanged between the two centers of power. Due to limited information on early Ottoman history in contemporary Byzantine sources, today's Byzantine historians tend to use Ottoman historical sources more frequently. These Ottoman sources, mainly comprised of chronicles, were mostly products of Bayezid II's project of composing the history of

¹²⁰ See Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 229-230.

¹²¹ This topic is discussed in Chapter 2 under the title "Diplomacy conducted in the periphery/ borderlands." Among the Ottoman sources, Neşrî's chronicle is the richest one presenting the events along the borderlands between Byzantium and the Ottomans in a more detailed manner.

the Ottomans in the late fifteenth century. The time gap between the actual events and the time they were narrated in these sources creates a challenge for the modern historian and compels her to tackle the reliability of their contents. At any rate, this does not affect the value of these Ottoman sources in so far as they are used cautiously.¹²²

An important historian of the period is Enveri. Working in various positions in the Ottoman government, he participated in several wars and campaigns. Written in masnavi-style verses in 1465, his work *Düsturname* is regarded as one of the earliest sources of Ottoman history. It is the most important account for the history of Aydinoglu emirate. Umur Beg's campaigns and victories are treated in great detail in the work.¹²³

Tursun Beg, a well-known *yazıcı* during the reign of Mehmed II, wrote an illustrious history on the conquests of the Ottoman ruler with a particular emphasis on Constantinople.¹²⁴ Born into an illustrious family sometime after 1426, he obtained several positions, especially ones related to financial issues, in the government. He composed diplomatic letters to various correspondents including Ismail Beg of Isfendiyar. Tursun Beg found a chance to hear many important decisions right in the Divan. He witnessed many of the events -such as the siege of Constantinople, and later conquests and campaigns of Mehmed II further west and

¹²² Namely, in versions of the anonymous *Tevârih-i Âli Osman*, the reigns of the first two Ottoman rulers do not present reliable information, because the events are narrated as obscure and complicated. Özcan, "Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân," 579-581. The Ottoman historians of the fifteenth century were affected by the overwhelming politics, assumptions and ideologies of their time. For the arguments on the modern scholarship on Aşıkpaşazade and Neşrî, see İnalçık, "The rise of Ottoman historiography," 152-167; Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, "The sources," 60-117; Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid. Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 23.

¹²³ Mëlikoff, *Le destan d'Umur Pacha (Düsturname-i Enveri)*; Öztürk, *Fatih devri kaynaklarından Düsturname-i Enveri: Osmanlı Tarihi kısmı (1299-1466)*.

¹²⁴ Tursun Beg, İnalçık and Rhoads (eds.), *The History of Mehmed the conqueror by Tursun Beg. Facsimile of the Ottoman text with English translation*; Tulum (ed.), *Tursun Bey. Târîh-i Ebü'l-Feth*.

north into the Balkans- that he describes in his account.¹²⁵ His benefactor and patron Mahmud Paşa is treated in good terms in the account. While he describes the conquest of Egriboz, he ascribes the Ottoman success to his patron without any recognition to Rum Mehmed Paşa.¹²⁶

Tursun Beg's work, titled as *Târîh-i Ebü'l-Feth* and probably completed after 1488, aims in a sense to serve as a guide to administrators in the proper management of state affairs. In this regard, his work belongs to advice literary genre. His work underlines particular attention to the notion of justice and protection of the reaya class. Geographical descriptions add more value to the work. Written in official literary prose style in the late fifteenth century, *Târîh-i Ebü'l-Feth* represents one of the first examples of the fifteenth century Ottoman historical writing. It influenced the contents of a prominent work by Kemal Paşa-zade (book 7), who seems to have based on Tursun's work while writing the section about Mehmed II's reign. Interestingly, he did not mention some failures and defeats.

Aşıkpaşazade is an important chronicler of the early Ottoman historiography. This man of a sufi origin was closely engaged in dervish lodges and thus inherited the sufi culture.¹²⁷ Actively participated in many military activities, he witnessed how the gaza became the principal element in the Ottoman conquests against the Christian *oikoumene*. His chronicle that must have been completed possibly around the late 1470s is considered crucial to understand the early Ottoman state and

¹²⁵ İnalçık and Murphey (eds.), *The History of Mehmed the conqueror by Tursun Beg. Facsimile of the Ottoman text with English translation*, 14-16.

¹²⁶ İnalçık, "Tursun Beg, Historian of Mehmed the conqueror's time," 55-71; İnan, "Fatih'in tarihçisi Tursun Bey ve Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth üzerine bazı notlar," 145-156.

¹²⁷ For a recent contribution to the biography of the author, see Beydilli, "Âşıkpaşazâde Derviş Ahmed Âşıkî'ya dair biyografik katkılar," 161-180.

society.¹²⁸ Among the sources of Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle entitled *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, a chronicle of Yahşi Fakih occupies a central role. Aşıkpaşazade transmits the events at least down to the reign of Bayezid I from that source.¹²⁹ There is the conflict between the gazi-sufi elite and the newly emerged learned elite throughout his work. Clearly representing a critical perspective towards Mehmed II's policies on the land use and taxation, Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle sides with the former group since he was negatively influenced by these newly executed decisions. His intentional selection of events and cases from the early sultans' reigns aims to indicate their modesty or other notions as opposed to Mehmed II's unfavourable approaches and implications.¹³⁰ In particular, for instance, Aşıkpaşazade emphasizes the 'justice' of Bayezid as a kind of nostalgic thing, which did not exist at the time of his composition of the work.¹³¹

Another important chronicler is Neşrî, who wrote slightly later than Aşıkpaşazade, constitutes the second major Ottoman source in the thesis.¹³² The self-portrait of the author has not been clearly unveiled. A few certain things can be deduced about his life based on what he wrote: he belonged to the ulema and accompanied the Ottoman army, as it was the case in Gebze, when Mehmed II died.¹³³ Completed his *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ* during the early years of Bayezid II's reign, Neşrî benefited mainly from both Aşıkpaşazade's text and Oxford Anonymous

¹²⁸ *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman. Âşık Pâşâzâde Târîhî*, ed. Âli Bey; *Osmanlı Tarihleri I*, ed. Atsız. The references in the thesis are given according to both editions. Hereafter "Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey," and "Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Atsız."

¹²⁹ Ménage, "The 'Menâqib' of Yâkshî Faqîh," 50-54.

¹³⁰ Kafadar, *Between two worlds. The construction of the Ottoman State*, 86-87, 145-146; İnalçık, "How to read 'Âshık Pasha-Zâde's History,'" 139-156, esp. 143-147.

¹³¹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 64-65; Atsız, bâb 59, 136.

¹³² Mehmed Neşrî, *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ – Neşrî Tarihi*, Unat and Köymen (Eds.). Hereafter "Neşrî."

¹³³ Ménage, *Neshrî's History of the Ottomans: The sources and development of the text*, 4-5.

Chronicle particularly on the early years of the Ottoman state. It has also genuine details, which indicates that the author made use of other sources as well.

This point brings us to the important source of the commonly known period of the Interregnum (1402-1413). As one of the major sources of Neşrî's chronicle, a specific section in the Oxford Anonymous Chronicle was most probably completed shortly after the end of the civil strife among Bayezid's sons. The title of the work has been suggested by Dimitris Kastritsis, who thinks that the source probably had been titled as "*Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥammed bin Bāyezīd Hān* (The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan)" and that it has been preserved intact in the Oxford manuscript since it contains many details about the events of the time.¹³⁴ The importance of the work lies on the ground that it represents an excellent piece of the early Ottoman historiography and mainly treats the political struggle following the battle of Ankara. In this regard, it puts in invaluable information on the relations between the shifting authority of the Ottomans and the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos's court.¹³⁵

The chronicles of Aşıkpaşazade and Neşrî varied in some topics. While Aşıkpaşazade adopts and narrates harsh criticisms about the family of Çandarlı, Neşrî tries to give them credit in his work. Despite their differences, they have

¹³⁴ Cengiz and Yücel, "Rûhî Târîhi," 359-472+unnumbered facsimile folia. Kastritsis, *The tales of Sultan Mehmed, son of Bayezid Khan [Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥammed bin Bāyezīd Hān]* includes a Turkish transliteration of the source and an annotated English translation. According to Kastritsis, the source has been mistakenly identified as "Rûhî Tarihi" by the publishers, who associated the work with a later author. See also Kastritsis, "The historical epic *Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥammed* (The tales of Sultan Mehmed) in the context of early Ottoman historiography," 1-22. Due to the deficiencies of the publication by Cengiz and Yücel, in the Appendix, the reader will find references to Kastritsis's publication.

¹³⁵ Kastritsis, *An early Ottoman history: The Oxford Anonymous Chronicle* (Bodleian Library, Ms Marsh 313), 1-42.

common perspectives in many other topics such as the image of Timur in their chronicles. They both associate him with evilness and cruelty.¹³⁶

All in all, the Byzantine Greek sources constitute the essential ground for our knowledge of the early interactions between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. On the other hand, in the later parts of this encounter, the sources varied. Both the fifteenth century “post-Byzantine” Greek sources and the fifteenth and early sixteenth century Ottoman narratives throw important light on the topic in question. Regarding the later Greek sources such as Chalkokondyles and our Ottoman sources illuminating the early period of the Ottoman state, there were mutual interactions. There are strong indications that they had common source material despite the difference in language.¹³⁷

1.5 Methodology

The diplomatic relations between the two polities can be studied from so many aspects; however, I will focus on some of them. One needs to ascertain that the issue of diplomacy is a question of the field of international relations. It is necessary to have a glimpse of the methods of the field at the outset.¹³⁸

First of all, *realpolitik* was one of the approaches of the Byzantine emperors that they pursued with regard to the Ottomans. Their major purpose often turned out to put an end to their expansion. The tendencies could thus be depended on the current circumstances and pragmatic concerns, but not ideological presumptions. The

¹³⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 77; ed. Atsız, bâb 67, 143; Neşrî, vol. I, 346, 356.

¹³⁷ See Akışık-Karakullukçu and Kastritsis, “Narrating Ottoman politics in the fifteenth century: Perspectives from some Byzantine and Ottoman histories,” 35-57.

¹³⁸ For a general introduction of key concepts of the field, see Jervis, “International politics and diplomatic history: Fruitful differences,” 1-12.

term known as political realism had its origins there. It does not pay attention to human nature but lay its focus on the role of international system.

As viewed by the classical realists, states all by themselves tried to seek their interests and establish a domination over other states and underlines that in such a world would consist of multiple powers each trying to keep the balance-of-power. In this system, less powerful states would eventually try to pursue a balance toward more powerful ones. This can partly be observed in our case. In its preliminary stages as a political actor in the region, the Ottoman emirate targeted to balance the Byzantine power long established throughout the region of Bithynia. Such occasions existed in the entire period of mutual encounter. The powerful state would determine and pursue its own pragmatic foreign policy based on its national interests. It was the case for Byzantine diplomacy, which aimed to survive among other competing and challenging powers by conducting varying diplomatic ways and methods.¹³⁹ For the realist perspective, the importance lies on the domestic politics, which can explain the choices and actions taken by the rulers. In this sense, Byzantine Empire had multiple topics that could be operative in domestic affairs, such as the church, cultural norms, or other sui generis features. All these could have impact on the outcome once the state approached to a certain state party.

Apart from realism, the theory of constructivism can help us reconstruct the issue of Byzantine diplomatic approaches toward the Ottomans. Constructivism offers an alternative way of explaining the international politics and comes up with an idea that challenges realism. What constructivists argue is that the ideas, norms and values could shape the state's international politics, which at the end could be

¹³⁹ Walt, "International relations: One world, many theories," 31.

determined by the elite, collective and cultural norms and social identities. According to this theory, these norms led the political actors in question to act in a particular way. It becomes thus a matter of self-identification of various groups operating in the society. Moreover, the theory underlines the capacity of change in interests and identities, which may bring about shifts to states' paradigms. This change is dependable on time. In other words, the actions are sifted through and made according to historical experience.¹⁴⁰ In this framework according to constructivist model, Byzantine Empire's foreign diplomacy toward the Ottomans may have showed a diversity depending on the prevailing ideas as voiced and pursued by each emperor or individual who happened to be involved in international decision-making processes or entrusted with diplomatic missions.

In fact, the neighbors of the Byzantine Empire have shown a wide range of differences that compelled modern historians to handle each diplomatic encounter locally. As indicated by Jonathan Shepard, a clear distinction should be made between the empire's northern and western neighbors on the one hand and the Muslim neighbors on the other.¹⁴¹ Shepard's emphasis particularly rests on the tenth to twelfth century Byzantium, yet his statement is also valid for the later centuries of the empire. Both the religious and the cultural variations, the role of the state in question within the broad context of regional/world politics, and the scale of the communications had an impact on alternative interpretations and conducts of diplomacy.

¹⁴⁰ Walt, "International relations: One world, many theories," 38-41. See also Pihlainen, *The work of History: Constructivism and politics of the past*.

¹⁴¹ Shepard, "Information, disinformation and delay in Byzantine diplomacy," 233-293.

Initially, the empirical data for our theme are collected from primary sources, almost exclusively available in the Byzantine Greek and Ottoman Turkish languages. Since the quantity of the Byzantine or Ottoman archival documents is close to nothing, historiographical narratives have become the main sources of information for late Byzantium.¹⁴² The amount of knowledge has allowed us to draw an extensive layout and provided every occasion of diplomatic contact that varied in frequency. At the same time, while collecting our data, as the next step, it is necessary to make a discourse analysis. Each historical source reflects different priorities, drawbacks, and also advantages sometimes. At that level, both Byzantine and Ottoman sources have been criticized and evaluated according to their points of view and thus their alternating narrations of events. While I tried to do an in-depth analysis for all Byzantine contemporary narrative sources, for the Ottoman sources the reader may realize that they are fewer and presented by restricted critical assessment. This is followed by an interpretation of the data in terms of the particularities and components of each diplomatic encounter.

In order to be able to see the total history of the diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state, we need to handle the topic from its very beginning to the last day of Byzantine Constantinople. This may provide possibilities for making a comparative analysis.

In this study, the description of diplomatic encounters, the diplomats in charge, the aims and means of diplomacy are tried to be obtained by comparing the available historical sources. The units of comparison could sometimes reflect interesting varieties and occasionally help us confirm one mention of a specific

¹⁴² Kaldellis, "The corpus of Byzantine historiography: An interpretive essay," 211.

contact. The horizontal comparison, which considers major themes and units, accompanied a vertical one that aims to follow the process of historical phenomena. Therefore, comparisons enable us to establish similarities and differences.

As the basis of the research, the data are collected and thus each encounter is detected with numerous variants in mind. The result of this research is embedded here at the end of the dissertation as an appendix, which helps to visualize and contextualize each contact. The parties/rulers in question, date, size, and purpose of embassies are indicated with reference to any individual -if possible- who was entrusted with a mission. These points are accompanied by historical references, each given in separate columns to help the reader to figure out the actual source of information.

The annalistic type of historiography did not overwhelm in Byzantium. The long tradition of historical writing is dominated by narrative histories, which consist of a series of accounts each starting at where the former ends every twenty or so years. However, this tradition breaks off after around 1360, when Gregoras and Kantakouzenos completed their histories. It was after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans when the Greek historians began once again to compose texts illuminating the time gap which is roughly the last hundred years of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁴³

It might be appropriate now to explain the methodological concerns of the thesis in a comprehensive manner in its approach toward the main primary sources of the study: narrative histories. Byzantine and Ottoman narrative histories abound in references and portrayals of sovereigns, warfare and political matters with all their connections with the ruling elite. For that reason, what to find in them is

¹⁴³ Mango, "The tradition of Byzantine chronography," 360-372; Magdalino, "Byzantine historical writing, 900-1400," 218-237.

overwhelmingly related to topics that took place in and around courts. In that regard, diplomacy and diplomatic practices of the courts are prevalent issues in these sources. Nevertheless, the evidence for diplomatic encounters are too fragmentary which entails the researcher to piece them together. The present thesis aims to consider these points while treating each narrative in its own right and avoiding any underestimation. It does not offer a narratological overview highlighting the primary sources that it exploited. However, for unveiling the prevailing dichotomies in narrative works, it is necessary to ponder for a moment and set the frame of the discussion.¹⁴⁴

The positivist idea of accepting historical references as they reflect reality has been questioned since the creators of these sources might well have had their own bias and deficiencies. Since the images that are drawn by authors could reflect personal thoughts, they should be viewed with great caution while utilizing them in our own interpretations. Therefore, uncovering the agency of the authors in the sources requires great due care.

Contemporary critiques addressing the nonprogressive empiricist models in modern Byzantine historiography gradually paved the way for alternative interpretations of the history of the Byzantine Empire in recent decades. In this thesis, inspired by theorists like Paul Ricoeur, Roland Barthes, or Gérard Genette, I intend to approach the topic from the perspective of “historiographical epistemology,” which enables to delve into the motivations and intentions of the narrators. The issue of suspicion comes into the picture and occupies the mind of the

¹⁴⁴ Byzantine historical narratives have had considerable influence over the modern historiography. For a stimulating perspective in deconstructing the role of the emperors in Doukas’s history, see Kinloch, “Stories of emperors, sultans, and cities: comparing protagonists in the histories of Doukas and Leonardo Bruni,” 196-213.

historian, because what the narratives present barely reflect a pure and “objective” observation of the past events just as they happened.¹⁴⁵ Then, this causes us to critically approach the testimonies that commonly claim to be “representing the real events.”¹⁴⁶ For that, as the narrative theorists offered, a structuralist approach could be adopted so that the literary aspects of the texts may be displayed.¹⁴⁷ Many scholars have written about the role of the author in designing the perception of the past. Pointing to the narrative discourse prevailed in a text, Alun Munslow tries to explain how history is an authored narrative.¹⁴⁸

Historiography is one of the genres, which leans on the long tradition of storytelling. The stories told could be real or fictional. The central function of a narrative line in a text reveals itself throughout the work. Authors could select an event or a series of events as the main skeleton around which they build up their narratives. This model of framing the narrative is largely observed in late Byzantine and early Ottoman historiography.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Ricoeur, *Memory, history, forgetting*, 131.

¹⁴⁶ One example may suffice to reveal this widespread argument. Kritoboulos of Imbros states at the beginning of his work that he will mention the events of the period “exactly as they occurred.” He promises his reader that he shall show “the utmost care to tell the truth.” Kritoboulos, trans. Riggs, 10.

¹⁴⁷ The leading articles of the field are as follows: Ševčenko, “Two varieties of historical writing,” 332-345; Haldon, “On the structuralist approach to the social history of Byzantium,” 203-211; Haldon, “‘Jargon’ vs. ‘the facts’? Byzantine history-writing and contemporary debates,” 95-132; Mullett, “Dancing with deconstructionists in the gardens of the Muses: new literary history vs ?” 258-75; Mullett, “Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the revival of fiction,” 1-28; Bourbouhakis, “To flutter or to crawl? Ihor Ševčenko and the ‘two varieties of historical writing’,” 232-244. For an overview of storytelling in Byzantium, see Messis and Nilsson, “Byzantine storytelling and modern narratology: An introduction,” 1-11.

¹⁴⁸ Munslow, *Narrative and History*, 60-63.

¹⁴⁹ Bourbouhakis and Nilsson, “Byzantine narrative: The form of storytelling in Byzantium,” 267. Regarding the statist perspective of Doukas in his *History*, see Kinloch, “Reframing medieval Anatolia, Caucasia, and the Aegean: Narratives, states, and cities,” 6-21. On the state-centered perspective in early Ottoman historiography, see a recent study by Mengüç, “Histories of Bayezid I, historians of Bayezid II: Rethinking late fifteenth-century Ottoman historiography,” 374-378. For early Ottoman historiography, see the following pioneering studies: Ménage, “The beginnings of Ottoman historiography,” 168-179; Ménage, “The Menāqib of Yakhshi Faqih,” 50-54; İnalçık, “How to read ‘Āshık Pasha-Zāde’s History,” 139-156.

Regarding the study of the available narratives used in this thesis, to avoid totalizing interpretation of narratives and taking their contents at face value, the key approach lies in the thoughts of the structuralists. In other words, we need to get into the world of the minds of the authors to deconstruct their texts and reveal the hidden meaning. It will thus be possible to grasp the real structure of the primary sources, which, at the end, enables us to see to what extent a modern historian can utilize these sources.¹⁵⁰

In this thesis, while investigating the narratives in question, I always benefited from the ideas of structuralist historians. In that regard, the “boundaries” of a narrative can be rendered as exclusions and restrictive conditions. The discourse disguised in depictions of events unfolds many subjective perspectives and leads the historian to approach the primary sources with doubts in mind. The historiographic tradition that has been famously voiced by Roland Barthes as the narrative turn in social sciences has raised suspicions about the credibility of primary sources and therefore has brought about questions of human experience and subjectivity. Thanks to him and the following scholars who contributed to the explanation of narrative style of writing and its pitfalls, historians now became aware of the concept.¹⁵¹ If we ask “why” the events took place at a certain moment in time, the historical narratives’ explanatory sequence reveal itself and eventually manifests a character of a construction. The role of narrator behind the reflection of the past, at that point, becomes something that consists of self-conscious or random selections.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Haldon, “‘Jargon’ vs. ‘the facts’? Byzantine history-writing and contemporary debates,” 116.

¹⁵¹ Barthes, “Le discours de l’histoire,” 65-75.

¹⁵² Ergut, *Tarihin hakikatleri*, 180.

In this context, we as historians need to acknowledge the status of the storytellers in order to explain the production as well as the perspective of a historical narrative. Jacques Le Goff defines the dynamics lying behind the narrative composed by the historian as follows: “Never mind the fact that a narrative, whether historical or not, is a construction, and underneath its honest and objective appearance, a whole series of implicit choices are operative.”¹⁵³ Louis Mink once wrote: “Stories are not lived but told.”¹⁵⁴ Hayden White, who sees the historical text as a literary artifact by arguing that history as a discipline has a strong literary basis, later developed this view.¹⁵⁵

Narratives are constructed to tell the stories of a selected time period by intentionally putting together elements, phases, and actors of the past. In the end, a narrative reflects its composer’s taste.¹⁵⁶ There seem to be many difficulties involved here because the historical data produces a complexity, which shows itself in the many-sidedness of the sources of that information. Varied points of view matter in bringing explanations to historical events and constructing the causation that acted behind. As the elements of historical truths can be compiled and presented in various ways, historians tell history in their own tastes.¹⁵⁷ What the historian Doukas and others likely did, in this sense, was actually narrativizing, that is to say, they created their own stories out of historical facts they picked and thus constructed their own narratives.

The messages told via narrative sources can be viewed under the light of a larger analysis of rhetoric. Historians’ elective approach brings about questions

¹⁵³ Le Goff, *History and memory*, 117.

¹⁵⁴ Mink, “History and fiction as modes of comprehension,” 557.

¹⁵⁵ White, “The historical text as literary artifact,” 221-236.

¹⁵⁶ Lemon, “The structure of narrative,” 108.

¹⁵⁷ Stanford, *An introduction to the philosophy of history*, 220-223.

regarding conscious selection of events, argumentations that were developed or based on their ideological position, types of narration and rhetorical tools. As Hayden White put the rhetorical tropes in a nutshell, these are synecdoche, metaphor, metonymy, and irony.¹⁵⁸ Recurring expressions and thoughts on certain individuals and rulers constitute the narrative's framework and thus represent the individual perspective of narrator. The portraits drawn throughout texts show consistency. As Hayden White argues in his *Metahistory*, historians usually write their narratives by making emplotment that embodies authors' discourse and cultural background. Given that White's arguments have been the topic of many discussions and criticisms due to his simplistic and reductionist view, his comments on the determining function of authors' fictive and invented form of series of events or rather pro or against statements regarding certain individuals are still on the agenda of historians.¹⁵⁹

With regard to that point, a narrative is distinguished from a chronicle, because while in the former "reality wears the mask of a meaning," the latter aims to make a list of historical developments by chronological order without much elaborating on the interpretation of them.¹⁶⁰ In this sense, the form of narrative naturally becomes subjective, unlike a chronicle, which records events though sometimes it might bear conscious selection of recorded phenomena. Beside their possible meanings as reflecting a series of events or narratives of that series of events, historical narratives bear knowledge about the past and could still include "accurate information."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ White, *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*, 31-38.

¹⁵⁹ White, *Metahistory: The historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*, 7-11.

¹⁶⁰ White, "The value of narrativity in the representation of reality," 21.

¹⁶¹ Carroll, "Interpretation, history and narrative," 252. See also McCullagh, "The truth of historical narratives," 33-40.

What narratives commonly have is a causal sequence of presenting events and bringing in explanations. In order not to fall into the trap of “narrative,” which also has the moralizing power, that is, it is capable of leading the readers with certain values, historians have to prioritize analytical reasoning in interpreting history.

The past is narrated in various ways. In the field of Byzantine Studies, among the scholars the debate over how far the Byzantine histories include “original” substance and how much of them can be described as “literature” proliferated in recent decades. Modern historiography, no doubt, puts an emphasis on the agency of the Byzantine authors, from whose writings historians derive their interpretations. The authors of Byzantine historiography often did not cover every aspect of a particular instance in history nor present the ‘true’ sequence, role, or details of it. Departing from the phenomenon of subjectivity in the writings of the Byzantine authors, the picture that they draw becomes a mixture of reality and observation, that is, historical events and their selection by these authors. At the end, their major aim was to help keep the memory of the past and transmit it via their writings to future generations. However, intentionality, as an innate characteristic of these writings, is always a key concept to approach the samples of Byzantine historiography. The contexts in which the authors produce and their personal experiences as well as political and cultural backgrounds determine the outcome.

Byzantine historiography, like medieval texts in general, reflects two common characteristics. The histories of the period were mostly composed under the authority of a patron and under the influence of the older texts and models, which is called *mimesis*. In order to detect the level of subjectivity, one requires a thorough analysis of literary topoi that might have been embedded in the texts. Do these concepts and the contents merely bear similarities with stereotypical repetitions as

the legacy of former literature? This question has a centrality in our attempt to lay out the narrators' perspectives. Regarding the ways of depicting the qualities of ideal envoys, sources often share much in common. To put it more bluntly, *mimesis* occupied a central space in rhetorical representation of idealized qualities of imperial representatives.¹⁶² The negative image of Theologos Korax or the image of Çandarlı family members in Byzantine and Ottoman historiography may indicate how this notion of *mimesis* was widely put into practice.¹⁶³

The *topoi* are less observable in the descriptions of the movements in diplomatic traffic. The majority of cases bear significant similarity with each other while defining an embassy or an action of sending off an envoy. In most of the existing references, unless they mention the particular name of a representative, merely a verb πέμπω is used referring to the action of dispatching a diplomatic mission. The reader could easily understand that this action must have required an embassy with participating envoy(s).

Literary criticism must be called into play since the basic sources of information in this study consist of historical narratives. An eye should look into the interpretation of events through the prism of each narrator; in that way, it would be possible to grasp the intentionality disguised or explicitly revealed throughout the text. The historian's task at that point must be benefiting from the historical texts by anatomizing the authors' bias from the "truths." It necessitates a careful scrutiny in the cultural and personal background of the author in question. In recent decades, a

¹⁶² For the topic of Byzantine rhetoric, see Jeffreys (ed.), *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*.

¹⁶³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.8, 163; Book 34.2, 293; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 110-111; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 7.15, 99-101. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 197; ed. Atsız, bâb 156, 230-233.

considerable attempt has been made to understand the function of narrative construction from a literary perspective. The nature of historical narratives has become one of the major issues to be discussed in the field of history. The scholarly contribution to the issue has illuminated many aspects. Since there are various ways of using available sources and representing the past, one can talk about several distinct ways of narration in Byzantine historiography.¹⁶⁴

As a type of historical writing, narrative centers around a theme and presents it in a chronologically and descriptively formulized way. Since descriptions of events are interwoven with narrators' own biases and perceptions, the outcome does not automatically reflect all-encompassing "reality." What these writings offer, as the structuralists may call it, is a distortion of the reality. The main task of the historian is thus to reveal these points in which an apparent self-insertion is observable and therefore to make an analysis and draw conclusions accordingly.

Our knowledge of the past becomes a subject open to debate once we approach history as pieces of literary productions. This perspective, which is raised by Ruth Macrides in the field, can help us deconstruct the principal narratives and thus reconsider the contents of the works of Byzantine historiography.¹⁶⁵ It is necessary to approach each narrative by decoding their underlying perspectives. In other words, the historian's responsibility is to decipher the elements of a narrative and pose questions testing its credibility. Given that every reference could be

¹⁶⁴ Mango, "Byzantine literature as a distorting mirror;" Agapitos, "Literary criticism," 77-85; Scott, "Text and context in Byzantine historiography," 251-262. See also the papers in Macrides (ed.), *History as literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fourtieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007*. See for a recent application of narratological analysis in an excellent study on the illustrated manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses, Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine past. The perception of history in the illustrated manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses*.

¹⁶⁵ Macrides, "The historian in the history," 205-24; Macrides, "How the Byzantines wrote history," 257-263. See also another article in the same publication by Neville, "Why did the Byzantines write history?" 265-276.

problematic and require verification with other sources in this dissertation the list of the embassies shows common depictions made in primary sources.

The busy diplomatic traffic was not of course just happening between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans. On the other side, both entities developed and maintained their own diplomatic contacts on many fronts and with diverse polities. Sources sometimes do not put much light on certain periods. The 1360s, for instance, are silent, as our sources do not present any diplomatic contact between the two polities. However, diplomatic mobility was there because the contacts with different polities are known at that period. In 1363-4, the Patriarch Kallistos visited Serbia as an *apokrisiarios* and died there apparently.¹⁶⁶ Sometimes sources do not reveal all the contacts clearly, therefore, one needs to ask questions to the sources and read between the lines. For example, the available sources informing us on the developments of the late 1370s Constantinople do not name any diplomatic contact per se, yet Andronikos IV Palaiologos entered Constantinople and took the throne with the support coming from Murad I. Such possibly military aid from an Ottoman ruler must have required a certain level of diplomatic contacts with which an alliance could be formed. However, sources say nothing in particular on that likely encounter.¹⁶⁷ As this instance indicates, sources could sometimes omit some diplomatic encounters because the contacts could be considered less important, or they did not fit into the narrative framework.

Making a survey of diplomats requires the use of prosopography. As identified by the historian Lawrence Stone, prosopography comes to the help of the

¹⁶⁶ Peter Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), Chr. 7, 16, 66.

¹⁶⁷ Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, Chr. 7, 17, 67.

historian in two main points: it shows social, political, and economic connections of persons and tells a lot about social structure and these individuals' mobility in society.¹⁶⁸ Prosopography as an instrument for bringing together all available mentions of persons in historical records enables the researcher to make a thorough analysis of the functions and careers of these historical individuals in their own historical contexts. Based on its centrality in the inquiry on the positions and careers of diplomatic agents and since it is helpful in identification of specific social groups, this research approach turns out to be applicable here. Despite its invaluable contribution to the prosopographies of the earlier centuries, sigillographic evidence does not help the historian for the names of individuals engaged in diplomatic tasks in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This situation limits me to lean mainly on the histories and to a lesser extent on other genres, namely chronicles, letters, and travel accounts, as far as the information is relevant to the topics discussed.

What post-structuralism suggests is the central role of texts and the discourse they present. Textual influences of the Byzantine literary tradition on the writings of the narratives here in use represent an abrupt intertextuality in Jacques Derrida's terms. By calling in to play particular words, structures, and techniques, authors intended to transmit the reader a designed, worked out, or constructed 'truth.'¹⁶⁹ These rhetorical tools do not totally explain the reason behind the texts but rather, I think, compel the historian to rework the texts and put the spot on the authors' role who created them. In that context, an analysis of the authors' control over their texts becomes logical and required. The historical technique of contextualizing a historical

¹⁶⁸ Stone, "Prosopography," 46. A retreatment of the subject is published later: Stone, *The past and the present*, 45-73.

¹⁶⁹ Haldon, "'Jargon' vs. 'the facts'?: Byzantine history-writing and contemporary debates," 109-117.

event goes hand in hand with a deep questioning of the role of its ‘narrator.’ In other words, one must take into consideration the source which tells that event and try to argue the reasons for the author’s choices by looking at his personal, cultural, political and ideological background.¹⁷⁰ Authors can play the role of eulogists or antagonists. This phenomenon directly affects the writings of authors.

Structural history considers the process and the role of structures and causal factors that occurred in time by investigating the individuals, families, groups in society, and conditions in which events took place and the interactions of these agents with each other. Human agency, thus, plays a structural role in the methodology of structurism.¹⁷¹ We need to take into consideration the human agency, while we approach the consequences of diplomacy and the ways it was conducted. The causation behind the events being materialized brings about the role of individuals. This is the moment when the individual agency comes to the fore. The agency of the individuals requires the result of their action to be intentional. It also requires free will and a certain capacity.¹⁷² In our context, the actors of diplomatic encounters acted in their capacity as both assigned official representatives of central governments and agents with constrained areas of movement. However, they may still have potential to act beyond the control of their principals, therefore pushing self-insertion into the process of policy making or diplomatic practice.

The principal agent theory may be helpful in understanding of the roles of the diplomatic agents entrusted in a diplomatic encounter between the two polities.

Instead of an argument that the principals (i.e. Byzantine emperors and Ottoman

¹⁷⁰ Burke, “History of events and the revival of narrative,” 235.

¹⁷¹ Lloyd, *The structures of history*, 93-94; Haldon, “‘Jargon’ vs. ‘the facts’? Byzantine history-writing and contemporary debates,” 95-132.

¹⁷² Pomper, “Historians and individual agency,” 281-308; Shapiro, “Agency theory,” 263-284; Adams, “1-900-How-am-I-driving? Agency in social science history,” 1-17.

rulers) determined and executed the foreign policy, this theory offers an alternative view saying that the de facto practitioners of diplomacy in the field by visiting foreign courts could well have been actors playing an active part in communications and the contents of diplomatic contacts. Therefore, in the area of policymaking, the roles of the entrusted individuals or bureaucrats could be decisive in shaping the relations and furthering the contents of diplomatic encounters. There may be some conflicts between the principal and the agent. Such occasions reveal themselves as the cases in which the agents may behave contrary to the will of their principals.¹⁷³ In these instances, the agents might act according to their interests and thus might be influential at the side of the principal who could change the delegation in the upcoming meetings. These characteristics are observable in many of the encounters between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans.

If the ruler himself was not engaged in an encounter, he could not be sure if his directions and wills were fulfilled according to his orders. The case in point would be Theologos Korax and his various missions to the Ottoman court. There is always the factor of the primary sources, which repeat a treacherous and self-seeker portrait for Korax. For all the missions that were conducted by Korax, he was not alone except for his last couple of visits, which took place in 1422 and after which the emperor, as our source confirms, ensured the envoy committed treason.¹⁷⁴

In her study on diplomacy in Renaissance Rome, Catherine Fletcher asks a phenomenal question about the limits of ambassadors' agency and power of representation. She concludes that the Renaissance ambassador had two personae, both as a representative of his master and as a private individual, who reflected

¹⁷³ Braun and Guston, "Principal-agent theory and research policy: An introduction," 302-308.

¹⁷⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1, 229 and Book 28.3, 231.

personal elements during his mission. Fletcher gives an example of a call of the Italian ambassadors residing in Rome by Pope Pius II, who asked for their support for an anti-Turkish campaign. Despite their approval of the pope's call, the envoys underlined their incapacity as they did not possess the authority to respond to the pope's words as envoys despite their approval of what was requested by the pope as private individuals.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, did the Byzantine envoy have such a dual persona, playing the two roles of a private individual and a representative of the Byzantine court at the same time? Where do we put the agency or personal factor/capacity in our context? Can we even speak about it? One needs to bear in mind that Fletcher underlines the ambiguity in distinguishing the borders of these two personae.¹⁷⁶

The Byzantine emperors tried to diminish the possibility of adversary positions or disobedience of agents by entrusting more than one individual for a mission abroad. This is observable in most of the embassies visiting the Ottoman court. The occasions for conclusion of treaties or making prominent requests involved multiple imperial representatives. Although there are contrary situations in the recorded embassies between the two polities, it seems remarkable that multiple envoys were actually entrusted at strategic moments and for problematic issues.

In some cases, to make the visit more influential on the receiving state or possibly based on the assumptions that no one could represent the emperor fully enough, the rulers undertook the role of an ambassador and became the imperial representative by themselves. This approach eventually became a new trend under the Palaiologan regime, which indicates several examples of the emperors going on a

¹⁷⁵ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome. The rise of the resident ambassador*, 36-37, 166.

¹⁷⁶ "It is not always straightforward – nor was it intended to be – to discern for which of these two selves a gift was intended." Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome. The rise of the resident ambassador*, 166.

diplomatic tour or a visit to foreign courts. These personal conducts of diplomacy by the emperors may occur sometimes in another place out of a court.

The thesis has some major research questions. The first of these is what types of diplomatic methods were used in these contacts, which will be treated in Chapter 2, and partly in Chapter 3. The thesis, moreover, asks questions of agency in diplomatic communications. Who was responsible for negotiating and delivering messages to the political authorities? Calling methods of prosopography to help, the thesis uses its benefits to sort out the identities of diplomatic agents. The investigation aims to create a database for entrusted individuals in this diplomatic traffic as well as to distinguish them according to their positions, backgrounds, other characteristics, and their networks within their own communities and in international relations. This may enable us to interpret diplomacy in action, which shows itself in various forms of mutual confrontation, representation and other elements of diplomatic communications.

1.6 Periodization

If one needs to draw a general picture of the overall period with characteristically consistent sub-periods, the historical texts or descriptions embedded in histories and mostly related to diplomacy in one way or another can be called into assistance. The following interpretation is based on these references at hand and tries to formulate the phases of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts chronologically.

The nature of diplomatic communications, apart from regional and large-scale international developments, depended mainly on the policies of the rulers on both sides. This feature of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic relations prompts the observer to analyze the phenomenon according to rulers' reigns. In terms of diplomatic

contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans, the initial decades witnessed some sort of an equilibrium between the two polities, trying to protect the status quo while securing their political interests at the same time. Until the 1320s, the silence of documents caused an ambiguous picture and unfortunately did not offer much information on the topic per se.¹⁷⁷ After the first civil war of the Palaiologan period in the 1320s, John Kantakouzenos was gradually becoming “the guiding hand” behind the foreign affairs of Andronikos III’s empire.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, one should take into consideration the fundamental position of John Kantakouzenos earlier than his own reign on the Byzantine throne. The year 1354, on the other hand, has been considered the first permanent existence of the Ottomans in Europe by the conquest of Gallipoli, although two years earlier they already captured the castle of Tzympe.¹⁷⁹ It signifies a moment that accelerated the Ottoman advance further into the Balkans and made the contemporary Byzantine authors concede the situation. A more important aspect of the year 1354, however, lies in the change of authority in Byzantium. It emphasizes the end of John VI Kantakouzenos’s reign, thus one of the turning points in the Byzantine diplomatic agenda.

When exactly did the Byzantine Empire become the ‘vassal-state’ to the Ottomans? George Ostrogorsky, who thinks that the vassalage can be placed around 1372-1373, has raised the issue.¹⁸⁰ Later on, other scholars followed the same path and placed the outset of the vassalage period at around the same time.¹⁸¹ Laonikos

¹⁷⁷ The argument of “black holes” regarding the unverifiable nature of early Ottoman history was put forward by Imber, “The legend of Osman Gazi,” 67-76.

¹⁷⁸ The expression of “the guiding hand” belongs to Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk, c. 1295-1383*, 34.

¹⁷⁹ See Nicol, “A.D. 1354 – Annus fatalis for the Byzantine Empire,” 163-168.

¹⁸⁰ Ostrogorsky, “Byzance, état tributaire de l’empire turc,” 49-58.

¹⁸¹ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 277-278; Barker, “The question of ethnic antagonisms among Balkan states of the fourteenth century,” 171; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 29.

Chalkokondyles records John V Palaiologos's embassy to Murad I in 1372-3, which compelled the Byzantine emperor to pay tribute to the Ottomans.¹⁸² Until 1373, some sort of balance had prevailed over the relations between the two polities. As also confirmed by the author of the *Chronicon Barberini*, vassalage to the Ottomans seems to have begun under Murad I's reign.¹⁸³ Although many scholars confirm that the Byzantine Empire became the Ottomans' tributary shortly after the battle of Černomen on 26 September 1371, when the Ottomans gained a victory over the Serbians, there is a controversy about this date. However, based on what Demetrios Kydones writes about the Turkish suzerainty prevailed over the Byzantine Empire, our periodization can be inflicted with a slight change considering the answer to this major question. According to Demetrios Kydones, a year after 1354 when the prominent Byzantine fortress of Gallipoli fell to the Ottomans, the Byzantines had to give tribute, which actually made Judith Ryder think that the tributary vassal status might have begun earlier than what is commonly accepted in modern scholarship as the early 1370s.¹⁸⁴ As far as the reference of Kydones is concerned, it can be argued that already by ca. 1360 the conditions for the vassalage were observable. In fact, following the end of John VI Kantakouzenos's reign, the status quo in the Byzantine foreign policy was shifted in focus in ca. the mid-1350s. As a conclusion, Kydones's

¹⁸² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 1, 34.

¹⁸³ Philippides, *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman Sultans 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*, 20.

¹⁸⁴ Kydones, PG 154, 1012D: "Τοῦ γὰρ περὶ τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον καὶ τὴν Προποντίδα συμβάντος σεισμοῦ ὃς πάντα ἀνέτρεψε, καὶ τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο τοῖς βαρβάροις προδεδωκότος, ἣ τε Χερρόνησος πᾶσα τούτοις ἐδούλευσε, καὶ τὰς ἐν Θράκῃ πόλεις δι' ἑαυτῶν ἐποιήσαντο, καὶ πρὶν ἔτος ἐξήκειν, φόρους τε ἡμᾶς ἐπράξαντο, καὶ τὴν πρὸ τῶν τειχῶν ἔτεμον γῆν." See Ryder, *The Career and Writings of Demetrius Kydones*, 60, where the author places the tributary status much earlier than it was argued before. Cf. Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400*, 225-227, where the author states that Pope Gregory XI had learnt the treaty between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans by September 1374; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 277, where the author agrees with Gill and Ostrogorsky, who placed the Byzantine tributary status at around 1373. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 29, where she places the change of the imperial policy towards the Ottomans after 1371.

statement tempted me to accept the beginning of the tributary status around the mid-1350s, but it gradually became observable and was sealed after 1373.¹⁸⁵

One of the most important events in this regard occurred in 1373 when the emperor John V Palaiologos collaborated with Murad I for their rebelled sons, Andronikos and Savcı Çelebi.¹⁸⁶ As already asserted, after 1373, the Ottoman state gained the upper hand and the Byzantine Empire became its vassal. From that time onwards, the Byzantine Empire turned out to be a tributary state to the Ottomans. Following his son Andronikos's plot, John V Palaiologos was put into prison by the plotter. Yet, having obtained support from Murad I, John V managed to escape and went immediately to the court of the Ottoman ruler. He was already the vassal of Murad. In July 1379, John V, thanks to the military and logistic support of the Ottomans and the Venetians, returned to Constantinople.¹⁸⁷ The year 1379 was also the date of the return of Gallipoli back to the Ottomans.

We have the suspension of the status of a vassal to a certain extent in 1402, which signifies another crucial step in the history of the relations between the two polities. For Byzantium, the defeat of Bayezid I at the hands of Timur at the battle of Ankara meant the restoration of pre-vassalage circumstances. After Manuel II Palaiologos arrived back from his European journey in 1403, as Cardinal Isidore

¹⁸⁵ Anthony Bryer pushes the debate further and argues that the marriage between Orhan and Theodora, John VI Kantakouzenos's daughter, in 1346 could be interpreted as a mark of vassalage. Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: The case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," 486-490.

¹⁸⁶ For Andronikos and Savcı, there is an extensive bibliography. Suffice it to present a few of them here: Ostrogorsky, "Byzance, état tributaire de l'empire turc," 49-58; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 287-288; Elam, "Babalar ve oğullar: IV. Andronikos Palaiologos ve Savcı Çelebi'nin isyanı (1373)," 29-74. For a recent interpretation on the identity and the affair of Savcı that caused a challenge to Murad I's authority, see Estangüi-Gómez, *Byzance face aux Ottomans: Exercice du pouvoir et contrôle du territoire sous les derniers Paléologues (milieu XIV^e-milieu XV^e siècle)*, 230, f.n. 513. On the date of the Savcı affair, see Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, 489-490, f.n. 136 referring to Katsoni, *Μία επταετία κρίσιμων γεγονόσεων: Το Βυζάντιο στα έτη 1366-1373*.

¹⁸⁷ Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk, c. 1295-1383*, 157. See Wright, "Constantinople and the coup d'état in Palaiologan Byzantium," 271-292.

remarks, many cities once lost to the Ottomans now were regained. Isidore adds that “many of the barbarians became his [Manuel’s] tax-paying subjects.”¹⁸⁸ The post-1402 circumstances brought a short-term relief for Byzantium and made Manuel “the authority” in the relations of the two polities.

Finally, the beginning of the last period can be safely placed at around 1421 when Murad II ascended to the throne and the Ottoman state began to adopt a more offensive approach against the Byzantine Empire. To understand diplomacy, particularly in the latter half of the Palaiologan period, one needs to follow Ottoman political developments because they consequently determined the course of the relations more than the ones in Byzantium. For the period, the decisive role of the Ottoman rulers on the diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the Ottomans was put forward by Élisabeth Malamut, who underlined that the Ottoman rulers often chose their interlocutors.¹⁸⁹ As will also be discussed in the following pages, this general assessment needs to be reconsidered because the diplomatic relations were subjected not only to the dispositions of the Ottoman rulers but also to the key factors related to the Byzantine rulers and their relations with the leading individuals among the Ottoman diplomatic corps.

Therefore, the compartmentalization in the study is going to be organized around recurring themes, depending on the types, approaches, and conditions in diplomacy between Byzantium and the Ottoman state. The overall ambassadorial contacts allow us to divide the entire period into four distinct parts: 1. From the beginning to ca.1360, 2. ca.1360-1402, 3. 1402-1421, 4. 1421-1453. Even though the

¹⁸⁸ Philippides and Hanak, *Cardinal Isidore, c. 1390-1462. A Byzantine scholar, warlord, and prelate*, 363.

¹⁸⁹ Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 79–95.

reigns of the Ottoman rulers seem to draw the lines of this scheme of division, as will be illustrated, a certain degree of Byzantine involvement was also evident. Such an evaluation necessitates a broader view and leads me to contextualize the foreign relations of each party.



CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND TYPES OF DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS

2.1 Introduction

Diplomacy was an art of finding ways to avoid warfare. It was either put on to the agendas of parties at times of warfare or featured during times of peace. On the other hand, peace could be maintained through varied means: a treaty following a warfare period, which ended with the failure of one side and the victory of the other, payment of tribute, a marriage contract, a mutual or a unilateral agreement on exchange of prisoners or captives.¹⁹⁰ Peace-making and the politics of compromise usually remained vital and central to the Byzantine emperors' approach to foreign polities in a rapidly changing political environment. It was also a requirement for a shrinking state.

In order to address the question of Byzantine diplomacy with the Ottomans in a more agent-oriented way, we need to look at ambassadorial diplomacy, which constituted one aspect of this complex mechanism of official communications. This attempt requires general research on the predominant ways of approaching a foreign state through official representatives. The envoys and embassies are the topic of the following chapters. In this chapter, I aim to distinguish the methods and types of diplomatic contacts. As treated at large by Dimitri Obelensky in "The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy," there was a variety of methods in use in the Byzantine Empire's dealings with foreign nations.¹⁹¹ The diplomatic approach of

¹⁹⁰ For a short discussion of examples from the early and middle Byzantine periods on the ways of peace-making, see Drăghici-Vasilescu, "How Peace was Achieved in Byzantium and Medieval Europe," 1-11.

¹⁹¹ Obelensky, "The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy," 45-61.

Byzantium partly depended on the policies of its adversaries. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the leading or decisive roles of every political actor in the evolution of Byzantine diplomacy in an age of decline. This requires an overall examination of different methods and types of diplomatic contacts in both peace time and war time.

2.2 Warfare and diplomacy

Generally speaking, the state of foreign affairs between rival polities had two edges. They would either try to maintain peace via negotiations or simply confront each other on the battlefield. In the majority of instances during the Palaiologan era, it seems that Byzantium used diplomacy as a means of avoiding warfare. A crucial question comes to the fore at this point: Is this very speculation a mere generalization or is it based on historical evidence? War was like a last resort, yet there were times when it was inevitable. As a very influential figure in Andronikos II Palaiologos's court, Theodore Metochites wrote the inevitability of war that diplomacy could not avail when the opposite side was the Turks, who were, according to him, nomadic people and not showing a unified character as a polity. Metochites, thus, urged the emperor to battle against them.¹⁹² Nevertheless, late Byzantine history presents multiple examples in which the authorities opted for diplomacy as a peaceful and reasonable alternative.

¹⁹² Metochites mentions the characteristics of the Turks in an unpublished encomium for Andronikos II, Vind. Phil. Gr. 95, 145v-147v. See also, Toth, *Imperial orations in late Byzantium (1261-1453)*, 102-103; Kyriakidis, *Warfare in late Byzantium, 1204-1453*, 13 referring to Metochites, *Orations*, 384 published in Polemis (ed.), *Οι δύο Βασιλικοί Λόγοι*. On an embassy to Alexandria, Metochites had a treatise in the form of a saint life. For Pachymeres's opinion on warfare, see Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 379-381, 441-443. Also see Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 127.

The fundamental element in the foreign policy of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos was his commitment to avert the danger of Charles of Anjou. For that reason, his focus was concentrated on European relations. On the other hand, the dissents of the residents of Asia Minor in response to Michael VIII's fierce antagonism toward the region led to his priorities in foreign affairs, his alleged neglect, and the financial burden he put on the people of these territories. This tension showed itself in several rebellions one after another and a serious resistance that ended up with the defection of these people to the Turks. Michael VIII's son and successor Andronikos II's reign announced a disentanglement from the imperial policy that had been followed since 1259. The new emperor tried to revert this situation at the outset of his reign and planted his policy launching an emphasis on the management of the imperial rule in Asia Minor. At the outset, Andronikos preferred to use a native force commanded by John Tarchaneiotēs to reverse the situation in Asia Minor. His domestic policy of reordering and expanding the territories of the small-holders so that they would contribute to the exigencies of the army was challenged by large landholders and clergy of the region. This failure led Andronikos II to hire mercenary groups (mainly the Catalans); however, that decision did not remove the alarming conditions and in the end accelerated the process of unraveling of the empire.¹⁹³

Andronikos's foreign policy is eulogized in the writings of his panegyrists, Nikephoros Gregoras, Theodore Metochites, and Nikephoros Choumnos. Among them, Theodore Metochites, who attained the utmost authority in bureaucracy as *mesazon* and took an active part in the diplomacy of the empire in Andronikos II's

¹⁹³ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, 85-126.

court, describes the emperor's target as bringing psychological recovery, investment, and security to the area. Andronikos's renouncement of the union of churches and his emphasis on domestic policy differentiates him from his predecessor.¹⁹⁴ While the emperor focused on the ways to repel the Turks from Asia Minor, he had to face a challenge coming from the Serbian Kingdom. An intricate marriage diplomacy helped him bring relief to the empire in that manner. In 1299, an embassy headed by Theodore Metochites aimed for a marriage alliance between the two courts.¹⁹⁵ Likewise, Andronikos II tried to find ways of establishing alliances with the Eastern Christians. For that purpose, departing the capital in the summer of 1294, an embassy was conducted by Theodore Metochites and John Glykys to the Cilician Armenians to marry off Andronikos's son Michael.¹⁹⁶

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Byzantine Empire was confined to a limited region, which could be defined as a small Balkan power. According to Angeliki E. Laiou, all Andronikos's policies ended up with a failure and resulted in the growing power of the Turkish emirates on the Eastern borders of the empire.¹⁹⁷ By that time, the greater part of Western Anatolia was under the sovereignty of Turkish begs, who rarely fought side by side and seldom established alliances among each other.¹⁹⁸ The historian Gregoras refers to a coalition among the Turkish begs that was formed before 1303-1304 and that they shared coastal territories. Elizabeth Zachariadou shows the impossibility of Gregoras's words. As sources seem to have confirmed, the Turkish begs were conflicting with each other

¹⁹⁴ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, 22-26.

¹⁹⁵ For the embassy see Theodore Metochites, *Presbeutikos*, ed. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, vol. I, 154-193. See also Malamut, "Les reines de Milutin," 500-505.

¹⁹⁶ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, 55-56.

¹⁹⁷ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, 86-93.

¹⁹⁸ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 142.

over the Byzantine territories, rather than creating alliances. One of the most evident cases in point is the rivalry between the Ottoman and Karasi states. The Byzantine state did not confront a unified enemy, but rather scattered groups in various parts of the Eastern frontiers. These small groups were attacking Byzantine lands and settlements, collecting booty, and then were not staying there for long but retreating.¹⁹⁹ Hence, Byzantium did not have a stable unified authority toward whom it could pursue traditional diplomatic methods properly. The circumstances at that time did not allow this.

A mystery surrounds the initial stage of the Byzantine-Ottoman encounter. Since the Byzantine sources do not illuminate the preliminary contacts very much, we must put the Ottoman chronicles into play, which were composed in the mids and later parts of the fifteenth century. One of our main Ottoman sources, Aşıkpaşazade draws a calm state for the initial stage of Osman's chieftainship before the turn of the fourteenth century. After Osman's arrival in Bithynia in the late thirteenth century, warfare did not exist.²⁰⁰

The battle of Bapheus on 27 July 1302, symbolizes the Byzantine military incapacity to deal with the threat posed by the challenging actor of the region: The Ottomans. As the Ottoman warriors unremittingly advanced, the Byzantine frontier zones turned out to be open spaces for possible attacks. In such a state, which began to accelerate especially with the destructive impact of the Catalans as well as the two consecutive civil strife in Byzantium, settlements situated in the remote areas of the capital had to cope with that threat. As the tradition of historiography has kept it hitherto, the tricks widespread among the Byzantines and the Latins were also

¹⁹⁹ Zachariadou, "The Emirate of Karasi and that of the Ottomans: Two rival states," 225-226.

²⁰⁰ Neşrî, vol. I, 86-88; Kafadar, *Between two worlds, The construction of the Ottoman State*, 123.

preferred by the Turks to capture castles and cities. Zachariadou points out the inadequacy of the first Ottomans in possessing a strong and regular army or proper equipment and technology that would allow them to accomplish this.²⁰¹ However, they gradually extended their control over the urban settlements of Bithynia. In that context, the Byzantine local authorities tried to develop conciliatory tendencies towards the Ottomans, which showed themselves mostly as a form of negotiated surrender. This was a form of diplomatic encounter at local level. That phenomenon can be observed in Ottoman conquests of various Byzantine towns. Orhan, for instance, captured Nicaea (2 March 1331) by that method (“ὁμολογία παραστησάμενος”).²⁰² This became a prevailing method: Süleyman took possession of Philippopolis by the same way following the battle of Černomen.²⁰³ Bayezid captured many towns in Europe by adopting that approach which eventually brought no harm to the inhabitants as promised prior to the surrender (καὶ ἄλλα δὲ τῶν ταύτη πολισμάτων οὐκ ὀλίγα προσεχώρησεν αὐτῷ καθομολογίῃ).²⁰⁴ Instances of negotiated surrender can be detected elsewhere such as in the surrender of the Mamluk city of Melitene to the Ottomans as Chalkokondyles uses similar wording.²⁰⁵

As a method of diplomacy that took place in the battlefield or in times of war, the practice of “negotiated surrender” could be observed in other contexts. Speaking about the capture of Ephesus by the troops of Sasa Beg, Pachymeres narrates how the Turkish conquest in Western coastal Anatolia took place. During a period of successive diplomatic attempts between Byzantium and the Ilkhanid state, the Byzantine emperor was preparing an embassy. In the meantime, an agreement or

²⁰¹ Zachariadou, “Histoires et legends des premiers ottomans,” 64.

²⁰² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 20-21; trans. Kaldellis, Book 1.26, 35.

²⁰³ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 28-29; trans. Kaldellis, Book 1.35, 51.

²⁰⁴ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 62; trans. Kaldellis, Book 2.11, 107-109.

²⁰⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 94-95; trans. Kaldellis, Book 2.49, 163-165.

truce (ὁμολογία) happened to be concluded between Sasa and the inhabitants of Ephesus after a strategy that the former compelled the Ephesians to suffer from hunger. This agreement was made to surrender the city by releasing a part of the city's inhabitants and sending them to Tire (Thyraia) in return for the famous sculpture of the Virgin and Christ that was accompanied by a large amount of money, putting the remaining people to death.²⁰⁶

The issue of submission of fortresses to the enemy also requires attention. In need of urgent military support, a few fortresses, that escaped from Turkish conquest, could call for immediate help from the grand dux. The inhabitants of such centers were able to send messengers informing their political authority. Pachymeres mentions an example of a submission by agreement. His account gives information about Tripolis, which is situated on the passage between Hermos and Meander valleys, and about the surrounding fortresses, which were submitted to the Turks out of necessity and by agreement. Since the inhabitants of the city of Tripolis did not expect Byzantine army soon, they managed to reach an agreement (ταῖς ὁμολογίαις) and made a temporary treaty (πρὸς καιρὸν ἐσπένδοντο) with the Turks that made grain supply to the settlement possible.²⁰⁷ This agreement seems to have determined the limits of both the inhabitants' movement and the provision of their basic needs. It allowed the Turks to come inside the walls and trade there. Pachymeres continues his narration by saying that these conditions encouraged the Turks and finally made them capable of conquering the city. Pachymeres underlines that when the Turks made agreements, they already began to be prepared for an ultimate conquest.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 13.13, 647-649.

²⁰⁷ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 11.25, 477.

²⁰⁸ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. 4, Book 11.25, pp. 475-479.

Although the sources mention various cases of direct communications between settlements and the Turks, we are not provided with ample evidence about the agents, who concluded these sorts of agreements. It might have been the city councils or some sort of local authority that carried out negotiations.²⁰⁹ Sources also point out that there was certainly an alienation of inhabitants from their local governments, as happened in the case of the fall of Prousa.²¹⁰

Ottoman sources do mention the phenomenon of “negotiated surrender.” The ‘holder’ of Nicomedia was a woman according to Neşrî. Once the Ottoman warriors appeared around the city, that woman called her leading men and told them the incapacity of the city to handle the enemy. She feared of the Ottomans, who would become a prominent foe against them. The only possible solution would be a surrender by an “aman.” In this manner, she sent one of her good men (has âdemisi) to Orhan asking for peace (‘ahd = عهد) to guarantee their safe abandonment of the city to go to Constantinople.²¹¹ Similar stories prevail in Ottoman chronicles narrating the conditions in other prominent centers of Bithynia and Mesothnia.²¹²

Ottoman chronicles represent a tendency and adopt a rhetoric that the Ottoman rulers advised the inhabitants of settlements to surrender to the Ottomans following agreements upon favorable conditions providing safety for the inhabitants as well as their leaders (i.e. the *tekvurs*). Neşrî presents a fine example of that. According to the chronicler, the call of the inhabitants of the villages, which already surrendered to the Ottomans, to the inhabitants of Nicaea is as follows: “Oh, you

²⁰⁹ There is a need to look at how the provincial administration was conducted in late Byzantium, and who were left in isolated centers responsible in bureaucratic and administrative terms. That exceeds the limits of the thesis.

²¹⁰ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins. The foreign policy of Andronicus II 1282-1328*, 293.

²¹¹ Neşrî, vol. I, 150-152.

²¹² Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 37-39; ed. Atsız, bâb 30, 116-117; see also Hickman, “The taking of Aydos Castle: Further considerations on a chapter from Aşıkpaşazade,” 399-407.

sluggish people! Come and obey the Turk, thus recover from the hunger, and be in safety.”²¹³

There seems to have been diplomatic contacts at local levels. The *tekvur* of Nicaea dispatched one of his trusted individuals in order to lay down some conditions in return for their safety. Only after accepting such an offer the *tekvur* of Nicaea was able to depart the city and with the inhabitants set out for Constantinople.²¹⁴ Neşrî draws attention to Orhan’s policy, in that context, that the Ottoman ruler protected the lords of the castles and landlords who did not cause trouble for the Ottomans and peacefully surrendered to them as it was the case for instance in the conquest of some settlements in Bithynia. As the chronicler states, Orhan did not touch them, but showed them indulgence.²¹⁵

Seizing fortresses without warfare can also be observed during the reign of Murad I. Interestingly, all the surviving references to events of surrendering fortified settlements by their “*tekvurs*” are mostly found in the Ottoman chronicles. One reason we find this sort of description of events in the Ottoman chronicles, but not much in Byzantine sources, could be that it shows the weakness or incompetence of the Byzantine local administrators and the provincial troops.²¹⁶ A few of the settlements refused to surrender and thus resisted, but in the end, as the Ottoman chronicles informed, they perished.²¹⁷

²¹³ Neşrî, vol. I, 159: “‘ey miskinler! Gelün, Türke ita‘at idün, aclıktan kurtılun, emn ü âmân içinde olun’ dirlerdi.”

²¹⁴ Neşrî, vol. I, 159: “...İznik’in Tekvur’ı bir itimad itdüğü kâfiri Orhan Gazi’ye gönderüb eytdi: ‘eğer bizümle ‘ahd idüb bizi incitmeyüb, gidenimüz gidüb, turanımız turub, bu kavli kabul idersenüz, kal‘ayı virelüm’ didi. Orhan Gazi dahi ‘ahdi kabul idüb Tekvur’ı İstanbul kapusından çıkup halkıyla İstanbul’a gitdi.” See also Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 41-42; ed. Atsız, bâb 32, 118-119.

²¹⁵ Neşrî, vol. I, 126-128, 130-132, 138, 166: “Orhan dahi bunları hoş görüb, yine yirlerinde mukarrer itdi.”

²¹⁶ See Neşrî, vol. I, 182, 184.

²¹⁷ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 52; ed. Atsız, bâb 43, 126.

Several sources point to the attempts of the inhabitants of major cities of the Byzantine Empire to overcome the threat posed by the Ottomans. These were mainly shaped around diplomatic efforts in which the inhabitants became the conductors of diplomatic communications per se. The Thessalonians, for example, ventured particularly to overcome the Ottoman assaults that occurred throughout the 1420s. Besides their diplomatic approaches to calm down the furiousness of the Ottomans besieging their cities, the Thessalonians included a considerable population who adopted pro-Ottoman and pro-Latin tendencies to ward off the evident threat. They did not only send envoys to the Ottomans, but also to the Venetians. As the Venetian sources illuminate, various cases reveal dispatching of Thessalonian envoys to Venice in 1425 and 1429.²¹⁸

At the turn of the fifteenth century, the conditions both in Constantinople and in Thessalonike were pointing to the presence of a remarkable party, which was prone to Ottoman sovereignty and thus adopted this approach of negotiated surrender as a way out for survival. Recorded in a contemporary source by Symeon, the Archbishop of Thessalonike, there were Thessalonians, who frankly supported the Ottoman takeover despite their relative low number as opposed to the party possessing pro-Latin political attitude. The accommodationist attitude might not have been limited to the groups in these major urban centers of the Byzantine Empire, as Nevra Necipoğlu marked, but it might have been the case for many towns in the countryside.²¹⁹ The town-based analysis may indicate a presence of suitable layout for Ottoman ascendancy. Whether the primary reason would be military and political

²¹⁸ See Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 1995, 229-230, no. 2149, 263-264; Delilbaşı, "Osmanlı-Venedik savaşı," 581-586.

²¹⁹ Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 285.

impotence that gave rise to such surrenders or something else, we may also note here another possibility that the political setting was appropriate for ‘peaceful’ relations. At the end, that way of conquest or in other words “negotiated surrender” entailed no warfare. By surrendering their settlements, the local Byzantines thus adopted accommodationist tendencies.

The following case presents in a more detailed manner how a plan of negotiated surrender developed and was put into practice. Manuel II’s efforts for receiving military aid against the Ottomans in the end necessitated a personal visit to Western Europe, which is mentioned in various sources including a Byzantine short chronicle describing the event during Bayezid’s siege of Constantinople.²²⁰ Manuel’s contacts in France carried an aim to find that support. John VII was left in charge of the affairs of the empire in Manuel’s absence. In the meantime, Bayezid carried on his policy of absolute conquest of Constantinople despite a group of envoys departing from the city with an aim to declare the wish that the Byzantine vassal position could continue if the Ottoman ruler would lift the siege. A very important anonymous Greek account points out a visit of these envoys demanding a peaceful takeover. According to the source, the embassy was sent in August 1401 by the inhabitants of Constantinople presuming that Bayezid’s anger must have been calmed down. The embassy was composed of leading individuals of Byzantium, whose names are not given in any source. The source illuminates the readiness of the public to obey the Ottoman besieger, who in return mocked the envoys and sent them back empty-handed without any mercy at all.²²¹

²²⁰ Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, Chr. 22/26-30, 184-185.

²²¹ Gautier, “Un récit inédit sur le siege de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402),” 106, l. 36; 110, l. 10. “Μικρῷ δὲ πρότερον ἢ συμβαλεῖν ἀλλήλοις τὸ σκυθικόν τε καὶ ἀγαρηνὸν στράτευμα, ἀπειπόντες οἱ τῆς Κωνσταντίνου οἰκῆτορες, ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγοι περιλειφθέντες, καὶ νομίσαντες ἡμερωτέρου τυχεῖν ἐκείνου, νῦν γοῦν, εἰ δὲ μὴ πρότερον διὰ τὸ τοῦ μέλλοντος ἄδηλον, πέμπουσιν

This anonymous embassy seems to have been a topic for later historical sources. There are several of these referring to the issue of the voluntary approach toward Bayezid with an aim to present the keys of Constantinople due largely to the famine that the city's inhabitants had been suffering from. Both the abovementioned Greek account and Doukas's historical account underlines the famine and the disappointment that the Constantinopolitans were suffering. It had its basis in the expected military aid from Europe.²²² Among the sources referring to that mission, only Kritoboulos uses the word "treaty" to describe the affairs of the two parties. For the author, the parties made an agreement.²²³ A short chronicle also mentions the same event as the journey of the leading inhabitants of Constantinople with an aim to deliver the city's keys to the sultan, who was in Kotyaeion at that moment.²²⁴

Another source gives an idea about how the efforts to come to an agreement with Bayezid culminated in various visits of envoys. According to Patriarch Matthew, writing in 1401, three missions were dispatched for that purpose. He intimidated the representatives if they implemented the surrender of the city to the

αὐτῷ πρεσβείαν ἄνδρας τῶν παρά σφίσιν ἐνδόξων, εἵκειν ἅπασιν ὁμολογοῦντες οἷς ἂν ἐκεῖνος ἐπιτάξειε ποιεῖν διὰ μόνον δουλείας ὥς μὴ ἐνὸν αὐτοῖς ἐκουσίως τὴν πόλιν καταπροδοῦναι ποτε. Ὁ δὲ τοὺτους πρότερον διὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ σατραπῶν μυκτηρίσας εἰ τύχην ἀλωσομένων ἔχοντες τὰ νικάντων αὐτῷ προτείνουσιν ἀπράκτους ἀπέστειλεν, ὁμότερος κὰν τοῦτῳ χαγάνου τοῦ Σκύθου φανείς. Ὁ μὲν γάρ, εἰ δὲ μὴ τάλιθ' ἔλεγον ἦν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐλευθερίαν ὑπισχεῖτο τοῖς Κωνσταντινουπολίταις μετὰ τὴν ἄλωσιν καὶ τὸ γυμνοὺς ἐκεῖθεν ἐξιόντας ἀπελθεῖν ὅπου βούλονται. Παγιαζίτης δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦτο, ἀλλ' ὥς ἔχων ἀκριβῶς τὴν τε πόλιν καὶ τοὺς ἐνοικοῦντας οὐδ' ὅτι οὐν πεπλασμένης εἶδος φιλανθρωπίας πρὸς τοὺς πρέσβεις ἡμῶν ἐνεδείξατο." Gautier, "Un récit inédit sur le siege de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402)," 108-110. Gautier also gives the French translation of the account in his article. This part of the Greek account is translated with a commentary into Turkish: Kırıldökme Mollaoğlu, "Sultan I. Bayezid döneminde ait Grekçe bir anlatı," 140.

²²² Doukas, ed. Grecu, 81; Gautier, "Un récit inédit sur le siege de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402)," 110. A short chronicle mentions the issue of hunger. See Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, chr. 22/28-30, 184-185. Kritoboulos also attributes a long speech of Mehmed II to his soldiers, which includes a topic of the sultan's ancestor Bayezid's siege of Constantinople. In that speech, as the author narrates, Mehmed II reminded the exhaustion of the people of the city due to the lengthy siege. Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, 32, l. 37: "λιμῶ" (hunger).

²²³ Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, 32-33, l. 16.10.

²²⁴ Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, chr. 22/28-30, 184-185; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A Study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 215-217; See Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 182.

enemy.²²⁵ In August 1401, a Byzantine delegation visiting Bursa to talk with Bayezid did not find the Ottoman ruler because he was on a campaign. Therefore, the envoys were engaged in a discussion with Bayezid's wife and expressed John VII's hastiness to hand over the Byzantine capital to the Ottoman ruler.²²⁶

Despite the despair of the inhabitants of Constantinople for the recovery of their capital, the battle of Ankara put away the possibility of an Ottoman takeover of the city. This brought about a release to the Byzantine Empire. During the final stage of Bayezid's siege of Constantinople, rumors about the collaboration of several individuals with the Ottomans were widely circulated in the city. In 1401, as revealed in the patriarchal archive, a certain priest called George Lopadiotes was suspected by the patriarchal court due to his transmitting of messages from a group of *archontes* to the Turks outside of Constantinople.²²⁷

The cases of surrender of cities based on agreed circumstances proliferate also in later parts of the Palaiologan period. Possibly in 1447, Patras was taken by the Ottomans after a negotiated surrender (ὁμολογία).²²⁸ Getia was another settlement that was taken through a negotiated surrender (συντίθενται) in absence of their bishop.²²⁹

In conclusion, departing from the assumption that warfare is the last resort, the Byzantine emperors have become peace-makers. When circumstances evolved

²²⁵ MM, vol. II, no. 626, 466; MM, vol. II, 461-462; Necipoğlu, "Economic conditions in Constantinople during the siege of Bayezid I (1394-1402)," 157-167; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 180 and Chp. 7. See also Elam, "Ankara Savaşı'nın Osmanlı-Bizans ilişkilerine etkisi," 168. For the siege of Constantinople under Bayezid, see the following bibliography: Bernicolas-Hatzopoulos, "The first siege of Constantinople by the Ottomans (1394-1402) and its repercussions on the civilian population of the city," 39-51.

²²⁶ Gautier, "Un récit inédit sur le siege de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402)," 108-110.

²²⁷ Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 180-181 ref. to MM, vol. II, no. 637, 484.

²²⁸ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 18; trans. Kaldellis, Book 5.28, 399.

²²⁹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 18; trans. Kaldellis, Book 5.28, 397-399.

into an inevitable military confrontation, both parties tried to build peaceful resolutions as already indicated in several examples of negotiated surrender. Although one of the sides become the loser, that way of reaching an agreement carries kernels of diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state.

2.3 Tributary mode of diplomatic relations

The clashing polities usually complied with the exigencies of periods of war or peace. Based on the perceptions of historical sources, the history of the Byzantine-Ottoman confrontation can well be divided into peaceful and warfare periods. While the Byzantine relations with the Ottomans during the reign of Murad I have generally been considered peaceful, the reign of Bayezid constitutes not exactly a good example for amicable contacts. Here, one must rely on the periodization that we offered earlier, because times of peace are strongly dependent on the prevailing approaches and political tendencies of each ruler on both sides. Diplomacy in peace times showed itself usually in the form of marriage alliances, which connected two courts with familial ties and proposed relative stability in mutual political affairs or sometimes in the form tributes that can be considered as signs of subordination. Due to the extensive nature of marriage alliances, the subject deserves a separate treatment, which will appear in the following sub-chapter.

Certain periods witnessed particular Byzantine emperors attending Ottoman campaigns in an inferior or vassal position. The emperors had to accompany the Ottoman rulers during various campaigns in Anatolia. Campaigning with the rival ruler became a compulsory practice that derived from the more powerful position of the Ottoman rulers over the Byzantine emperors. That form of vassalage

conspicuously showed itself in Manuel II's thought and experience under the imperious Bayezid I.²³⁰

Focusing on details of each diplomatic contact in the history of the Byzantine Empire adds to our knowledge of various forms of relations that emerged as superiority or inferiority of one side. Tribute can well be summarized as a type of subordination in diplomacy and a way of sustaining "peaceful" relations as long as the tributary party performs the task of timely and duly paying. Tributes or fiscal obligations of any sort could take various forms such as paying in cash, gold, or else. Throughout the Middle Ages, in different parts of the world, tributary systems occupied a prominent role in shaping the foreign policies of states. In the following pages, I glean information about tributary obligations in diplomatic contexts shaped by the Byzantine-Ottoman encounters.

Departing from that aspect of peace, which could intentionally be realized as a result of an action of "buying," Gregoras's description throws additional light on the topic. Describing the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II's attempts in order to obtain the friendship of the Turks, the author depicts these efforts as the emperor "purchasing the peace," although Andronikos could manage to do that by increasing the annual taxes. This metaphor finds its meaning in Gregoras's way of narrating how the emperor in guise of friendship approached the Turks. He continues by writing that the emperor perhaps did not realize that he was asking this "from wolves" and "then open his veins in many places so that they can drink and take advantage of his blood saturate."²³¹

²³⁰ Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425). A Byzantine emperor in a time of tumult*, 130-162.

²³¹ Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, Book 8, 39-40. For possible inspiration from Theocritus in using that metaphor, see the footnotes on these pages.

Tributary mode of relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans had their roots in the early fourteenth century. As Pachymeres mentions, a certain amount of tribute (διδούσα τέλος) was exacted to the Turks to keep their hands off the city of Prousa.²³² By that method, the city was finally relieved from the enemy. Moreover, Süleyman, the son of Orhan, negotiated a treaty with the Byzantines in the face of the allied Serbian and Bulgarian forces' plan to attack him in Europe. According to Chalkokondyles, who is probably our only source for that incidence, the proposal included sixty thousand drachmas that Süleyman expected from the Byzantines in return for his surrender of the towns he previously conquered in Thrace and lifting of the sieges of towns there.²³³

As the first face-to-face battle of a Byzantine emperor with an Ottoman ruler, the battles of Pelekanon and Philokrene (10-11 June 1329) resulted in serious damage laid against the Byzantine authority in Bithynia. Just a few years after this encounter, the Ottomans captured Nicaea on 2 March 1331. Andronikos III Palaiologos intended to come to terms with the Ottomans in August 1333. It was during the Ottoman siege of Nicomedia that the emperor went to Anatolia and wanted to meet Orhan. The Ottoman advance was accelerated in the region, therefore, the emperor possibly felt obliged to negotiate peace with the Ottoman ruler. Upon Andronikos III's invitation, Orhan met with the emperor and signed a treaty. According to this significant contract, as a short chronicle has its full terms, Andronikos agreed to pay a tribute of 12,000 hyperpyra annually to the Ottomans in return for Byzantine control over a few territories in Bithynia.²³⁴

²³² Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 13.17, 657.

²³³ Chalkokondyles, ed. Grecu, vol. I, 29-30; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1.37, 51-53. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3013 and 3019.

²³⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 446-448; Loenertz, "La chronique brève de 1352. Texte, traduction et commentaire. 2: de 1328 à 1341," 40, 52-54; Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I,

Apart from the Ottomans, the Genoese were another challenging actor against Byzantine interests in the area. After his victory over his grandfather during the civil strife in the 1320s, Andronikos III tried to reconstitute Byzantine authority over Western Anatolia. Following his failure at Pelekanon, the first action of the young emperor was to reach a settlement with the Turkish emirs in the region so that he could provoke them against Orhan. He may have viewed it possible to halt Genoese expansion in the Aegean.²³⁵ Both the emir of Sarukhan, and Mehmed of Aydinoglu were invited by the emperor around late 1329 possibly to New Phokaia, by then a Genoese city, where the emperor visited the Genoese for testing their allegiance to Byzantium. In this instance, it was the Turkish emirs who were invited, not the emperor who went to their presence.²³⁶ By the 1330s, the emperor still had a superior status over the Turkish emirates in Anatolia. While the Sarukhan emir accepted the invitation, Aydinoglu Mehmed accepted it but did not personally show up, instead via his messenger he presented gifts to the emperor. As Kantakouzenos asserts, Andronikos III's calling of the emirs of Sarukhan and Aydin for a meeting was simply aimed at securing Byzantine interests. Another historian, Enverî, also recorded the event almost a century later than Kantakouzenos. For him, it proved the superior authority of the Aydinoglu emirate over the Byzantine Empire.²³⁷

chr. 8/27; vol. II, 243-244; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2763; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 170.

²³⁵ Gregoras, vol. I, 538-542; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 172. The years 1334-1336 witnessed the attempts of the Genoese in the Aegean to form an allied front with the Byzantines against the impending Turks. Gregoras, vol. I, 524-525.

²³⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 370-390; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 172.

²³⁷ Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le destân d'Umûr Pacha (Düsturname-i Enveri)*, 55-57, lines 235-286.

This has been interpreted as a change in Byzantine policy towards the Ottomans.²³⁸ It also signifies that the Ottoman threat was for the first time taken seriously by the emperor and consequently the ways of preventing further expansion of the Turks, who already came closer to Constantinople, began to be searched out. As the most important general in Andronikos III's army, John Kantakouzenos probably knew all aspects of the encounter with Orhan. It can be observed from his historical account.²³⁹

The year 1354 has been considered a crucial step for the hegemony of the Ottomans over the European territories of the Byzantine Empire. Already before 1354, the Ottoman troops commanded by Orhan's son Süleyman had taken the strategic fortress of Tzympe in 1352. Kantakouzenos, in his historical account, explains that Süleyman insisted on holding the fortress, in contrast to the existing agreement between the Byzantine emperor and Orhan, instead of leaving it to the Byzantines back again. Therefore, as the source tells, the Byzantine emperor dispatched an embassy (πρεσβείας) to Orhan in order to protest Süleyman's breach of agreement and he announced that he was ready to compensate Süleyman in return for Tzympe and to withdraw his soldiers.²⁴⁰ There is no evidence whatsoever about who the envoys in this embassy were and what the details of the embassy included.²⁴¹ Yet, Kantakouzenos narrates that it was a hard deal, because the emperor

²³⁸ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 170. Nicol puts forward the idea of John Kantakouzenos's influence in this shift, but he adds that the Grand Domestic (*megas domestikos*) of the time did not speak any word on the contents of the treaty.

²³⁹ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 339-362, 446-451.

²⁴⁰ Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk, c. 1295-1383*, 124-129. See Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 276-281. By the Byzantine-Ottoman treaty, Süleyman Paşa accepted to withdraw from Tzympe in return for 10.000 hyperpyra.

²⁴¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 278-279.

offered to pay an amount four times higher (μυριάδας χρυσίου τέτταρας) than what the existing agreement proposed.²⁴²

At some point, the tributes exacted could be abandoned. In such cases, the status quo was inflicted a change and consequently a requirement for reconsideration of the relations would appear. In a year after 1354, when the Ottomans occupied Gallipoli, a new tribute was imposed upon the Byzantine government. An unparalleled source for this reference is Demetrios Kydones, who wrote on the gradual loss of Byzantine territories to the Ottomans by bringing forth valuable details about diplomatic contacts between these two parties.²⁴³ For Kydones, as the tributes to the Ottomans increased, the Byzantine Empire would eventually crumble. A letter dated ca. 1377 from Kydones to John Laskaris Kalopheros indicates that the tributary status of the Byzantine Empire was consolidated in the last quarter of the fourteenth century and made it a mere vassal of the Ottoman Empire.²⁴⁴ In order to settle the arrangements between the two young rulers, Murad I and Andronikos IV Palaiologos, the latter personally visited the Ottoman ruler promising much greater tribute than before. Dölger dates this communication around the summer of 1376 shortly before the coronation of Andronikos IV.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 280. Cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3022. On the topic of the amount that Süleyman received to hand over the seized towns and fortresses, Chalkokondyles mentions an amount of sixty thousand drachmas: "... ἐπραττεν, ὥστε δοθῆναι οἱ ἐξάκις μυριάς δραχμάς, ..." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 30; trans. Kaldellis, 52. For Chalkokondyles's narrative's chronological shortfall on the conquest of Gallipoli, see Nicoloudes, "Ερμηνευτικά προβλήματα ἑνὸς ἱστορικοῦ γεγονότος: Ἡ κατάληψη τῆς Καλλίπολης καὶ ὁ Λαόνικος Χαλκοκονδύλης," 48. For the Turkish translation of this article, see Kırıldökme Mollaoğlu, "Bir tarihi olayın açıklanması ile ilgili sorunlar: Gelibolu'nun fethi ve Laonikos Chalkokondyles," 205-216.

²⁴³ Kydones, PG 154, 1012D.

²⁴⁴ Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 167, 37-39; ed. Cammelli, no. 25, 59, 2. Leone, "The Letters of Demetrios Kydones," 165. See also Charanis, "The strife among the Palaeologi and the Ottoman Turks, 1370 to 1402," 297-298; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 123.

²⁴⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 55; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.4, 94-96. See Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3152. Cf. Charanis, "The strife among the Palaeologi and the Ottoman Turks, 1370 to 1402," 296.

The tribute (φόρου τε ὑποτελεῖς) that John V Palaiologos had to pay Murad I in 1373, the one Andronikos IV Palaiologos promised to pay the same Ottoman ruler in the winter of 1376/1377, which, if we believe Chalkokondyles, was much greater than before (πολλαπλάσιον ὑπισχνοῦμαι ἀπάγειν ἔτους ἐκάστου), and finally the tribute (φόρον) of 30.000 gold pieces that was handed over to Murad I in 1379 designate the clarity of the status as tribute-paying state of the Byzantines vis-à-vis the Ottomans.²⁴⁶ This last one accompanied a request of Manuel II Palaiologos, then a prince, for his participation to Murad I's campaigns in person. These years coincide with the overwhelming status of the Ottoman ruler Murad I over many European states, whom he subjected to pay tribute to the Ottomans.²⁴⁷

The topic of tribute is also important for understanding diplomatic contacts and their practical aspects because the envoys must have conveyed tributes. In other words, alongside his task of delivering the message of his master, an envoy could also present a tribute. There appears in the sources cases in which envoys are said to have been entrusted to carry and submit the tributes. Neşrî narrates a case in point while he explains how the beg of Eflak sent off an envoy carrying the "harac." The envoy in this mission was also responsible for delivering the beg's sons to the service of the Ottoman sultans.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 34, 55. See Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 58; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.6, 100: "ἐτάξατο φόρον ἀπάγειν ὁ Ἐμμανουῆλος ἐς τρισμυρίου χρυσίνους, καὶ αὐτὸν ἄγοντα ἐπὶ στρατιὰν ἔπεσθαι συστρατευόμενον"; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 33-34; Charanis, "The strife among the Palaeologi and the Ottoman Turks, 1370 to 1402," 293.

²⁴⁷ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 45; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1.52, 79.

²⁴⁸ "... Eflâk Beyi, elçiyle haracını gönderip, ita'at etti. Ve dahi oğlanlarını hizmete, kapıya gönderdi ki, ayrık yağılık etmiye. Eğer edecek olursa oğlanlarını helâk edeler. Eflâk oğlu'yla bu vech üzere musâlaha edip, barışıklık ettiler. Andan Sultan kalkıp, Ungurus vilâyetine varıp, kal'a-i Severin'i feth etti. Şevket-i islâmî küffâr görüp, sulh edip, üç emir-zade kefereyi hizmete gönderip ve hâcet oldukça leşker dahi göndermeğe iltizâm edip, şöyle ahdettiler ki, mâdâm-ki Sultan ül-islâm velmüslimîn hayatta ola, muhalefet ve hiyanet etmiyeler. Andan sonra küffârın ayrık hiyâneti zâhir olmadı." Neşrî, vol. II, 537.

Another example of tribute as a matter of international affairs can be found in the Ottoman chronicles. Neşrî portrays Musa as a person who appropriated the properties of various neighboring begs and thus had an attempt to gain authority over them. The prince requested tributes from these local leaders. He further sent his father's vizier İbrahim Paşa to Manuel II from whom he was to demand tribute (harac). Neşrî at that point describes the vizier's rejection of obeying his master's order but defection to Mehmed after he arrived in Constantinople. İbrahim Paşa wrote a letter to Mehmed explaining Musa's plan and the distaste of the begs regarding Musa's approaches towards them. Responding to İbrahim Paşa with a letter, Mehmed invited him, who joined the Ottoman prince afterwards.²⁴⁹

The narrators of the historical accounts used in this thesis could serve in the diplomatic traffic as members of embassies. Living under Genoese-controlled Lesbos, the historian Doukas on several occasions served as a tribute presenter entrusted to convey tributes to the Ottoman court. In 1455, Domenico Gattilusio sent Doukas on a mission to Hamza, who was then the governor of Chersonese.²⁵⁰ Meanwhile, in order to reach a long-lasting state of peace with the Ottomans, John VIII Palaiologos decided to leave some cities and towns for the Ottomans. This was accompanied by a promise of an annual tribute that was equal to three hundred thousand silver coins. For Doukas, the embassy was a fundamental action that enabled the Genoese to keep the peace.²⁵¹

Among the diplomatic contacts between the two parties that included tribute, a handful cases involved exact sums. The abovementioned tribute constitutes one of

²⁴⁹ Neşrî, vol. II, 488-490; Kastritsis, *The tales of Sultan Mehmed, son of Bayezid Khan*, 79 (= Cengiz and Yücel, "Rûhî Tarihi," 427); Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid. Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 165-166.

²⁵⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 43.5, 403-405.

²⁵¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 29.1, 245.

the unique instances where sources refer to the exact amount. There are some others, which have been mentioned earlier in this sub-chapter. Another one is from the year 1424 when a peace treaty was concluded between Manuel II Palaiologos and Murad II, possibly without John VIII's knowledge. The treaty was signed when John VIII was away from Constantinople for his trip to Western Europe and Manuel was left behind. According to the treaty, the Byzantine emperor agreed to surrender the coastal Byzantine cities and towns along the Black Sea and pay an annual tribute of three hundred thousand silver coins.²⁵²

On the other hand, some cases, in which nothing is said about the total sum, also existed. In these, the scale is described in general terms. For example, describing the compensation for the service of Orhan in Anna of Savoy's fight against John VI Kantakouzenos, Doukas mentions a large amount of gold (χρυσίου πολλοῦ) that was promised to the Ottoman ruler by Anna of Savoy.²⁵³ Interestingly, this very detail is not mentioned by Kantakouzenos, who would not fail to mention the empress' counter efforts to form alliances with Turkish rulers.²⁵⁴

Concluding this sub-chapter, it needs to be underlined that the status of the Byzantine Empire as a tributary state from the mid-fourteenth century onwards had a decisive role in the growing incapacity of the empire to recover the economic balance.

²⁵² "Ὁ βασιλεὺς οὖν Ἰωάννης ποιήσας κατάστασιν καὶ τελείαν εἰρήνην μετὰ τοῦ Μωράτ δοὺς αὐτῷ τὰς πόλεις καὶ κόμας ἃς εἶχεν ἡ Ποντικὴ θάλασσα πλὴν τῶν κάστρων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθη λαβεῖν ἐν τῇ μάχῃ, οἷον Μεσημβρίας Δέρκους καὶ ἄλλα, καὶ τὸ Ζητούνιον σὺν ταῖς λοιπαῖς χώραις τοῦ Στρυμόνος, καὶ κατ' ἔτος τέλος ἁσπρῶν τριακοσίων χιλιάδων εἰρηνεύων κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἐκάθητο." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 29.1, 245. See Taeschner, "The Ottoman Turks to 1453," 769; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 35-36, 47-48.

²⁵³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 8.1&2, 55, 57.

²⁵⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 498. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2904.

2.4 Intelligence services

Espionage, which is different from the traditional ways of diplomatic methods, in diplomatic relations between the two polities is rarely attested in the available sources. As for the Byzantine intelligence service, much has been written in the earlier periods of the empire, whereas the later centuries still await a comprehensive treatment. Probably the reason for that is the lack of references to this age-old method and organization of providing security to states' existences in late Byzantine historiography.²⁵⁵ Yet still, there are indications of the presence of spies in the late Byzantine period. *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân*, a mid-fifteenth century Ottoman source, mentions how the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaiologos made use of the spies to gather intelligence about the Ottoman ruler's reaction following the Council of Ferrara/Florence.²⁵⁶

A similar situation of what is observed in Byzantine scholarship today is true for the field of modern Ottoman studies. While there were multiple studies on espionage in the Ottoman Empire's later centuries, no particular research has been conducted on the topic in the early Ottoman era.²⁵⁷ The main reason for this unstudied state of the subject was possibly the relative scarcity of evidence in both late Byzantine and early Ottoman history. The identification that primary sources

²⁵⁵ Dvornik, *Origins of intelligence services*. The book has an extensive part on the intelligence in Byzantium. Dvornik, *Origins of intelligence services*, 21-187. More recently, Nike Koutrakou treated the subject in several of her research but dealt with mostly the earlier periods of Byzantine diplomacy. Some of her studies are as follows: Koutrakou, "Diplomacy and espionage: Their role in Byzantine foreign relations, 8th-10th centuries," 125-144; Koutrakou, "'Eyes of the emperor' and 'real spies'. Stories of espionage in Byzantine writings," 47-64.

²⁵⁶ *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân*, trans. İnalcık and Oğuz, 4. See also İnalcık, "Gazavât-ı Sultan Murad," 438-439.

²⁵⁷ The closest study in terms of the period it covers deals with the spies of the Ottoman court in the sixteenth century in the rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire. See Gürkan, *Espionage in the 16th century Mediterranean: Secret diplomacy, Mediterranean go-Betweens and the Ottoman Habsburg rivalry*; Gürkan, "Dishonorable ambassadors? Spies and secret diplomacy in Ottoman Istanbul."

rendered for the individuals entrusted with the task of spying reveals a common portrait that lacks conventional training or bureaucratic background. That does not diminish the importance of intelligence activities. On the contrary, it triggers further instigation that asks questions about who these spies were and what they actually worked for.

The main goal of a spy was to learn about the enemy's resources, plans, and current state of affairs as much as possible. A polity could need all these to develop policies or counter-actions. Political powers, therefore, made use of spies as a way to gather intelligence so that they could take action, thwart their enemies accordingly and consequently shape the politics or revert their disadvantages.

From the early stages of Byzantine-Ottoman encounter onwards, espionage played a particular part in foreign diplomacy and warfare. In the battle of Bapheus (1302), its contribution to the course of events seems undeniable.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, Aşıkpaşazade mentions some talented spies who were entrusted to trace the tekfur of Konur Hisar and thus to inform Süleyman Paşa to capture him.²⁵⁹ This phenomenon of espionage seems to have been quite crucial for the rulers or commanders to guess the next step of their foes or for any counteraction and proactive measurements vigilantly.

Spies of other polities were also attributed occasionally with distinguishing dexterity in the Ottoman chronicles. An example to that would be Neşrî's mention of a certain Ahi Mustafa who was sent by Ali Beg, one of the Tatar begs, to Mehmed I while they both were in Murted Ova (forty km west of Ankara) in order to learn the

²⁵⁸ İnalçık, "Osman Ghazi's siege of Nicaea and the battle of Bapheus," 86-90.

²⁵⁹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 50-51; ed. Atsız, bâb 41, 125.

quantity of the latter's soldiers. That individual was dressed like an envoy and aimed to fulfill his secret mission.²⁶⁰

In another story in both Aşıkpaşazade's and Neşrî's chronicles, the Ottomans caught a spy/emissary. Having been disguised somehow among the Ottomans, that spy was apparently a man working for the Byzantine court and entrusted with gathering intelligence about the Ottoman strategy. According to our sources, he was heading to Hungary to inform the king of the country about the coming Turkish attack and advise him to be ready for it. After his capture, he was brought to the Ottoman ruler Bayezid. When the spy was interrogated, he confessed that before him there was another spy who already informed the Hungarian court about the circumstances. Upon the capture of this individual, as the sources inform, with his beglerbegi's (Kara Timurtaş) encouragement Bayezid decided to go against Constantinople.²⁶¹ This is how the Ottoman siege of Constantinople began in 1394, as explained by the chroniclers.

Ottoman sources occasionally refer to the presence of intelligence gathering activities of the Ottoman sultans. To begin with, the early phase of the Ottoman presence in Bithynia witnessed various use of that method in realpolitik. The castellan of İnegöl, Aya Nikola as he appears in the chronicles, had a spy (casus) who watched over his master's interest and gave intelligence about Osman's troops. Osman had also a spy, a martolos, who informed Osman on the tekvrur's ambush.²⁶² Furthermore, the Ottoman sources narrate how Murad II tried to gather intelligence

²⁶⁰ Neşrî, vol. I, 415: "Anı sultana ilçî suretinde casusluğa gönderdi ..."

²⁶¹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 65-66; ed. Atsız, bâb 60, 136-137; Neşrî, vol. I, 325.

²⁶² Neşrî, vol. I, 80. For another example of the use of these spies by Süleyman Paşa, see Neşrî, vol. I, 182. For the term martolos and the organization named as such, see Anhegger, "Martoloslar Hakkında," 282-320. The term is used to designate a certain group of warriors in *Gazavât- Sultân Murâd b. Mehmed Hân*, trans. İnalçık and Oğuz, 3.

concerning the state of his enemies and activities by dispatching a company from among his warriors while he was campaigning by leaving half of his army behind. This intention of the Ottoman ruler is described as “dil alma” (i.e. to gather intelligence) in these sources. In fact, during his Hungarian campaign in 1436, Murad II came into agreement with the Byzantines and was able to get informed about the intentions of Karamanoğlu emirate thanks to various occasions that brought intelligence (i.e. “diller”). He was thus able to ward off the threat as these sources inform.²⁶³ There are further indications that the Ottomans followed this practice of submitting initially their intelligence service before moving on. Before the battle of Varna in November 1444, as Doukas informs, Mehmed II and his viziers Halil, Saruca and Zaganos were acknowledged by spies, who carried intelligence from Hungary that the Hungarian and Vlachian military contingents were being prepared for a war on the Danube.²⁶⁴ As another example, in 1448, when the Hungarian commander János Hunyadi began to move against the Ottomans by passing through Belgrade, Murad II aimed to see who these troops were. He related the approaching group with the Hungarian ruler and immediately commanded to spy on them and in this way wanted to get to know these troops. For that mission, a certain *martolos*, a spy or an informant here, named Doğan was selected and dispatched to gather knowledge on the enemy.²⁶⁵

On the other hand, the efficacy of the late Byzantine espionage can be observable in a few sources of information. For instance, Sphrantzes provides

²⁶³ Hoca Sadeddin, *Tacü't-Tevarih*, vol. II, trans. Parmaksızoğlu, 184; *Gazavât- Sultân Murâd b. Mehmed Hân*, trans. İnalcık and Oğuz, 4-5. For the issues of reconnaissance and gathering intelligence in the Ottoman tradition, see Daş Darıcı, *Osmanlılarda istihbarat faaliyetleri (1300-1750)*, 156.

²⁶⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 32.4, 275-277.

²⁶⁵ Neşrî, vol. II, 658: “مارتلوس طوغان”, “جاسوسلداك”.

information on the presence of spies who worked for the Byzantine court. He mentions that spies were among the attendants of Mehmed I, who crossed over the Bosphorus and met with the Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaiologos in 1419-1420. Before the Ottoman ruler's arrival, as Sphrantzes witnessed, Mehmed I's antagonistic plan to attack Constantinople after his return to his country was delivered to the Byzantine court secretly by these spies. This story of a covert operation of Mehmed I affected the population in the Byzantine capital and divided the inhabitants into two groups, while one of them was supporting the capture of Mehmed, the other was hoping to collaborate with the Ottomans. This very piece of story indicates that the Byzantines were able to benefit from a developed system of gathering intelligence through spies.²⁶⁶ This very event was followed by a welcoming of Mehmed by three leading Byzantines, Demetrios Leontares, Isaakios Asan, and Manuel Kantakouzenos at Diplokionion.

Inside the Byzantine court in Constantinople, spies had a prominent part in the dissemination of "secret" news from one party to another. Demetrios Kydones, who occupied a central position in the empire's foreign relations for some decades in the fourteenth century, wrote in one of his letters to Manuel II Palaiologos dated 1387 that he was anxious about the spies in the court who could destroy his hopes for reuniting with Manuel II.²⁶⁷

In conclusion, this brief sub-chapter aims to underline that espionage played a part in intelligence gathering and thus in the preparation stages of military campaigns

²⁶⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.1, 14: "προμαθόντες ὡς ἐν μυστηρίῳ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκείνου, ὅτι ὑπάγει."

²⁶⁷ Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 368, 314; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 64.

or in decision-making processes in diplomatic attitudes. Throughout the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries the role of spies was functional and decisive.

2.5 Marriage diplomacy

A brief section on marriage diplomacy between the two courts is required to be able to understand the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomacy in its entirety. For this reason, here is a part which is accompanied by a chronological description and evaluation of each detectable royal marriage. Marriage was a common practice and one of the most influential instruments in establishing ties between different polities. It serves in a way as a binding promise that facilitated or encouraged diplomatic contacts and consequently provided the parties of the contract with considerable conformity and security in their foreign policies. In her article investigating how marriage played role in ensuring Byzantium's stability in diplomatic sphere, Judith Herrin is able to show marriage alliances that mostly allowed Byzantium "to sustain foreign relations" with its neighbors.²⁶⁸

The late Byzantine emperors conducted marriage alliances with many of their rivals. The ones that were concluded with the Western states by far predominated the others. This network included Bulgarians, Serbians, Trapezuntines, Armenians, Russians, Latins, Tatars, and finally Turks as parts of the extensive Byzantine imperial family. For the Byzantine imperial family, these dynastic connections not only took place by marrying the emperors' daughters or sisters off to foreign royal males but also by wiving with a female member of a foreign dynasty.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Herrin, *Unrivalled influence. Women and empire in Byzantium*, 303.

²⁶⁹ Origone, "Marriage connections between Byzantium and the West in the age of the Palaiologoi," 226-241.

Traditionally the phenomenon of intermarriage has been considered important since it meant to be a way of “absorbing foreign groups.”²⁷⁰ Although marriage with non-Christians was prohibited in the Orthodox tradition, late Byzantine history reveals multiple cases of intermarried Byzantine-Ottoman individuals. This approach began to be a novel practice under the dynasty of the Komnenoi.²⁷¹ Similar attitudes were also adopted by the other Christian polities of the region. As cited by both Laonikos Chalkokondyles and Michael Panaretos, Eudocia, a princess of the Komnenoi of Trapezund, married to a Turkish emir.²⁷²

There are two main aspects of the topic in terms of the social groups engaged in that trend. First of all, that epoch bears indications of various royal marriages that occurred exclusively between an Ottoman male royal member and a Byzantine female member of the imperial court. In our historical sources, no female member of the House of Osman is described as intermarried with a Byzantine individual. On the other hand, sources never relieve a case in which an Ottoman princess married off to a Christian prince, whereas the Ottomans established frequent marriage alliances with other Muslim countries as was the case in various instances with Germiyanoglu, Dulkadiroglu, Karamanoglu or other emirates.²⁷³

Apart from political struggles between the Ottomans and the Byzantines, there were mutual intellectual and religious relations/communications. Mixed identities can be described as a characteristic of the period. From the late eleventh-

²⁷⁰ Nicol, “Mixed marriages in Byzantium in the thirteenth century,” 160-172. For the absorption of individuals in the new cultural environment and through marriages, see Vryonis, “Byzantine and Turkish societies and their sources of manpower,” 125-152.

²⁷¹ Macrides, “Dynastic marriages and political kinship,” 271-272.

²⁷² Carroll, “A minor matter of imperial importance in the ‘Sphrantzes Chronicle’,” 90.

²⁷³ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 437. See also, for example, Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 56-57; ed. Atsız, bâb 50-51, 129-130. Nefise, the daughter of Murad I, married to Alâeddin Karamanoğlu in 1378. Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, 165-167, 181.

early twelfth century onwards Byzantine sources describe a bilingual group bearing two ethnic descents: *mixobarbaroi*. These mixed groups constituted a considerable part of society in the frontier regions particularly in Bithynia. This phenomenon sealed the reality of a multicultural setting that prevailed along the borders upon which society was dwelled.²⁷⁴ Anna Komnena asserts that the offspring of a mixed marriage spoke Greek, but from one of the parents she still marks the barbarian connection.²⁷⁵ Intermarriage was a common phenomenon among the lower social strata in both societies, which actually brought a mixture of both cultures and societies. Rustam Shukurov's suggestion alluding that most of the members of the Seljuk ruling elite, especially the ones having a Greek mother, spoke Greek to some extent. He further claims that some of the Seljuk sultans had a dual identity comprising of Turkic/Persian and Greek ethnic and cultural elements.²⁷⁶ The family of Maurozomes would provide an excellent example for that. Some members of the Maurozomai developed personal loyalty and friendship with the Seljuk ruling elite, besides they occupied important offices at the Seljuk palace in Konya. This signifies their political function within the Seljuk Sultanate.²⁷⁷ In the early 1390s, Manuel II Palaiologos describes his experiences while he was in Bayezid I's company. He writes that there were some descendants in Ankara who could speak Greek and serve as translators in the religious dialogue.²⁷⁸ Having intermarried with a

²⁷⁴ Balivet, "Culture ouverte et échanges inter-religieux dans les ottomans du XIVe s.," 1-7. Gregoras, vol. I, 379.

²⁷⁵ Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, trans. Sewter, 234, 485-486. For the roles of these *mixobarbaroi*, see also Necipoğlu, "The coexistence of Turks and Greeks in Medieval Anatolia (eleventh-twelfth Centuries)," 65-67.

²⁷⁶ Shukurov, "Harem Christianity: The Byzantine identity of Seljuk princes," 133-134.

²⁷⁷ For the family and its connection with the Seljuk court, see Redford, "Maurozomes in Konya," 48-50.

²⁷⁸ For Manuel's letters indicating the vassal status and his participation in Bayezid's military campaigns, see Dennis, *The letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, Letter 16, 47, also Letters 14-21, 36-63; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 84-98; Reinert, "Manuel II Palaeologos and his müderris," 40-41.

Christian/Byzantine wife, a male member of this group could act as a Byzantine.

This became apparent if one looks at how frequently Seljuk sultans had such spouses.²⁷⁹ Thus, Christianity and the Greek language were the two elements that could be observable in the overall cultural and religious milieu of Anatolia during the twelfth-thirteenth centuries.

Mixed marriages between the Byzantines and the Turks did not constitute the only aspect of cultural integration, which is being exposed so far. Despite its limited extent in state and diplomatic circumstances, intermarriages occurred between the Byzantines and the Latins. Aristocratic families such as Rogerios, Raoul and Petraliphas were three prominent families of dual identity for a long time in the Byzantine Empire. These families maintained their Latin names to the end, but they were fully Hellenized in cultural terms.²⁸⁰ It may lead us to conclude that symbiosis and cultural integration were characteristics of the regions where any political interaction took place.

Furthermore, the succeeding centuries also witnessed a tendency among Turkish elite to marry a Christian woman. As mentioned by Doukas, a fifteenth-century Byzantine historian, Turks were so eager to take foreign women so that they received them as a Venus while they behaved their women wantonly and badly. Although this particular reference in Doukas's narrative reflects a topos describing the Ottomans as lustful people, matrimony between the Turks and Christians had become very common particularly among the ruling elite and aristocracy in Turkish principalities during the fourteenth century.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Shukurov, "Harem Christianity: The Byzantine identity of Seljuk princes," 115-120.

²⁸⁰ Nicol, "Symbiosis and integration. Some Greco-Latin families in Byzantium in the 11th to 13th centuries," 113-135.

²⁸¹ Zachariadou, "Notes on the wives of the emirs in fourteenth-century Anatolia," 61-68.

Muslim sources sometimes reveal a hesitation that marrying with an infidel lady would bring inconvenient moral tradition or unacceptable ways of behaviour to the Muslim court. Aşıkpaşazade, who is one of our major sources for the early Ottoman history, describes a Serbian princess, who was married with Bayezid I, in a very negative manner. Although many early Ottoman sultans had their primary ladies from the non-Muslim stock of the conquered lands, the situation was not always the same. Musa, one of the sons of Bayezid I, follows that tradition, yet, Mehmed did not choose this way but married with a woman from the Dulkadiroglu tribe. This should have been due to the latter's political aims so that his political authority lied in the Turkmen-dominated territories.²⁸²

Pachymeres underlines the significance of marriage alliances as an instrument to establish peace between parties. The author expresses how marriage may hold and lead the parties in question to a state of amity and alliance. Writing possibly in 1299, he asserts the following: "In fact, peace achieves many results that the sword does not achieve, and the treaties that are accomplished from marriages, because they are very solid and secure, end up achieving what battles and war have not achieved indeed."²⁸³ It is crucial to consider here this function of marriage as a means of peace-making could sometimes be obtained via marriages and the results of marriages could turn out to be instrumental. By containing promises rather than being simple contracts, marriages could be concluded to retain state interests as

²⁸² Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 17. Süleyman Çelebi had also married with a Christian lady, a close relative of Manuel II Palaiologos. In the epic of Melik Danismend, a marriage alliance with the Gabras family, very influential in the imperial territories across the Halys River in the east, is a thing that should be boasted of. A marriage alliance of such would bring prestige and political outcome.

²⁸³ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 10.9, 323: "πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ εἰρήνην ἀνύτειν ὅσα σίδηρος οὐκ ἰσχύει, καὶ σπονδὰς καταπράττειν καὶ μόλις τὰς ἐκ τῶν γάμων, συντακτικωτάτας οὐσας καὶ ἀσφαλεῖς, ὅσα μὴ μάχαι καὶ πόλεμος οὐμένουν κατεπράξαντο."

Pachymeres elsewhere defines the marriage between Andronikos II's daughter and Guillaume de la Roche (the duke of Athens). Pachymeres mentions this marriage as an example for "shallow marriages" (μετέωροι δ' ἦσαν οἱ γάμοι).²⁸⁴ Parties sought at the end a parental friendship in an attempt to bring an end to hostilities and to secure the conditions of peace.²⁸⁵ In this sense, as Juliette Dumas puts it in a nutshell, they were "effective means of expanding one's rule and consolidating one's dynasty."²⁸⁶ The main motivation behind marriages was to benefit from the opportunities to form alliances. Marriage was thus widely utilized to make diplomatic promises firm and strong not only by the Byzantine emperors but also by other contemporary leaders.²⁸⁷

The major purpose of a dynastic marriage alliance was to contribute to the empire's policy of "extended family." A dynastic marriage did not completely resolve future problems because changes in the reigns of rulers or civil tensions could make any established links invalid and out of date. Therefore, matrimonial alliances were rather like a temporary maneuver in a political milieu at the moment when they were made.²⁸⁸ Usually, treaties accompanied marriages as a complimentary part of a wider set of purposes. When a marriage was concluded, it became a seal for a treaty that accompanied the marriage in question.

Despite the mythical statement of *De Administrando Imperio* that speaks of a tradition which did not allow to marry non-Christians and non-Romans, the cases of exogamy are attestable starting from the fifth century onwards. The marriage of

²⁸⁴ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. II, Book 5.27, 529.

²⁸⁵ Macrides, "Dynastic marriages and political kinship," 273.

²⁸⁶ Dumas, "Des enclaves pour époux... Stratégies matrimoniales dans la dynastie ottoman (mi-XIV^e-début XVI^e siècle)," 255-275.

²⁸⁷ For the practical use of marriage to establish diplomatic links, see the chapter "Marriage. A fundamental element of imperial statecraft" in Herrin, *Unrivalled influence. Women and empire in Byzantium*, 302-320.

²⁸⁸ Malamut, "Les alliances matrimoniales dans la diplomatie byzantine du 8^e au 15^e siècle: une stratégie dynastique revisitée sur la longue durée," 380.

Galla Placidia with the Gothic ruler Athaulf in 414 or the one between Eudokia, emperor Heraclius's daughter, and a Turkish ruler would be two striking examples from the early centuries of the empire, which proliferated in its later centuries and turned out to be a widely practiced phenomenon from the eleventh century onwards as the sources in Greek and Turkish confirm many cases.²⁸⁹

Marrying barbarians began to be widely accepted in the imperial family in the later centuries of the empire because instances proliferate when we come to the alliances established with the Turkish neighbors of the Palaiologoi. In 1265, Maria Palaiologina was selected as a spouse to be married off to the Mongol leader Hulagü. When the spouse died upon the arrival of the Byzantine princess, Maria became the wife of Hülagü's son, Abaka. On the other hand, in 1269, another Byzantine princess, Euphrosyne, was married with Nogai, the ruler of the Mongols of the Golden Horde.²⁹⁰ Élisabeth Malamut underlines the main feature of these two marriages: they both involved the illegitimate daughters of the Byzantine emperor.²⁹¹

The foreign female members of the Palaiologan court sometimes gained power as they turned out to be influential figures not only in imperial foreign affairs, but they also created their areas of sovereignty in micro geographies. Between 1303 and 1317, the Byzantine empress Irene/Yolanda of Montferrat, Andronikos II's wife, followed her own foreign policy as "an indirect and unintended consequence of the marriage of her daughter Simonis to Stefan Uroš II."²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Vryonis, "The Byzantine legacy and Ottoman forms," 271, 287. Gregoras, vol. III, 504.

²⁹⁰ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. I, 234, 243.

²⁹¹ Malamut, "Les alliances matrimoniales dans la diplomatie byzantine du 8e au 15e siècle: une stratégie dynastique revisitée sur la longue durée," 430.

²⁹² Laiou, "Byzantium and the neighboring powers: Small-state policies and complexities," 45.

As a common policy of creating alliances, late Byzantine emperors followed the marriage diplomacy with many of their neighbors.²⁹³ Primary sources mention several instances of diplomatic contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the other polities, a few of which concern the Turks. To begin with, the first attestable marriage alliance took place between Orhan and the tekfur of Yarhisar. Orhan, who was a prince at the time of the marriage (probably in 1299), married Lülüfer (Nilüfer), whose Greek name is unknown.²⁹⁴ This marriage is considered to be a token of the Ottoman sovereignty over the settlement. In other words, it seems to have been a pledge of fealty.²⁹⁵ Nilüfer became the mother of the next Ottoman ruler Murad I, thus the lineage of the Ottoman imperial family originated from this marriage. This very marriage was indeed a borderline case; it did not take place between the imperial families.

The dynastic marriage alliances were generally made with Christian women in the fourteenth century, whereas the following century proved the reverse.²⁹⁶ The marriages of Orhan can be indicative of how Christian women were incorporated into the Ottoman dynasty. Following his marriage with Nilüfer, Orhan had another wife named Asporça Hatun. Although it has been argued that Orhan established an alliance through this marriage and he became the son-in-law of Andronikos III Palaiologos, there is not much information to make such an argument. The aim of this marriage was likely to obtain the Ottoman support vis-à-vis the ongoing threat

²⁹³ For a general overview of the cases known, see Malamut, “Les alliances matrimoniales dans la diplomatie byzantine du 8e au 15e siècle: une stratégie dynastique revisitée sur la longue durée,” 379-454.

²⁹⁴ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 17-18; ed. Atsız, bâb 13, 102-103; Neşrî, vol. I, 104.

²⁹⁵ Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, 85. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall transmits a story of later marriage of Orhan’s father, Osman, with Nilüfer. Cited in Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, 85, f.n. 5.

²⁹⁶ Pierce, *The imperial harem*, 29.

from the Serbians and the Bulgarians.²⁹⁷ As her name could reveal, the wife could have had a Christian background; yet, evidences are not adequate to know more about her origin.²⁹⁸ A year before his marriage with Theodora, the daughter of John VI Kantakouzenos, which will be our focus in the rest of this sub-chapter, Orhan had married to another Theodora, the daughter of the Serbian ruler Stephen IV Dušan in 1345. It is argued that Orhan had also a wife named Bayalun Khatun, whose identity remains to be obscure, yet she must have been Nilüfer Khatun, the wife of Orhan.²⁹⁹

Orhan's great military advancement coincided with one of the weakest periods of the Byzantine Empire in the 1340s. At that moment, the regional developments turned out to be altogether favorable for the Ottomans. The second civil war in the 1340s seriously weakened the empire, made it deprived of its previous military prowess. That process ended up with the depletion of the imperial treasury.³⁰⁰ Shortly after the death of the emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos, John Kantakouzenos, then the *megas domestikos*, left Constantinople for Didymoteichon to lead the army there. Before setting out, as Kantakouzenos wrote in his testimony, the *megas domestikos* dispatched an embassy to Orhan, the purpose of which was to secure peace with the Ottomans. He did not want to lay the Byzantine territories open to possible Ottoman attacks in his absence. Consequently, they concluded a treaty possibly as a form of provisional truce.³⁰¹ According to a short chronicle, the terminus post quem for this diplomatic contact is the end of July 1341 as it marks

²⁹⁷ Parlaz, "Osmanlı hanedan evlilikleri üzerine bazı notlar," 65-73. The author does not give reference to any primary source that might point out the identity of Asporça being the daughter of Andronikos III and his wife Anna of Savoy.

²⁹⁸ Pierce, *The imperial harem*, 34-35.

²⁹⁹ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. I, 149. For the argument putting forward the name of Bayalun, see Babinger, "Nilüfer Khatun," 43; Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, 165.

³⁰⁰ Gregoras, vol. II, 790, 810-811.

³⁰¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 66.

Kantakouzenos's departure. In other words, it took place shortly after Andronikos III's death.³⁰²

Kantakouzenos asked Orhan to provide troops for his fight against Andronikos III Palaiologos in the civil war, whereupon the "first" contact of Kantakouzenos with the Ottomans took place in 1344. The Ottoman ruler responded positively because he probably found the offer suitable not only to extend his control in the entire Bithynia and Mesothynia, but also to test the conditions for moving to Thrace. Allowing pillage to decrease the power of his antagonists, John Kantakouzenos provided the appropriate conditions for Orhan, who was able to get to know the region and had a chance to collect booty from the Byzantine territories.³⁰³

The role of marriage on the reproduction and continuation of the dynasty had a central importance in the Ottoman system. The deliberate policy that did not allow the reproduction of foreign noble wives of the Ottoman sultans seem to have been adopted in the period in question. This was a way of controlling the influence of foreign royal houses. The only exception that we have definite evidence was the marriage between Orhan and Theodora. This marriage produced children. For Leslie P. Pierce, the status of the Ottomans in this marriage was that of a supplicant.³⁰⁴ Kantakouzenos provides excellent details for this marriage, which is one of the few marriage ceremonies described in historical sources in great detail. Uniformly agreed, our sources speak about a variety of his attempts to establish alliances, as he sought to make his own rule firm in the region. For that objective, Orhan's marriage

³⁰² Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, chr. 8/33, 81.

³⁰³ Gregoras, vol. II, 100.

³⁰⁴ Pierce, *The imperial harem*, 41.

with one of Kantakouzenos's daughters would be appropriate. A closer glimpse will allow a better understanding of this complex network of marriage diplomacy that signifies the second marriage union between the ruling authorities of each side. The preliminary research in the topic of Kantakouzenos's marriage alliance is the one conducted by Anthony Bryer, who in an excellent study four decades ago examined the marriage with all its aspects. Based on the Byzantine chronicles, Bryer saw this marriage alliance as a turning point in Byzantium's relations with the Turks.³⁰⁵

Kantakouzenos previously offered one of his three daughters to Umur beg of Aydınoğlu emirate, who rejected it pointing out that it was not appropriate to take the daughter of a brother, as Kantakouzenos was a 'brother' to him.³⁰⁶ After Umur lost Smyrna to the Latins, Kantakouzenos must have thought that the position of the Aydınoğlu emir was no longer prominent for his existence in the Aegean, because we see him developing close relations with Orhan. That change seems to have occurred in ca. 1345. When Kantakouzenos began to think that Orhan would be his new ally, Umur was still alive. Nevertheless, once Orhan sent an embassy to Kantakouzenos in late 1345 or early 1346 asking him if he accepts a marriage with Theodora, the daughter of Kantakouzenos. For his decision, Kantakouzenos needed to get approval from Umur, because they had a very intimate relationship, as revealed in Kantakouzenos's and Enveri's words as 'brotherhood', or perhaps because he might have needed him in the future. At the end, Kantakouzenos took advantage of the situation and gained Orhan's alliance, otherwise Anna of Savoy's power would have become incontestable. The question whether it was this marriage

³⁰⁵ Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: The case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," 471-493.

³⁰⁶ Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le destān d'Umūr Pacha*, 1739-1820.

that opened the doors of Europe to the Turks or it accelerated the extensive destruction of the Byzantine countryside in Thrace and the Balkans lies open.³⁰⁷

Although it has been regarded that the first occupation of a Byzantine settlement in the European territories by the Turks was in 1354, Thrace already became a shelter for Turkish mercenaries at the end of the thirteenth century.

The first part of the wedding ceremony between Theodora and Orhan took place in Selymbria in the early summer or September of the year 1346, shortly after Kantakouzenos's coronation in Adrianople on 21 May 1346.³⁰⁸ The groom was absent in that ceremony. This event is also important concerning ceremonial aspects. One has to bear in mind another important point. At the time of the marriage, the civil war did not end in Constantinople, but Kantakouzenos was recently crowned.³⁰⁹ This explains why the wedding took place outside of Constantinople, at Selymbria. A long and generous feast bears clues to how traditional Byzantine protocol, customs (e.g. *prokypsis*) and practices took place at a prominent wedding. It is interesting that Byzantine traditional imperial ceremony of *prokypsis* was carried out in front of an audience consisting Muslim participants. Kantakouzenos further gives details regarding the ceremonial and visual aspects of the event. During the *prokypsis*, there were some eunuchs kneeling and holding candles. The ceremony had also sounding effects, namely trumpets were sounded as well as songs voiced by performers.³¹⁰

If we take Kantakouzenos's account at face value, his description of an instance showing the position of both Kantakouzenos and Orhan is modest.

³⁰⁷ See Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, vol. III, 356.

³⁰⁸ Malamut, "L'impératrice byzantine et la cour XIII^e-XV^e s.," 645-661.

³⁰⁹ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 205.

³¹⁰ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 588-589. See Malamut, "L'impératrice byzantine et la cour (XIII^e – XV^e siècle)," 653; Vryonis, "The Byzantine legacy and Ottoman forms," 271. The event of wedding ceremony between Theodora and Orhan has more recently been examined here: Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 221-223.

Kantakouzenos was the only person on horseback in the presence of the Ottoman ruler. Kantakouzenos's older age or more probably the author's overall attitude of elevating himself through descriptions must be considered while evaluating Orhan's position in the ceremonies. Perhaps there was a sort of hierarchy unveiled in this scene. According to the way Kantakouzenos's status vis-à-vis Orhan is praised and exalted in the emperor's memoirs, this description could have been loaded with conscious depiction of the confrontation.

The way the marriage occurred did not conform to the standard. The bridegroom was absent from the ceremony, which took place on Byzantine soil. Almost a year later Orhan came into contact with his father-in-law at Skoutari. The meeting that took place in the spring of the year 1347 was a celebration of the wedding ceremony in the Ottoman lands and of Kantakouzenos's 'conquest' of Byzantium as he calls it.³¹¹ The territories in and around Skoutari was under Turkish control by the summer of 1347. Kantakouzenos gives details of this meeting in his account:

When the emperor's son-in-law Orhan learned that he had conquered Byzantium and already was firmly in control of the entire dominion of the Romans, he came with all his household to the shore opposite Byzantium, called locally Skutari, to join in celebrating his victory. The emperor immediately crossed over by ship to meet him, and they rejoiced with each other for several days, relaxing in hunting, drinking, and toasts of friendship. The emperor and his son-in-law Orhan ate together at the same table, while the four sons, born to Orhan from other wives, ate at another table not far from the emperor's. The other distinguished Persians [i.e. the Ottomans] and Romans reclined on rugs to partake of all that the emperor provided. After they had their fill of festivities, Orhan remained in the camp, while the emperor returned to Byzantium with his daughter Theodora, the wife of Orhan. The children of Orhan followed with others from his household. Theodora stayed with the empress, her mother, and her sisters for three days and then returned to

³¹¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 62.

Bithynia with Orhan's sons and the other followers, who had been lavishly treated by the emperor, her father.³¹²

One of the major consequences of the marriage was that the Ottomans now became integrated into the familial network of the Byzantine Empire. The origin of the notion of tying other nations to the Byzantine imperial family goes back to earlier times in Byzantine history. The Byzantine court considered it important to form an enormous family tree by marrying imperial members with their neighbors. What kind of advantage did this bring to the Byzantine Empire in history and this case in particular? One objective was obviously to save their territories against pillaging by the outsiders. Laonikos Chalkokondyles explains a similar decision of Alexios III Komnenos of Trebizond when he married his daughter to a Turkoman in 1352. According to the author, the decision aimed to protect the territorial integrity of the Grand Komnenoi.³¹³

The writings of Kantakouzenos portray a well-determined and beneficial collaboration between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. His emphasis on Theodora's philanthropic activities towards the Christian communities in Ottoman Bithynia to remain faithful to her religion and encourage the converts to revert to Christianity, as Bryer rightly questions it, was either a mere justification of his alliance with Orhan or a representation of the reality in the region at that time that the religious identity was not so strict.³¹⁴

³¹² Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 28. The translation belongs to Kantakouzenos, trans. Miller, 165, 267-268.

³¹³ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 75-76; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.26, 128-130; Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: The case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," 481. See also, Bryer, "Greeks and Türkmens: The Pontic exception," 113-148.

³¹⁴ Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: The case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," 488, 490. Bryer comments on the meaning of the marriage, which may have been interpreted as Kantakouzenos's vassalage to the Ottoman ruler: "In this ambiguous field Kantakouzenos would naturally offer a dowry: the bride price was Orhan's military support. But, like the Türkmens of the Pontos, Orhan may well have viewed the marriage of 1346 as a mark of vassalage. His ulu hatun (chief wife and mother of Murad I) was Nilüfer, whom he married in 1299. Evidently a convert to Islam, she was the daughter of the Byzantine governor of Yarhisar. Alderson had no doubt that the

Furthermore, Anna of Savoy, the mother of Kantakouzenos's contender John V Palaiologos, did not want to lose Orhan as an ally. Gregoras mentions her immediate response to this shift of alliance. Once she learned about the marriage, having sent lavish gifts she entrusted a certain George Tagaris to the Sarukhan emir to get help against Kantakouzenos. However, things went contrary to the empress's expectations. The Turkish forces reached Selymbria, yet, due to the lack of guidance at the hands of Byzantine soldiers and the fact that they were not diverted to their expected mission, they devastated the whole area in close proximity to the capital. In the meantime, at Selymbria, Kantakouzenos made peace with this Turkish force of the Sarukhan emir by giving presents to them.³¹⁵ J. L. van Dieten argues that upon hearing Anna's call, Kantakouzenos's faithful ally Umur sent his troops to be used against her. The author also states that both the troops of Sarukhan emir and Umur were there at around the same time.³¹⁶ After all, it marks, on the one hand, the challenging aspect of the civil strife in the sense that both parties took action against each other and tried to form alliances. On the other hand, the intended allies benefited from that environment according to their interests.

Marriages constituted an important element in constructing alliances in the Middle Ages. In the middle of the fourteenth century, the states in the Balkans tried to make their strategic plans happen via intermarriages between courts.

Kantakouzenos's alliance via Theodora was not the only example for the Ottomans,

marriage 'symbolized the annexation of her father's estates'." Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: The case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," 486-487. Regarding the role of dowry in the marriage, there is a need to further analysis. For cross-cultural encounters in the period, see Zachariadou, "Religious dialogue between Byzantines and Turks during the Ottoman expansion," 295-304; Kafadar, "A Rome of one's own: Reflections on cultural geography and identity in the lands of Rum," 7-25; Krstic, *Contested conversions to Islam. Narratives of religious change in the early modern Ottoman Empire*.

³¹⁵ Gregoras, vol. I, 763. See Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2904 & 2905.

³¹⁶ Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, vol. V, 357. See also Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2912.

for example, previously in 1345, Stefan IV Dušan had married his daughter to Orhan.³¹⁷ Here, I tried to present an important example, which can show us a glimpse of the role of the method of marriage alliance in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic relations.

Moreover, there are other marriages between the imperial family members of both sides, on which there is little knowledge. In 1358, Halil, one of the sons of Orhan, married to Irene, the daughter of John V Palaiologos and Helena Kantakouzenos. The marriage did not last long and eventually Irene was left a widow.³¹⁸ As marked by Élisabeth Malamut, Halil's marriage into the Palaiologan family could well aim to help deliberate policy of the Byzantine emperor to halt Orhan's military aggressiveness. By connecting the families with a marriage alliance, Halil would be a contender to the throne so that the marriage in question would contribute to that goal.³¹⁹

The Venetian chancellor Raffaino de Caresinis mentions that Andronikos IV, who was imprisoned by his father John V Palaiologos between 1376 and 1379, offered his sister Maria to Murad I in August 1376, possibly in the context of Andronikos's alliance with the Ottoman ruler. However, the marriage did not take place due to the death of the bride-to-be.³²⁰ Anthony Dolphin Alderson states that three daughters of John V Palaiologos were married to Murad I and his sons Yakub

³¹⁷ Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: The case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," 478.

³¹⁸ See Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus), ca. 1100-1460*, 134-135, f.n. 4; Tinnefeld, "Kaiser Ioannes V. Palaiologos und der gouverneur von Phokaia 1356-1358," 268. On the other hand, Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 18, f.n. 42 ignores the marriage.

³¹⁹ Malamut, "Les alliances matrimoniales dans la diplomatie byzantine du 8^e au 15^e siècle: une stratégie dynastique revisitée sur la longue durée," 431. See also Ganchou, "Zampia Palaiologina Doria épouse du prétendant ottoman Muṣṭafā: un fils de Bāyezīd I^{er} (1421) ou de Mehmed I^{er} (1422)?" 133-138.

³²⁰ Luttrell, "John V's daughters: A Palaiologan puzzle," 104.

and Bayezid. Anthony Luttrell does not trust the author because of the lack of historical references, which are indeed a few.³²¹

Marriages continued to take place between the two courts after a relative silence until June 1410, when the son of Bayezid, Süleyman, was promised to marry Manuel II's niece, an illegitimate daughter of his late brother Theodore I, Despot of the Morea. There is no certainty that proves the realization of this marriage alliance, because the Ottoman prince died shortly thereafter. Seeking the best possible conditions for keeping the balance as opposed to the Ottomans, Manuel II made another attempt to establish a marriage alliance with Mehmed I. This time the emperor offered the Ottoman prince another of his nieces, Maria Kantakouzena. However, the marriage did not take place due to the bride's death.³²²

The Byzantine marriage diplomacy showed itself in an attempt to achieve short-term gains in a dynastic struggle within the Ottoman imperial family. The last two examples are apparent indicators of this policy. In that context, Manuel II supported the pretender Mustafa, who was claimed to be the brother of Bayezid, and offered him an alliance by a marriage between him and Zampia Palaiologina Doria, who was another niece of the emperor and the daughter of the Genoese Ilario Doria and a legitimate daughter of John V Palaiologos. The marriage took place around early October 1422. It was the last chance, as Thierry Ganchou underlines, for the Byzantines to have the opportunity to benefit from the inner dissensions within the Ottoman court by using marriage diplomacy.³²³

³²¹ Alderson, *The structure of the Ottoman dynasty*, tables XXIII-XXIV; Luttrell, "John V's daughters: A Palaiologan puzzle," 103.

³²² Ganchou, "Zampia Palaiologina Doria épouse du prétendant ottoman Muṣṭafā: un fils de Bāyezīd I^{er} (1421) ou de Mehmed I^{er} (1422)?" 136-137.

³²³ Ganchou, "Zampia Palaiologina Doria épouse du prétendant ottoman Muṣṭafā: un fils de Bāyezīd I^{er} (1421) ou de Mehmed I^{er} (1422)?" 159-165.

Marriages could sometimes be formed for the purpose of adaptation to the changing circumstances and shifting alliances. A case in point would be the discussion of the possibility of a marriage between Constantine XI and Mara, who was married to Murad II earlier. After her husband's death, as Sphrantzes recounts, she became a topic of a conversation between the author and the emperor in 1451.³²⁴

The marriage diplomacy was put into practice by the Byzantine emperors in order to enlarge the sphere of the Byzantine culture through princesses and to gather intelligence and strategic knowledge that would be meaningful for a better developing the foreign diplomacy.³²⁵ However, as argued by Paul Wittek, Mehmed I preferred a conscious policy of marriage diplomacy during his reign. Accordingly, Mehmed I tried to secure the Turkish tradition and did not want prevalence of Christian women as wives of himself and for his sons as well. For that reason, the Ottoman ruler searched for alliances to be established with other Turkish ruling families of the neighboring emirates.³²⁶ These operative functions resulted in the fact that marriage alliances became one of the most preferred means of diplomatic method in the Palaiologan era. Yet, they, as Laiou argues, "did not impede the fragmentation but simply furnished a palliative in the form of temporary and shifting alliances."³²⁷ This tendency also shows that the empire could no longer stand as a militarily powerful state, hence, it needed to dwell on matrimonial connections to ward off threats especially coming from the Turks. Donald M. Nicol once called Andronikos III's overall attempt in defense of the empire "a failure to find a cure." He thinks that a policy from day to day could never be applied to Asia Minor. The

³²⁴ Carroll, "A minor matter of imperial importance in the 'Sphrantzes Chronicle'," 89.

³²⁵ Herrin, *Unrivalled influence. Women and empire in Byzantium*, 314-315.

³²⁶ Wittek, "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople," 1-34. Also see, Imber, "Paul Wittek's 'De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople'," 65-81.

³²⁷ Laiou, "Byzantium and the neighboring powers: Small-state policies and complexities," 50.

Greek inhabitants of the frontier regions were ready to change their masters due to the heavy burden of taxes.³²⁸ In such a state of troubles, Byzantium developed its foreign policy towards the Turks in the early fourteenth century and submitted to exogamies via Byzantine princesses with an aim of decreasing the destructive impacts of the territorial losses and eventually intending to secure the empire's interest in front of the expanding power of the Ottomans. Yet, there is no sign that these diplomatic maneuvers worked out and hampered the unavoidable decline of the Byzantine state, which obviously rendered its emperors dependent on alliances.³²⁹

2.6 Hostage diplomacy

Diplomacy was used by the Byzantine government in an environment surrounded by challenging powers to play against each other. As an age-old practice that can be observed in the seventh century when Constans II's cousin, Gregory, was left at the hands of the Umayyad caliph, leaving a hostage as a method of diplomacy presents another aspect of the existing tradition of keeping the peace.³³⁰ Truces could sometimes be concluded thanks to that method. As revealed in some historical evidence, feeding and sheltering a hostage could require full coverage of his/her expenses by the party who asked to leave hostages at the corresponding court. Late Byzantine history presents illuminating cases for hostage diplomacy. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, both the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans had to deal with civil strife or uprisings that were initiated by the hands of imperial members. Such occasions sometimes constituted serious troubles for the integrity of

³²⁸ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 122-123.

³²⁹ Herrin, *Unrivalled influence. Women and empire in Byzantium*, 314-315.

³³⁰ Kennedy, "Byzantine-Arab diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic conquests to the mid eleventh century," 134.

each entity. Seeking to receive an assurance of loyalty from the counterpart, hostage diplomacy was practically conducted by political authorities to be able to benefit from dynastic debates and to support one side against the other.

Taking hostages is a repeated issue in the contemporary historiography of the age. In our case, the first known practice of a Byzantine prince being handed over to the Ottoman court is observable sometime after 1376. It was Manuel Palaiologos who was a young prince and became a hostage in the Ottoman court in return for his father's collaboration with Bayezid. Manuel accompanied the Ottoman ruler during his campaigns against the Turkish emirates. Furthermore, he was taken as a hostage to convince John V, Manuel's father, to dismantle the fortifications at the Golden Gate in 1390.³³¹ Earlier, Manuel had similar experiences so that he knew quite well how being a hostage looked like. He was left as a hostage in Buda in 1366, and later in 1371, he came to rescue his father, who was not allowed to come back to Constantinople to compensate the debts of the empire to the Venetians.³³²

Both Byzantine and Ottoman historical sources frequently refer to the cases in which each party sought advantageous positions by offering or accepting hostages to/from its counterpart. The phenomenon of hostage diplomacy should be considered within that framework. It entailed a certain level of knowledge of interior policy/circumstances and using it against one another as was the case for instance in Bayezid I's manipulation of the status of John VII, who was Manuel's nephew and the son of Andronikos IV. Bayezid's claim was that the young imperial member was the actual heir to the throne. Clavijo mentions that John VII had lived under

³³¹ Majeska, *Russian travelers*, Ignatius of Smolensk, 102-104, commentary in 414-415; Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 13.4, 77.

³³² Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425). A Byzantine emperor in a time of tumult*, 52.

Bayezid's control in Selymbria, which was then a Turkish settlement. John was transmitted to Constantinople by the Genoese Marshal Boucicault. The uncle (Manuel II) and nephew (John VII) found a way to solve the problems after John arrived at Manuel's court just before the latter's long Western journey.³³³

On the other hand, the first attestable Ottoman hostage at the Byzantine court coincides with the period following the year 1402.³³⁴ At that time, the Byzantine court frequently served as a favored place for Ottoman refugees. One of Bayezid's sons, İsa, took refuge in Constantinople following his defeat at the hands of his brother Mehmed at the battle of Ulubad (9 March-18 May 1403).³³⁵ Sources mention İsa's departure for Constantinople via a ship following the young prince's fierce struggle with his brother Mehmed and the consequent outset of his service to the emperor.³³⁶ Contemporary sources shed light on further details about this hostage diplomacy. One of Bayezid's sons, most probably İsa, the eldest one according to Doukas, became Christian and died in Constantinople, where he was honored with great honor by the order of Manuel.³³⁷ We do not know if he was a hostage there, or if he sought asylum in the Byzantine capital.

Apart from imperial/royal members, some non-imperial/non-royal individuals could sometimes be hostages. For instance, Orhan took the tekfur of Samandıra as a hostage and offered him to the emperor in Constantinople in return for a certain amount of money. We hear that Orhan sent a message to the emperor. However, nobody accepted to take back the tekfur except for the tekfur in Nicomedia. While

³³³ Clavijo, trans. Le Strange, 51-52.

³³⁴ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 3, f.n. 8.

³³⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 167-168; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 4.12, 293-295.

³³⁶ Neşrî, vol. II, 426.

³³⁷ For İsa's conversion, see Doukas, ed. Grecu, 135-137; trans. Magoulas, Book 20, 112.

the Byzantine sources remain silent on such occasional contacts, the Ottoman chronicler Neşrî refers to that event but does not provide ample evidence for how this communication actually took place.³³⁸ It might be a simple messenger who brought the request to Andronikos II. In this example, one can observe Orhan's policy of using the hostage for his own political advantage.

A further example is related to the troubles caused by the pretender Mustafa and Juneid to the Ottoman rulers over a decade. It was Manuel II Palaiologos this time who had the strings at his hands and pulled the debate over the Ottoman throne according to his own political interests. A little while after the accession of Murad II as a ruler in 1421, Manuel II Palaiologos dispatched Lachanas Palaiologos and Theologos Korax as envoys to the new sultan. The Byzantine emperor aimed to console Murad after Mehmed's death and to congratulate the latter for the beginning of his reign. However, the main motivation behind this embassy remained to be a hot debate as the events in the succeeding years could reveal. It was about Manuel's request of two Ottoman princes based allegedly on the late Mehmed I's promise. According to Doukas's account, the late Ottoman ruler had wished to entrust his two sons to the Byzantine emperor.³³⁹ In the event that the next Ottoman ruler preferred not to obey what was requested by Manuel, the latter made threats to proclaim and recognize another individual, which would well be the so-called Düzme Mustafa, who claimed to be the son of Bayezid (τὸν πλαστὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Παῖαζήτη), thus the "legitimate" Ottoman sovereign, and sought cross-frontier support at the Byzantine court.³⁴⁰ The response which was pronounced by the vizier Bayezid to the Byzantine

³³⁸ Neşrî, vol. I, 136-138.

³³⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.10, 165-167.

³⁴⁰ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 4.4, 10. Despite the vivid portrayal of Sphrantzes, the troubles between the pretender Mustafa and Mehmed I, and later on Murad II are frequently mentioned in other Byzantine historical narratives such as Doukas's and Chalkokondyles's accounts yet without

envoys was accurate. It did not eventually reflect a conciliatory tone. Leaning on Islamic tradition and the prophet's sayings, the Ottomans wished to keep their good terms with the Byzantine Empire not by making compromises on that matter, so they refused to entrust two Ottoman princes as hostages to the Byzantine court. On the other hand, the Ottoman vizier underlined the resolution to keep peace with Byzantium.³⁴¹ This whole mission and the Byzantine request for hostages heralded a period of conflict for the years yet to come.

The utilization of hostage diplomacy was not restricted to the Byzantine and Ottoman courts alone. The Ottoman sovereigns accepted royal individuals from other neighboring political entities, too. Dracul, the Wallachian ruler, was seized in Gallipoli by Murad II, who thought that the former attempted a betrayal against the Ottoman sultan. Dracul was only released after his adolescent sons arrived in Gallipoli and were then taken into custody and as hostages were transferred to the fortress of Nymphaion.³⁴²

The arrival of Berenquer of Entença, the commander of the Catalans in their sojourn in Byzantine territories, bears witness to the ways of communication. After a chrysobull guaranteeing him to be received in a friendly atmosphere, Berenquer hurried to Constantinople. Once he arrived there, he remained on his ship and sent emissaries to the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos to inform the emperor about his arrival. The Catalan commander, although he was provided with appropriate honors and vehicles, did not think that he had enough assurance. For that reason, as

naming the pretender as "düzme." On the other hand, the modern scholarship tended to accept him as a real son of Bayezid I. For an analysis of this influential figure and his impact on politics of the period, see Kırıldökme Mollaoğlu, "'Düzmece' olarak anılan Mustafa Çelebi ve Bizans (1415-1416/17)," 173-185.

³⁴¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.4, 173.

³⁴² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.5, 263.

Pachymeres said, he asked for the surest pledge and the emperor's son, the despot John, as a hostage.³⁴³

Hostages functioned as ammunitions that can be used to compel the other side to abide by the agreements. In other words, taking hostages could be consulted in order to secure or guarantee a treaty between the two parties or to present further demands by benefiting from the advantages of keeping possible candidates for the throne of the opposite party.

2.7 Diplomacy conducted in the periphery/borderlands

Apart from the diplomatic contacts at the hands of the central governments, the history of diplomatic encounters reveals several cases of local conduct such as communication in the forms of sending out gifts, negotiating over a truce, or other issues of daily concern. A late-eleventh century book on the practice of military tactics including advice on how to handle certain topics in warfare, Kekaumenos's *Strategikon* points to a series of confrontations directed and conducted by governors.³⁴⁴ A similar situation with the same means and motivations can be observed along the Anatolian borderlands in the Palaiologan regime.

After the incursion of people of Central Asian origin well into the inner parts of Anatolia and towards the Byzantine frontier began from the late eleventh century onwards, the coming of these groups did not halt and in fact accelerated in times of pushing threats such as the Mongols who swept their rivals and reached the Anatolian plateau in the middle of the thirteenth century. That situation created permanent cultural confrontations and economic contacts between nomadic and

³⁴³ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 12.11 and 12.12, 543-547.

³⁴⁴ Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy," 10.

newly settled Turkish elements on the one hand and the Byzantines particularly in frontier zones on the other. Keith Hopwood, in his study “Low-level Diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The Case of Bithynia,” adopted an anthropological perspective and approached the Byzantine-Turkish encounters from an alternative angle. He interpreted the relations in the nomad/sedentarist model. After gradual phases of acculturation, Turks predominated the countryside in Anatolia already in the thirteenth century. Hopwood, departing from the Byzantine and Ottoman sources, explains the political confrontation between Byzantium and these nomadic groups not as permanent warfare but a banditry. Byzantium tried to accommodate these groups in the first place through “low-level diplomacy.”³⁴⁵

Furthermore, Hopwood underlines the nature of the early phases of a ‘low-level’ diplomatic communication with an emphasis on a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans. His argument about the existence of low-level diplomacy needs to be underlined and elaborated further because these types of encounters existed as the sedentarization of the Ottomans took some time. It was not between Constantinople and the Ottomans. Yet it took place between local representatives of Byzantine administration and actors encountered in the frontier. The relations between nomadic and sedentarist societies were symbiotic; in other words, if we look at the items exchanged, we can see that while the Byzantines were able to take pastoral productions, the nomadic Turks were provided with processed products. The mutual relations also existed between the Byzantine Greeks and the settled Turks along the frontier zones, where common modes of

³⁴⁵ Hopwood, “Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia,” 151-155.

production and experience led to a particular social environment.³⁴⁶ For Hopwood, Osman adopted divisive diplomacy against the military power holders on the one hand and integrational diplomacy towards the local population living in Bithynia on the other.³⁴⁷

Hopwood particularly used Neşrî's chronicle for references regarding Osman's contacts with the castellans (*tekfurs*).³⁴⁸ Yet, the Ottoman historian has to be considered cautiously for the early years of the Ottomans. Neşrî mentions a Byzantine castellan of Belokome (Bilecik) asking help from Osman against another Byzantine castellan of Köprühisar. When the castellan of İnegöl, whose name was given as Aya Nikola in the chronicle, prevented the Ottomans from migrating to their summer pastures, Osman communicated with the castellan of Belokome and requested to leave their property in the city's castle in order to provide proper conditions for fight. In return, the Ottomans gave fresh butter, cheese, and meat. Hopwood argues that these sorts of gift-giving were "the basic building blocks of diplomacy."³⁴⁹ In *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, Aşıkpaşazade talks about the relations

³⁴⁶ Hopwood, "Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia," 153.

³⁴⁷ Hopwood, "Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia," 151-155.

³⁴⁸ Besides its principal connotation as the ruler of the Byzantine Empire, the term *tekfur* or *tekvur* denote a few meanings in Oriental sources. It especially refers to governors/landlords of towns or fortresses particularly in Bithynia and Pontus, and also in Thrace depending on the context. Apart from the cases where the Byzantine emperors are implied, if sources refer to an anonymous *tekfur*, his identity remains obscure. Maybe *tekfur* refers to Byzantine *kephale*, who was the governor of a small province in the Palaiologan period. The Ottoman sources of the fifteenth century frequently utilize the term while describing the Ottoman rulers and warriors' military advancement well into the Byzantine territories. It appears nowhere in Byzantine sources. The term and its meanings are discussed in the following studies: Savvides, "Tekfur," 413-414; Savvides, "On the origins and connotation of the term 'tekfur' in Byzantine-Turkish relations," 451-461. See also Kondyli, "Lords at the end of the empire: Negotiating power in the late Byzantine frontiers (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries)," 309-339.

³⁴⁹ Hopwood, "Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia," 152. Relations on the frontier could suddenly change. The castellan of Belokome was later attacked by Osman who destroyed the castle. Neşrî notes other instances of negotiations between Osman and other castellans in Bithynia (e.g. the castellan of Lopadion). Osman's relation with Köse Mihal is also indicative that as the latter collaborated with the Ottoman ruler, he was incorporated into Osman's

between Osman and the castellans. The chronicle mentions that Aya Nikola disturbed Osman's properties when the latter migrated to summer or winter places. The source refers to Osman's suffering to the castellan of Belokome about this. He told him that they wanted to entrust their properties there. We can only speculate whether he was personally and directly talking to the castellan. We do not know if there was a messenger. Upon accepting Osman's request, the castellan was returned with gifts once the nomads came back from summer pastures. Osman's tribe brought cheese, butter, cream, fine rugs and kilims as well as lambs and they gave these items via their women. Aşıkpaşazade talks about a relationship which was based on mutual confidence so much as both the Ottomans and the Byzantines in the region traded in domestic markets.³⁵⁰ On the one hand, the Byzantines received pastoral products, which means that these products were needed in Byzantium, as well as genuine gifts of rugs and kilims. All these items were symbolic in the sense that they required skillful processes. The Ottomans, on the other hand, received a cloak from the castellan of Belokome. These status symbols indicate that they acknowledge each other's status.³⁵¹ It seems that Osman tried to maintain the loyalty of the peasant inhabitants but preferred to fight with some of the local authorities while acting in line with some others with whom he shared common interests. We do not know the

circle. Hopwood, "Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia," 154.

³⁵⁰ "Aya Niküle derler idi, bir kâfir var idi İnegölde. Osman Gazi yaylaya ve kışlayagitdikleri vaktin bunların göçin üşendürür idi. Osman Gazi Bilecük tekvürine bundan şikâyet etdi. Bilecük tekvürine eyitdi: 'Sizden dilegümüz budur kim bizum göçkünümüzi yaylaya gitdügümüzde sizde emânet kayalum.' Ol dahı kabul etdi. Her vaktin Osman Gazi kim yaylaya gitse kamu esbablarını öküzlere yükledürler idi. Bir nice hatun kişiyile göndürürler idi. Kalada korlar idi. Kaçan kim yayladan gelseler peynir ve halı ve kilim ve kuzılar armağan iledürler idi. Emânetlerin gene alurlar idi, gidürler idi. Bu kâfirler bunlara gayet itimâd edüb durular idi." Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Atsız, 94, 98-99.

³⁵¹ Hopwood, "Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia," 153. Aşıkpaşazade does not mention the cloak.

dates for these early confrontations between the Byzantines and the Ottomans, but they must be around the final years of the thirteenth century.

In a shared *modus vivendi*, symbiotic relationships occurred in the ways of the ‘core’ of diplomatic relations. Each state was providing necessities -not luxuries though- for the other’s way of life. Such exchanges provoked dialogue.³⁵² Moreover, reciprocal relations in the *uc* regions may help us comprehend the newly developing intermixture of populations, and the emergence of new elite. The elite in the countryside and nomad elite had a mutual relationship with the settled components of frontier areas.³⁵³ Therefore, on the topic of diplomatic encounters along the borderlands, one can observe a reflection of a symbiosis as a common characteristic at the early stage of the encounter between the Byzantines and the Ottomans. The socio-cultural environment in which Osman’s small state found ground to flourish presented perfect standards. Osman seems to have carried out a reciprocal relationship as the Ottomans deposited their stuff to the *tekvur* of the fortress of Belokome (i.e. Bilecik). Cemal Kafadar attracts attention to a particular passage where Aşıkpaşazade underlines that symbiotic relationship in the latter’s narration of Osman’s words upon a question from his brother Gündüz Alp who offered the emir to make an assault to the neighboring Byzantine settlements. According to the chronicler, Osman said the following: “If we destroy these areas, our town of Karacahisar cannot prosper. What needs to be done is to maintain *müdârâ* (feigned)

³⁵² On the other hand, Osman’s aim to achieve political existence in the region is stressed by Neşrî’s words: “As we [the Ottomans] have come as strangers into this region, we shall be pleasant neighbors so ... we shall gradually build up links of friendship and hospitality.” Hopwood, “Low-level diplomacy between Byzantines and Ottoman Turks: The case of Bithynia,” 154. Osman said the following regarding the “infidels” living around Bilecik: “biz bu ile garib geldükde bizi hoşça tutub koñşılık itdiler. Biz dahi hakk-ı civârîye ri’âyet idüb onlara mümkün oldıkda itilük iderüz.” Neşrî, vol. I, 92.

³⁵³ Hopwood, “Nomads or bandits: The pastoralist/sedentarist interface in Anatolia,” 189.

friendship with our neighbors.”³⁵⁴ Although this expression means that Osman pretended to be at peace with his neighbors, it can be read as a mutual lack of confidence and a way of looking out for his own interests, therefore, may lead us to argue for a certain level of symbiosis.³⁵⁵

Decentralization created its peculiarities in late Byzantium. Several instances of towns engaging in direct communication on their behalf may be observed in primary sources. In Pachymeres’s *Historia*, for instance, the author explains peculiar relations between the Turks and the inhabitants of a settlement in various cases. Mention of a certain Alaïs, who was dispatched “to propose a collaboration, by means of specific agreements on sharing the citadel, to the inhabitants of Sardis, who were locked up in the fortress of the city due to the attacks of these people (i.e. Turks).”³⁵⁶ According to Pachymeres, the inhabitants had to accept this request made by this Turkish emir, since “it was, in fact, possible for the lambs and the wolves to conclude a common convention,” therefore; they gave their consent to be able to get access to basic needs for survival.³⁵⁷ As the Sardians forestalled an imminent Turkish danger, they sent a mission to Nostongos Doukas, who was the commander of the Byzantine troops, and the governor of the theme.³⁵⁸ He thus came and annihilated the Turks.³⁵⁹ This very instance is worth further investigating because there seems to have been direct contact between a Turkish emir and inhabitants of a Byzantine city,

³⁵⁴ Neşrî, vol. I, 86. The translation of Neşrî’s description belongs to Kafadar. See Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 14-15; Lowry, *The nature of the early Ottoman State*, 9.

³⁵⁵ For Osman’s view of friendly relations with his neighbors as described by Neşrî, see Neşrî, vol. I, 92.

³⁵⁶ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 441-443.

³⁵⁷ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 441-443. A complete English translation of this passage (in fact of pages 441-445) is provided in Foss, *Byzantine and Turkish Sardis*, 122-124.

³⁵⁸ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 443-445. See Failler’s notes on 442, f.n. 26 and on 470, f.n. 24.

³⁵⁹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 443-445.

not via an official envoy or so. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the political borders in Western Anatolia would explain the circumstances. Byzantium's sovereignty was almost non-existent except for a few fortified urban centers that barely confirmed the Byzantine authority retreated. Furthermore, these urban centers' connection with the capital was mostly halted due to the fact that the surrounding countryside was continuously under Turkish incursions. Places like Sardis and Philadelphia, which lost most of their connection with the capital and were disconnected in the middle of Turkish groups, turned out to be centers that virtually became Byzantine islands inland trying to preserve their control in immediate surroundings and provide subsistence for their inhabitants.

There are various other similar examples in the history of Byzantium where inhabitants of a city or a town communicated directly with a ruler or a representative of a political entity. When the Turkish emir Sasa captured Ephesus, after he exposed the city to a great famine, the inhabitants of the city made an agreement with him. According to this agreement, as for Pachymeres, the Ephesians did not suffer much, part of the inhabitants were allowed to go to Thyraia. They, in return, had to give a large sum of money together with famous venerable objects, which had been dedicated to a church at Ephesos.³⁶⁰

The authorities over these cities/citadels could negotiate with groups or political entities all by themselves. In a turbulent period for the Byzantine countryside, ecclesiastical figures, despite the Byzantine church's prohibition of the clergy from any state of military activity, took an active role in defending the Byzantine settlements suffering from Turkish assaults. An active ecclesiastical figure

³⁶⁰ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 647-649.

was Theoleptos, Bishop of Philadelphia. During the Turkish siege of Philadelphia, he held administrative initiative and defended the city by organizing the provision of the city and performing the role of a negotiator with Yakub Alişir, the ruler of Germiyan.³⁶¹ Even the patriarch Athanasios I praised the military resistance of Theoleptos.³⁶² Bishop of Kyzikos, Niphon, was another ecclesiastical figure sharing a similar role with Theoleptos in defending the city against the Turks.³⁶³ These reactive tendencies of ecclesiastical figures were also confirmed and supported by the Church in Constantinople.

As another instance, this time a secular figure, Attaliotes, the ruler of Magnesia, came to an agreement with Roger de Flor, when the latter arrived in the city. Thanks to his initiative, Attaliotes was able to retain the city.³⁶⁴ Moreover, the governor of Mesothnia, Kontophre, was influential enough to advise the Byzantine emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos to take action against the Ottomans, who were threatening the city of Nicomedia and the region around. In the context of the impending battle at Pelekanos Plain, this piece of evidence shows how efficient the Byzantine local administrators were in the late 1320s. This may lead us to think more about the level of decentralization in the Byzantine Asia Minor. It seems that one cannot talk about an absolute loss of control in the region because, for example, the city of Prousa still possessed a military administration during Osman's siege between 1317 and 1326.³⁶⁵ The status of remote towns and castles might have constituted exceptions since the local power holders, surrounded by the Turks and compelled to

³⁶¹ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 127-128.

³⁶² See Kyriakidis, *Warfare in late Byzantine Empire 1204-1453*, 162-163.

³⁶³ Hero, "Theoleptos of Philadelphia," 35; Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 467-469; Gregoras, vol. I, 221; Schreiner, "Zur geschichte Philadelphia sim 14. jahrhundert (1293-1390)," 385-393. See also Fisher, "A note on 'De Andronico Palaeologo'," 233-234.

³⁶⁴ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 471.

³⁶⁵ Zachariadou, "Histoires et legends des premiers ottomans," 67-70.

react in the absence of the Byzantine state's logistic and military support, might have possessed some sort of self-authority.³⁶⁶ Local power holders gained more power during the Palaiologan period compared to earlier periods. They were eager to expand their area of control in contrast to the central imperial authority, which had been in the process of dissolution since the twelfth century, as Niketas Choniates remarks, and accelerated during the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. These individuals emerged in a centrifugal setting, which became de facto the reality throughout the Palaiologan era.³⁶⁷

Until the fall of isolated Byzantine settlements surrounded by Turkish groups, such as Prousa or Lopadion, they might have had contacts with the outsiders, keeping in mind that they had long lost their connections with Constantinople because the routes were controlled by Osman, who gradually expanded his hegemony over northern Bithynia as far as Bosphorus and coasts of the Black Sea by the early fourteenth century. Can the situation of cities as separate parts be explained by the transition of the Byzantine state from a unified power into a combination of various appanages or a reaction of ecclesiastical figures against the government's policy? Underlying the growing role of the feudal groups under the Palaiologoi, Ljubomir Maksimović explained the provincial administration in late Byzantium.³⁶⁸ Both

³⁶⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 341-342. See Mirmiroğlu, "Orhan Bey ile Bizans İmparatoru III. Andronikos arasındaki Pelekano Muharebesi," 312-319; Kyriakidis, "Byzantine responses to the battlefield tactics of the armies of the Turkoman principalities: The Battle of Pelekanos (1329)," 84-88.

³⁶⁷ Shawcross, "Cities and imperial authority in the Western provinces of the Byzantine Empire, 12th-14th centuries," 39.

³⁶⁸ Maksimović, *The Byzantine provincial administration under the Palaiologoi*, 269-270. On the other hand, Christopher Wright explains this phenomenon as follows: "...shift toward a dynastic monopoly intersected with another aspect of the continuing encroachment of the family principle in Byzantine politics: the emergence of 'appanage' territories. Prefigured by the short-lived division of the empire between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, the assignment of portions of the empire's territory to members of the imperial family became a widespread trend in Byzantine government after John VI's seizure of the capital. This meant that they increasingly resided outside the capital – attended by an entourage of their own – in Thessalonike, Adrianople, Selymbria, Mistra, or whatever

Maksimović as well as George Ostrogorsky, who earlier studied the topic, have underlined the feudal character of the late Byzantine state and tied that phenomenon with the growth of the landed aristocracy as opposed to the peasantry turning into serfdom. Consequently, the central state was no longer a matter of fact.³⁶⁹ Byzantine urban self-administration became weaker under the Palaiologoi. The process can be summarized by the increasing power of the landed aristocracy against central authority, which then tended to place administrators who had kinship ties to the dynasty of the Palaiologoi or who had been grounded at a local level. The complex mechanism of provincial bureaucracy transformed into gradually self-independent units of highly decentralized state organs. There is no devoted publication on the circumstances in Byzantine cities of Anatolia during the first decades of the fourteenth century. The situation for the Byzantine territories of Europe for the same period has relatively been studied well.³⁷⁰ The feudal character of administration, that is the decentralization of Byzantine imperial power and political fragmentation, were evident features in the period. A reference in Chalkokondyles's account makes us speculate on possible contacts that occurred in the periphery. Escaping from the Catalans, the Tourkopouloi and the Turkish groups under the leadership of a certain Halil sought more secure places for themselves. Describing the events of Halil's escape, Chalkokondyles mentions the Byzantines' plot against a treaty that was made

other place became the seat of their local regime. Some of those empowered in this way were co-emperors, while others, typically holding the rank of despot, exercised powers and prerogatives of a kind traditionally reserved to an emperor ruling from Constantinople and markedly exceeding those of provincial governors. Consequently, much more of the direction of policy and distribution of patronage was now conducted away from the capital." Wright, "Constantinople and the coup d'état in Palaiologan Byzantium," 288.

³⁶⁹ Ostrogorsky, *Pour l'histoire de la féodalité byzantine*; Maksimović, *The Byzantine provincial administration under the Palaiologoi*.

³⁷⁰ Shea, *The late Byzantine city: Social, economic and institutional profile*; Kondyli, "Lords at the end of the Empire: Negotiating power in the late Byzantine frontiers (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries)," 309-339.

with the Turks earlier.³⁷¹ The question of the actual parties of this treaty is still debated since it might have been an earlier treaty with the Seljuks, or a particular one which local Turkish leaders temporarily concluded. Nevertheless, it clearly illustrates the prominent role of uc begs and the alternative perceptions among the Byzantine local towns and settlements.

In Chalkokondyles's narrative, Osman is portrayed as a leader who sought a deliberate policy to win the favor of the townspeople.³⁷² Nicolas Oikonomides relates these circumstances with anti-Constantinopolitan ideology in Anatolia that played a significant role in handover of cities:

The collaboration of the conquered populations with the Turks in operations directed against the Byzantine Empire is significant in showing that an anti-Constantinopolitan ideology prevailed then in Asia Minor, an ideology which certainly facilitated the Turkish conquest and which, combined with a certain greed of booty, motivated the participation of Christians in overseas looting operations.³⁷³

The treatment that the inhabitants were exposed to at the hands of Byzantine local authorities was another factor. That could facilitate the alienation of these groups and enable these centers to change sides. On the other hand, the absence of central state activity in the borderlands could have been another factor in the outcome. Byzantine authors sometimes find different causes that paved the way for the Ottoman conquests of these settlements. For example, Gregoras connects the state of serious famine with the eventual loss of Nicomedia.³⁷⁴

An important Ottoman chronicler, İdris-i Bitlisi sheds light on the frequent contact between Osman and the tekvurs of Bithynia. He mentions some envoys sent

³⁷¹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 16-17; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1, 27-29.

³⁷² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 11-12; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1, 19.

³⁷³ Oikonomides, "The Turks in Europe (1305-13) and the Serbs in Asia Minor (1313)," 160, f.n. 4.

³⁷⁴ Gregoras, vol. I, Book 11.6, 545.

by an enigmatic individual named Aya Nikola, as the *tekvur* of İnegöl, to the administrators of big urban centers in the region of Bithynia. He particularly refers to a letter of Aya Nikola addressed to the lord of Karacahisar (or Belokome). This letter, if we believe Bitlisi, represents the inner correspondence in Byzantium's frontier regions on a pending threat against the Byzantine existence there. In this letter, Aya Nikola says that the administrators of cities were separate from each other, and thus he underlines this.³⁷⁵

The identities of individuals who are said to have been prominent actors in the region, as mentioned in Aşıkpaşazade, cause troubles for modern researchers. It seems highly probable, however, that the early Ottomans used mutual communication means with the Byzantine local authorities on matters of seasonal migration, tax collection, or exchange of/ransoming captives. The perspective of the Byzantine sources, in this context, remained strictly bound to a Constantinopolitan point of view and differed significantly from the principal chronicle of Yahşi Fakih in the way that the latter directly focuses on local power holders (i.e. *tekvurs*) and their daily dealings with the frontier Turkish groups in their surroundings.³⁷⁶

The early Ottoman histories depict a lively political atmosphere along the borders between Byzantium and the Ottoman lands. Contrary to contemporary Byzantine primary sources, they highlight the Ottoman contacts with the local political and military authorities in Bithynia, because the Ottomans engaged in various types of relationships including direct mutual economic dealings as well as

³⁷⁵ İdris-i Bitlisi, *Heşt Bihişt*, 131. See also Neşrî, vol. I, 78-80, where the author speaks about the complaints of Osman to the *tekvur* of Belokome on the attacks of Aya Nikola against the people of Osman.

³⁷⁶ Zachariadou, "Histoires et legends des premiers ottomans," 67-68.

political/tax-related issues. The ignorance of the Byzantine sources on this topic might well be derived from their central perspective.³⁷⁷

The overall appearance of political sovereigns along the frontier regions somehow reflected a different picture in which the Ottomans built up reciprocal relations with some local administrators and the inhabitants of several urban centers although they remained hostile against each other. During the initial years, the Ottoman existence in Bithynia was eased by the coexistence of the Turks and the Christians. As Neşrî narrates, Osman was asked about his positive approach towards the Christians of Bilecik. He answered as follows: “once we arrived in this land, they [the Byzantines] received us warmly and they established neighborly relations with us. Therefore, in return of this, in terms of neighborhood rights we do them good whenever possible.”³⁷⁸ Osman was called to help the tekfur of Belokome upon the attack of the tekfur of Köprü-hisar. This very piece of evidence illustrates the presence of the alliances the Ottomans established with the local Byzantines.

However, the relations on good terms were possibly constructed on expectations of current political gains. In other words, Osman was probably aiming to expand the area of his control by eliminating the local representatives of the Byzantine authority. The Ottoman sources further reveal this point whereas there are a handful of references to amicable relations in the Byzantine sources. Despite this friendly atmosphere, Osman took Belokome at the end.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Zachariadou, “Histoires et legends des premiers ottomans,” 67-68.

³⁷⁸ Neşrî, vol. I, 93: “Biz bu ile garib geldükde bizi hoşca tutub konşılık itdiler. Biz dahi hakk-ı civârîye ri‘ayet idüb onlara mümkün oldıkda iyilük iderüz.” See also Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 11-12; ed. Atsız, bâb 9, 98-99; Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 126.

³⁷⁹ For the narration of the capture of other castles in the region which took place ca. 1299-1300, see Neşrî, vol. I, 94-102.

More particularly, Osman, while he established good relations with some tekvurs, he was in a state of war against some others. Aşıkpaşazade depicts a picture of the complex political approaches of local authorities towards the Ottomans. Neşrî also narrates how the tekvurs of the region around Prousa came together and built an alliance against the expanding authority of Osman. The tekvir of Prousa gathered the tekvurs in the neighborhood and allied together and thus they decided to stand firm in the ground. The battle at Dinboz resulted in a clear Ottoman victory. The Ottoman sources talk about Osman's tracing of the fleeing tekvir of Kite, who took shelter in Ulubad. Osman requested from the tekvir of Ulubad to hand over the fleeing tekvir. In response, he received an answer from the tekvir of Ulubad according to which he would not use the bridge that led to the center of Ulubad from then on. In this case, the tekvir agreed to meet Osman's request. Osman thus gave him a pledge on that.³⁸⁰

According to the narrative tradition of Ottoman historiography, particularly by Aşıkpaşazade, the Mihaloğulları family is praised due to the fact that the family played a leading role in the construction of the Ottoman state and among the ghazis in the Balkans.³⁸¹ The members of the family originated from Köse Mihal, who held a Byzantine background as he obtained the title of the tekvir of Harmankaya.³⁸² As the conventional Ottoman histories coherently underline, once Osman developed close relations with Köse Mihal, he opted to benefit from Mihal in his dealings and connections with the local representatives of the Byzantine authority or

³⁸⁰ Neşrî, vol. I, 114-116.

³⁸¹ Lowry, *The nature of the early Ottoman State*, 64. Lowry refers to Spandugino's account, which states that both Köse Mihal and Evrenos played role in the construction of the Ottoman state together with Osman.

³⁸² For general concerns on Mihal Gazi and the family of Mihaloğulları, see the following studies: Lowry, *The nature of the early Ottoman State*; Sabev, "The legend of Köse Mihal additional notes," 241-252; Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 26, 101.

administrators of cities and towns along the borderlands.³⁸³ It is on the eve of the conquest of Prousa (1326) that the Ottoman sources refer to Köse Mihal as Osman's envoy who was sent to negotiate the terms and conditions of the handover of the castle with a certain Beres, the *tekvur* of the city.³⁸⁴ Following a preliminary direct communication with the *tekvur*, Köse Mihal was dispatched a second time to affirm Osman's response to the *tekvur*'s appeal on giving a pledge about the security of the inhabitants during the requested handover. In Hadidî's *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, it was not Osman but his son Orhan who sent Mihal to the *tekvur* of Prousa.³⁸⁵ By securing the inhabitants during their departure from the city and making the *tekvur* pay the security guards with thirty thousand florins, Köse Mihal's embassy ended in the negotiated surrender of Prousa. One can suppose that the envoy spoke Greek to his respondent, which can also be gleaned, as the sources give no reference to any intermediary. Earlier than the abovementioned narrative of Köse Mihal's mission to the *tekvur* of Prousa, Aşıkpaşazade marks this individual's distinctive status serving Osman on the one hand and being a respected and a leading man among his counterparts in the region. When the *tekvur* of Bilecik decided to invite Osman to his

³⁸³ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 12-13; ed. Atsız, bâb 10, 99-100, where the author mentions how Köse Mihal turned not only into Osman's fellow man but also his guide in the Sangarios basin. See Başar, "Mihaloğulları," 24-25; Çekiç, "Kuruluş devri Osmanlı diplomasisi ve nitelikleri," 247-249.

³⁸⁴ Sending Köse Mihal as an envoy, Orhan requested the handover of the castle. Neşrî narrates this contact as follows: "Tekvur eytdi: 'Ahd idün-ki bizi kimse incitmeye. Ve kimsenün bize zararı dokunmaya'. Köse Mihal gelüb bu kaziyyeyi Orhan'a i'lâm itdi. Orhan Gazi dahi Kabul idüb Köse Mihal'i tekrar gönderdi. Beres tekvur eytdi: 'bana bir kac yarar âdem gönderün, bu hisar'dan çıkan kâfirleri Türkler incitmeyeler' didi. Köse Mihal, eytdi: 'hoş ammâ, ol size hıfz idecek kimesnelere nesnecük vermek gerekdür' didi. Tekvur Beres eytdi: 'her ne kim maslahat görürsen, ben vireyin' didi. Mâ-hasal, otuz bin filori'ye sulh itdiler. Beres tekvur bu sözi Kabul idüb otuz bin nakid filori gönderdi. Ve bi'l-cümle çünkim tekvur kal'adan çıktı, heman müslümanlar tekbir ü tehli'l getirüb kal'aya koyuldılar." Neşrî, vol. I, 131-133. Both Aşıkpaşazade and Neşrî mention the reasons of the surrender of Prousa as told by Beres tekvur's vizier Sarüz or Saroz, as called in the narratives. Here, there are indications of legitimizing the Ottoman authority upon the Byzantines as if it represented a release from difficult circumstances, which the inhabitants of Prousa have been suffering for some time. Neşrî, vol. I, 132-134. In the final analysis, the conversation between Saroz and Orhan narrated in Aşıkpaşazade, was a purported one. See Lowry, *The nature of the early Ottoman State*, 56.

³⁸⁵ Hadidî, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, ed. Öztürk, 53-54.

wedding with the daughter of the *tekvur* at Yar – hisar, he asked Köse Mihal to fulfill this request.³⁸⁶ This depiction of him as an intermediary between the local power holders and the Ottoman polity can further help us imagine his probable political capacity at the time. Köse Mihal's origin has been questioned by some scholars, who claimed that Aşıkpaşazade incorporated him into the narrative for setting historical legitimacy for the family.³⁸⁷ On the other hand, Enverî gives a Damascene origin to Köse Mihal.³⁸⁸ Due to this varied picture concerning Köse Mihal's origin, it is not clear whether he personally existed or took part in several historical occasions at that part of Ottoman history. Such a role of an intermediary nature is attributed to an unnamed friend of Osman in Konstantin Mihailovich's account, which was adopted and possibly altered by Aşıkpaşazade.³⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the utilization of the native locals in diplomatic contacts had its roots in this early instance. It is more than interesting that the same years witnessed the first recorded official embassy of the Byzantine Empire to the court of Osman, where a princess appeared as the Byzantine ambassador. Maria Palaiologina was ostensibly selected due to her experience as she was the wife of the late Abaka Khan. This parallel situation points to the major role of cultural and/or personal affinity or knowledge for the visited country, one of the basic selection criteria of envoys.

The major centers in frontier zones with the Turks in northwestern Anatolia benefited from imperial munificence within the bounds of possibility and as long as the circumstances allowed for imperial troops to come to help. In fact, this was not always the case because the Byzantine settlements were frequently laid open to

³⁸⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 15-16; ed. Atsız, bâb 12, 101-102.

³⁸⁷ Imber, "Canon and apocrypha in early Ottoman history," 117-137.

³⁸⁸ Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le destân d'Umûr Pacha*, 90.

³⁸⁹ Imber, "Canon and apocrypha in early Ottoman history."

possible confrontation with the Ottomans or received no military aid in the face of rapid assaults. The Byzantine central authority in the late 13th-early 14th century did not welcome any centrifugal tendencies. Andronikos II Palaiologos adopted a very negative approach against Monemvasia, which was ruled by local lords and did not follow the 'true' path as it would be through imperial interests. Sources refer to other policies of the emperor along the same lines. Ioannina was a city that challenged the imperial authority and suffered "a state of wickedness." Indicated in a chrysobull dated 1319, the city shifted from being disloyal to the state to a fair city not constituting a challenge against the imperial control in the region.³⁹⁰

Constantinople had to approach each city with certain individuals who were assigned to convey messages of the imperial authority over these cities, which in return dispatched their own envoys seeking provincial concerns vis-à-vis the capital. The process of cities' dissolving – gaining special rights in self-governance had already begun in the twelfth century. Cities now turned out to be regional centers where central authority could be felt exclusively by a relationship that was restricted to administrative control. As noted by Teresa Shawcross, the period under the Palaiologoi brought Byzantium a relatively stronger image and territorial/political integrity than it used to be under the Komnenoi. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, albeit with some exceptions, the empire had turned out to be uniform in the sense that the provincial centers contributed to the strength of the empire especially in commercial concerns.³⁹¹

³⁹⁰ Shawcross, "Cities and imperial authority in the Western provinces of the Byzantine Empire, 12th-14th centuries," 43 referring to MM, vol. V, 78-80, 154-155.

³⁹¹ Shawcross, "Cities and imperial authority in the Western provinces of the Byzantine Empire, 12th-14th centuries," 44.

CHAPTER 3

ENVOYS

3.1 Introduction

From a modern perspective, the primary functions of diplomacy can be summarized as intelligence gathering, image management, and policy implementation.³⁹² As representatives of their masters, envoys of the late Middle Ages carried out at least one of these functions. In their missions, these agents possessed -theoretically- a certain level of extraterritoriality. The immunities conveyed by such an advantage usually enabled envoys to pursue the target of their embassies and carry out the directions of their masters.

Contemporary sources describing diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state often do not go beyond adding more to the blurred picture, especially for the early fourteenth century. The same sources do not offer a complete profile of a Byzantine envoy in his employment in the Ottoman court. Nevertheless, by collecting data from historical sources on the topic, this chapter aims to understand the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts through envoys as actors of one form (ambassadorial diplomacy) of diplomatic methods. Here, the main motivation is twofold. The first and the fundamental one is the fact that the scholarship has not drawn up a detailed picture of the subject. The second one derives from a particular target: contributing to the understanding of diplomacy in action. The chapter seeks on the one hand, to reexamine the practice of ambassadorial diplomacy between the two polities by looking at the characteristics,

³⁹² Griffiths and O'Callaghan, *International relations: The key concepts*, 80.

statuses, and identities as well as careers of individuals entrusted in numerous contacts that can be understood through historical sources. On the other hand, this chapter investigates various aspects of diplomatic visits by the Byzantine embassies to the Ottoman court or the other way around in order to mark each embassy's particularities.

In other words, this chapter investigates the main component of the embassies: the envoys. It raises questions about the qualities, identities, and careers of the envoys. In order to contextualize the envoys in charge and their role as agents in diplomatic contacts, it is necessary to ask questions about the reasons and criteria for their appointment; whether their backgrounds and careers were decisive in their employment in a certain mission; the degree of involvement; their individual contribution to diplomatic efforts; their networks; and so on. This line of inquiry requires distinguishing each detectable individual who functioned as an official representative abroad and was entrusted with the management of diplomatic aims. This investigation will thus enable us to understand Byzantine diplomacy in operation, which will lay the groundwork for the second part of this chapter.

The main methodology of the study, with the help of extensive research into primary sources, rests on preparing a list and a detailed analysis of diplomatic communications, ranging from an embassy of any sort to a simple messenger carrying the message of political authority, that is mentioned by the authors of our sources. This entails substantive use of prosopography. For every member of diplomatic delegations, as far as their names are detectable, prosopographic research fills the blanks. An extensive list of all detectable incidents of diplomatic contact between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state is embedded at the end of the thesis as an appendix. It distinguishes each contact by marking its date, both sending

and receiving authorities, envoy(s) (if available), venues, and purposes. It also includes direct quotations from the primary sources from which we infer our knowledge. There is also a bibliographic description for each entry, where references are indicated to both Dölger's *Regesten* and primary or sometimes secondary sources. This part of the thesis rests upon the data collected in the Appendix.

Concerning embassies, one needs to begin with a proper description. By the term '*embassy*,' we mean any kind of delegation, either consisting of a single person or a group of people in charge, who happened to conduct communication between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. These people were carrying an oral or written official message and/or conducting negotiations with the recipient state's representatives. Looking at each Byzantine embassy to the West in the last hundred years of Byzantium, Stavroula Andriopoulou was able to discern two types of diplomatic missions in terms of the message they delivered: first, missions from embassies with an ambassador having the right to address the recipient of the embassies and negotiate an agreement on the matter of foreign policy discussed at any one time; and second, simpler missions that involved only the delivery of a letter. She accepts that what has come to the present day via historical sources is usually the written message (in the form of a letter), but rarely the oral message.³⁹³ Based on this interpretation, I suggest that the situation does not differ in Byzantine-Ottoman contacts, since the sources for the late Byzantine/early Ottoman history allow for a limited interpretation, as far as our empirical knowledge is concerned.

Envoys were the agents in embassies. They conveyed messages of political authority. During the period in question, they reflect rather an ad hoc character in

³⁹³ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 99-100.

contrast to, for instance, Renaissance diplomacy in the subsequent centuries, which introduced resident envoys. In the period in question, there were various envoys serving as they were selected for a single visit with differing priorities. Although many individuals are known to be entrusted in diplomatic contacts in Byzantine-Ottoman encounters, the majority of the recorded communications lack the names of envoys. This might have been due to the fact that they were simple missions conducted by envoys without extended authorization. Nevertheless, such cases can still illustrate various key aspects of the conditions of what it was like to be an envoy in both the Byzantine and Ottoman polities.

Throughout Byzantine-Ottoman relations, as far as the available sources allow, one may state that diplomatic contacts intensified in some periods. One may notice hiatuses when looking into the Appendix, which lists all the attestable diplomatic communications between the two polities. This might be related to exclusions (or omissions) in historical evidence. To be skeptical, on the other hand, at least about the information provided by the primary sources, it needs to be considered that diplomatic relations must have continued also in times of peace. The authors of our primary sources might have disregarded some diplomatic contacts because they were routine ones, and therefore deemed not deserving of note. No references to diplomatic contacts appear in both Byzantine and Ottoman historiography concerning the years between 1307 and 1328. In addition, following the battle of Ankara in 1402, when the Ottomans sought a peace treaty with their neighbors, and in the absence of the reigning emperor Manuel II, his regent and nephew John VII signed a favorable treaty in 1403. Although this historical phenomenon is recorded as a single diplomatic action in primary sources, there must

have been preparatory negotiations for it, which are not narrated.³⁹⁴ This treaty heralded more frequent diplomatic communications in the subsequent decades.³⁹⁵

One of the prominent factors driving the efficiency of the Byzantine diplomatic service was the use of entrusted envoys. The system of making use of several individuals, either named or unnamed in our sources, allowed Byzantine emperors to seek their interests in diplomatic circumstances. The empire's endurance for a long period characterized by an economic and military decline has been ascribed to the ingenuity of the Byzantine Empire in optimizing the benefits of diplomacy. In this accomplishment, if we define it as such, the role of the envoys was indispensably crucial. Diplomacy was actually carried out abroad by these representatives of the central authority, whose own individual contributions sometimes affected the course of a mission and/or its final outcome.

On issue worth briefly noting is the evolving definition of an envoy. Before European diplomatic tradition developed an attitude towards individuals whom one might call diplomats, it was a common phenomenon that not only valid and 'legitimate' governments/sovereigns but also anybody -e.g. feudal lords, representatives of cities, and even universities or merchants- could send diplomatic agents. In the 1430s, a new tradition began, and the diplomats with a high status in society began to be employed by the leading polities in Europe.³⁹⁶

Until the 1430s, however, sovereigns utilized the means of diplomacy by sending out envoys of their own. The limits of the power of an envoy are also fundamental to understanding the reason for his employment. He could be dispatched

³⁹⁴ Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 79. For the treaty of 1403, see Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403," 72-88.

³⁹⁵ Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403," 77.

³⁹⁶ Mattingly, *Renaissance diplomacy*, 27.

to a foreign court with limited or full capacity. The function of envoys ultimately depended on the limits of authority that were assigned to embassies. Garrett Mattingly, in his pioneering study *Renaissance Diplomacy*, underlines the pivotal function of diplomatic personnel's limits of authority.³⁹⁷ He relies on a close study of the writings of Bernard du Rosier, the Archbishop of Toulouse who wrote treatises on his experiences as an ambassador in the fifteenth century.³⁹⁸ Mattingly's book, together with a more recent study by Donald E. Queller,³⁹⁹ still –despite their early dates of publication- constitutes a prelude to the early modern diplomatic tradition. These two studies have made tremendous contributions to our understanding of the nature of European diplomacy, its developments, and the role of individuals in the diplomacy of the age. In particular, Mattingly reconstructs the fifteenth-century diplomacy with a reference to reliable testimonies, distinguishing envoys with limited authority from full-fledged ambassadors. Thus, his definition of two types of envoys (i.e. nuncio and procurator) is as follows:

A nuncio was a messenger, speaking with the voice of his principal. He might be a great nobleman, a herald, the representative of a corporate body, or a simple courier. In any case, his function was the same. It was to deliver a message or to grace a ceremony as the representative of his employer. He had no power to negotiate anything, and when his message was delivered or his symbolic act performed his mission was over. A procurator, on the other hand, had no symbolic representative function, but he could negotiate. He was a person armed with specific legal powers to represent the interests of his principal, or to arrange on more or less fixed terms a particular piece of business. His name and general function derived from Roman law and survive today in the proctors and procureurs of certain courts. 'A procurator speaks always in his own person though in his lord's name; a nuncio speaks in his lord's person, never of himself' was the way the textbooks put the

³⁹⁷ Mattingly, *Renaissance diplomacy*.

³⁹⁸ Bernard du Rosier, *Ambaxiator brevilogus*, in Hrabar (ed.), *De legatis et legationibus tractatus varii*.

³⁹⁹ Queller, *The office of ambassador in the Middle Ages*.

difference. Theorists found no difficulty in telling nuncios from procurators, and both from ambassadors.⁴⁰⁰

At this stage, one has to clarify the distinction between the representatives abroad, for which it is necessary to look at the issue of the capacity of the diplomatic corps. The first category represents an envoy with extensive authorization, which renders him “full-fledged” in navigating the course of diplomatic negotiation, making decisions, and representing his master in full capacity in the latter’s absence. Therefore, such an envoy could be given with plenipotentiary power to conclude a treaty or to negotiate with rulers or representatives of the hosting party without further asking for directions from his principal.

Recent scholarship tends to identify these representatives as “ambassadors,” entrusted with delivering the message of their sovereigns in the best way possible. These representatives differed from the envoys, constituting the second category, who did not possess as elevated a social status as the ambassadors and who were mostly tasked with transmitting imperial messages. Thus, this type of diplomat possessed limited authorization in diplomatic communications. Based on that, the envoys with modest tasks of delivering a letter or a draft of an agreement or simply fulfilling less important missions in comparison with ambassadors should be evaluated accordingly.⁴⁰¹

Not all diplomatic personnel in an embassy, therefore, were in charge of diplomatic negotiation. No negotiation took place if an embassy did not include someone with negotiating authorization. The envoys would usually present a message in a customary way, fulfilling what the mission required of him; or waiting

⁴⁰⁰ Mattingly, *Renaissance diplomacy*, 28.

⁴⁰¹ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*.

for a ratification of a treaty or opinions and responses from the hosting party. They would, if needed, ask for further directives from their sovereign according to the course of communication. In this thesis, I adopt an all-encompassing approach by mostly identifying each individual as “envoy” and occasionally used the term “ambassador” depending on the context. To identify the diplomatic personnel as “envoy”, not “ambassador”, would actually bring a certain level of flexibility because the former embraces all types of representatives. Therefore, an ambassador was for all intents and purposes an envoy; however, the reverse is not true.

There were certainly levels of authority and capacity among the Byzantine envoys. To present an example of an individual with a high level of authority, one may look at how the envoy Demetrios Laskaris Leontares behaved in his embassy to the pretender Mustafa who was known to be a son of the Ottoman ruler Bayezid. Leontares’s speech to Mustafa on the occasion of their gathering is indicative of the level of authority held by a full-fledged envoy visiting a foreign court. Mustafa was able to enter Gallipoli thanks to Byzantine support. In about 1421, Leontares arrived in Gallipoli, and the meeting took place. After expressing Mustafa’s actions against the valid treaties and promises already made and reminding the pretender of how his ancestor Yıldırım (Bayezid) perished at the hands of Timur following his breach of sacred oaths, Leontares is said to have uttered that he would inform the emperor about the deceit of Mustafa. He then sailed back to Constantinople. This instance indicates that Leontares was capable of raising these points in the exchange, and that he had been given the authority to carry out the discussion to those limits. He nevertheless needed to consult the emperor for further initiative.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 24.12, 199.

The limit of envoys' abilities, that is their authorization in front of the receiving party, constitutes one of the fundamental aspects of the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communication directly affecting the composition of the diplomatic teams and the contents discussed during missions. Sometimes the sovereign could be unsatisfied by the result of a diplomatic mission. When Byzantine envoys concluded treaties with Mehmed II and returned to Constantinople, their emperor was not content with the agreement and the proposed payment of a large sum of tribute. He, therefore, sent another embassy refusing the payment.⁴⁰³

Regarding the power of confirming a treaty, Kantakouzenos details an instance that indicates the difference in terms of authority. In return for an embassy from the Bulgarian Kingdom, Andronikos III dispatched Andronikos Palaiologos, by then the *megas stratopedarches*, and a certain Ioannis Aplisfaris as imperial envoys to confirm the peace treaty (πρέσβεις ἅμα συνεξέπεμψεν αὐτοῖς βεβαιώσοντας τὴν εἰρήνην).⁴⁰⁴ Despite the possibility that the text of the treaty was discussed and written prior to the diplomatic visit, this example shows that some individuals could be given the authority to conclude a peace treaty.

There is an excellent anecdote in Doukas's narrative that details the issue of the limits of authority concerning representatives of foreign rulers. In the context of Murad II's relations with the ruler of Karaman, one may think of a long-lasting challenge between these two rival states until the eventual conquest of Karaman by Mehmed II. Doukas mentions a group of officials from Karaman, who visited Adrianople in 1444 to speak with Murad II and inquire about a perfect-quality Arabian stallion, which happened to be at Karaman's stables. The faultless features

⁴⁰³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.2, 293.

⁴⁰⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 187, ll. 22-23.

of the horse had been brought to Murad's attention via foreign officials. Murad in return dispatched one of his servants, probably as an envoy, to Karaman, in order to acquire that long-dreamt-of-horse. When the Ottoman servant came before the ruler of Karaman, the latter cynically implied the incompetence of Murad in using the animal in question and asked the servant whether the Ottoman ruler could mount it. The response of the servant illustrates that there were certain limits of his authority in front of the foreign ruler: "It is not for me to answer whether he can [mount] or not. Only he can tell you. Tell me what I am to reply to my lord."⁴⁰⁵ That reply indeed indicates that the frame of conversations was already drawn up and as a result, the representative could not act individually and according to his free will.

Intelligence constitutes one of the purposes of embassies. As Nizam al-Mulk's frequently quoted words about envoys' research for roads and logistical information indicate, envoys carried information on physical conditions back to their home country so that campaigns and military matters could be organized. Therefore, one of the aims of envoys was to collect knowledge of the logistics and geography of the places they passed en route to their destination. In this sense, they were able to convey "political information," as explained by Nicolas Drocourt; they can also be described as news-bearers, because they were sometimes able to witness the domestic affairs of the country they visited.⁴⁰⁶ In the late Middle Ages, travelers likewise played a similar role as a source of information. As Drocourt asserts, the receiving sovereigns were possibly more reliant on the information that was carried by an envoy rather than a traveler. At the beginning of the fourteenth century,

⁴⁰⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 29.9, 255; trans. Magoulas, 174.

⁴⁰⁶ Drocourt, "Passing on political information between major powers: The key role of ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its neighbours," 91-112.

Pachymeres narrates that the news about Ghazan's death was received via letters broadcasted in the frontiers (κατὰ τὰς ἄκρας αἱ γραφαὶ διεδόθησαν). Ghazan's envoys happened to be in Constantinople in June 1304, where they learned of the death of the Ilkhanid ruler. They were on a mission responding to Andronikos II's earlier embassy.⁴⁰⁷ As conveyors of information, envoys' role can further be exemplified by the testimony of the Burgundian envoy Bertrandon de la Broquière, who, in the same vein, carried news of Joan of Arc to the Byzantine court.⁴⁰⁸

Certain envoys were sometimes entrusted with missions to the same destinations more than once.⁴⁰⁹ For example, Pachymeres says that Kharbanda, the Ilkhanid ruler, wanted to maintain conventions with Byzantium that had been established by Ghazan Khan.⁴¹⁰ In the spring of 1305, Andronikos II Palaiologos sent the same envoy to Kharbanda that he previously entrusted to Ghazan. Pachymeres does not give the name of the representative. Through this embassy, Andronikos aimed to receive an allied army from the Ilkhanid ruler. The Byzantine envoys returned to Constantinople with the news that some forty thousand fighters were prepared and twenty thousand were already on their way to Ikonion. The emperor was expected to be given assurance of who was to come to repel his enemies. Pachymeres underlines that the envoys were aware of the emperor's expectations, so they tried to satisfy the emperor's curiosity.⁴¹¹ Some scholars have raised ambiguities and doubts about the number of Ilkhanid forces. It has been argued that the number might have reflected the too-optimistic view of the Byzantines, since no military help

⁴⁰⁷ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 507. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2265 (before 17 May 1304). See also, Failler, "Pachymeriana nova," 188-190.

⁴⁰⁸ Drocourt, "Passing on political information between major powers: The key role of ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its neighbours," 112.

⁴⁰⁹ Kioussopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 88.

⁴¹⁰ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 507.

⁴¹¹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 645-649; see also Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2280.

came out of the East. The Ilkhanid cure did not work in the end and seems to have had little impact on Osman's attacks in Bithynia.⁴¹² The same situation is true for various individuals who were entrusted with a series of missions in a row. Theologos Korax, Demetrios Laskaris Leontaris, Manuel Melakhrenos, George Sphrantzes and Loukas Notaras were employed several times with diplomatic missions to the Ottoman court.

The question of to what extent an envoy could be entrusted with a series of diplomatic missions depended on his ability and the political gain that was expected out of those employments. That brings us to the personal role of envoys as primary agents in diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. Recent studies in the field of diplomatic history have tended to bring new perspectives aiming to reveal the main influencers behind the scenes. In other words, the agency of envoys has taken first place among the historians in the field. In this sense, diplomatic contacts have been analyzed according to the role of envoys entrusted to them and the envoys' contribution to the missions that they participated in, whether their personal interests or political tendencies or their networks had a part in their appointment and the final outcome of their missions. Besides the envoys, there were also other figures such as translators, merchants, missionaries, or generals, all of whom carried a sort of intermediary position and opened up different possibilities affecting the success of embassies. This "actor-centered approach" may bring possibilities for interpretations of historical data in a new light.⁴¹³ More specifically, our evidence may help us reconstruct the place of individuals, who had

⁴¹² Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 140, 145.

⁴¹³ Hennings and Sowerby, "Introduction: Practices of diplomacy," 3, where the authors give references to the following studies: Sowerby, "Early modern diplomatic history," 441-456; Watkins, "Toward a new diplomatic history of medieval and early modern Europe," 1-14. See also Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome. The rise of the resident ambassador*.

been dispatched as envoys with any level of capacity, in the encounters between the Byzantine and the Ottoman courts. The present chapter is an attempt to investigate the assertion of envoys' agency in diplomatic relations between these two courts. For that purpose, it will bring forward, as the first issue, the criteria for selection of envoys at both courts based on how the primary sources define them. Then, for the second issue, it will investigate envoys' social background, their careers and their experiences in order to understand the particularities shaped the course of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications.

3.1.1 Offices in charge of diplomatic relations

Firstly, during the entire period, there was no particular service dedicated to managing embassies or providing envoys within the Byzantine imperial administration. As far as the situation in the Byzantine Empire is concerned, the practical aspect of diplomacy was at the hands of the emperor, who assigned this task primarily to the high-ranking members of the government. It was ultimately the emperor himself who decided the composition and members of embassies as well as the messages to be delivered. Yet, the tasks of receiving foreign ambassadors and composing foreign correspondence were conducted mainly by the *paradynasteuon*, *megas logothetes* or *mesazon* depending on the period in question.

Further discussion is required here to explain the historical development of the offices related to the implementation of diplomacy. Despite the absence of a well-defined 'foreign service' in the Byzantine state, foreign embassies, in the late Byzantine era, were received largely by the *mesazon* (μεσάζων; pl. *mesazontes*) or by

other officials to whom the emperor entrusted this task. That duty was sometimes undertaken by the emperor himself.⁴¹⁴

In the first half of the fourteenth century, the Byzantine court contained two head officials with whom foreign relations were entrusted: *mesazon* and *megas logothetes* (*grand logothete*). While the latter was responsible for foreign correspondence and imperial chancery preparing orders and correspondence in general, the duty of issuing all other imperial documents was entrusted to the former.⁴¹⁵ The *mesazon*, furthermore, took over the entire responsibility for all forms of diplomacy by the second half of the fourteenth century, after the *megas logothetes* became an honorific title. During the period under consideration, the Byzantine government embodied two *mesazontes* occupying the office at the same time.⁴¹⁶ In short, the *mesazon* was the most important individual involved in diplomatic connections in the Byzantine court. He was acting as a person who took control of discussions, conducted negotiations and sometimes acted as an interpreter. Besides the top offices as described, the Foreign Service in the Byzantine Empire was mainly composed of the following offices: *protonotarioi* (the first of the secretaries) and *diermeneutai* (interpreters; sing. *διερμηνέας* or *ερμηνευτής*) under the authority of a *megas diermeneutes* (the head interpreter).⁴¹⁷ Moreover, since the Byzantine Empire was shrinking due particularly to the dramatic result of the civil strife of the 1340s,

⁴¹⁴ Oikonomides, "Byzantine diplomacy, A. D. 1204-1453: Means and ends," 77-78.

⁴¹⁵ See Oikonomides, "Byzantine diplomacy, A. D. 1204-1453: Means and ends," 78: "The *mesazon* was close to what we could call a 'prime minister', while the grand logothete looked more like the head of the foreign service."

⁴¹⁶ Kioussopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 85-86; Verpeaux, "Contribution à l'étude de l'administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων," 285-290.

⁴¹⁷ See for more: Oikonomides, "La chancellerie impériale de Byzance du 13e au 15e siècle," 167-195.

the number of officials with defined duties was reduced and the emperor's men of confidence began to be entrusted with multiple important services simultaneously.

In the Ottoman court, there were particular offices in charge of receiving foreign embassies. It was usually the grand viziers who were most active in that role.⁴¹⁸ Since the vizirate did not exist prior to Murad I's rule, the Ottomans might have entrusted an individual for dealing with the field of foreign affairs. However, available sources do not allow us to say this conclusively. Pointing to the central role of an Ottoman vizier, which we are able to attest by the reign of Murad I, Doukas equates this Ottoman bureaucrat with a Byzantine *mesazon*.⁴¹⁹ The traditions in Byzantine and Ottoman courts, of course, conveyed nuances and exceptions. Doukas informs the reader about a custom that the purpose of a mission was initially explained to the viziers.⁴²⁰ Another example of this phenomenon can be explained further. Narrating the events after 1453, Doukas describes how he was sent (ἐστάλθην) as an ambassador to deliver the news of the new lord of Lesbos and to deliver the annual tribute of three thousand gold coins. In August 1455, he visited the Ottoman court in Adrianople, where the ambassador appeared in front of the Ottoman ruler without any discussion with him, but engaged in conversations with his viziers.⁴²¹

One may guess at the function of the viziers as a sort of a barrier between the Ottoman ruler and foreign envoys, a unique sign of a strict protocol in the Ottoman tradition. This practice of communicating through viziers had been preferred in Islamic polities since earlier times. In 917, when the Byzantine embassy was aiming

⁴¹⁸ For a general assessment of the office of the grand vizierate in the early Ottoman state, see Taneri, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin kuruluş döneminde veziriazamlık (1299-1453)*.

⁴¹⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.10, 165.

⁴²⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.2, 293-295.

⁴²¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 44.1, 411.

to accomplish in an exchange of prisoners visited the Abbasid court, the envoys at that mission had to relate their purpose of visit initially to the vizier Ibn al-Furat.⁴²²

How did early Ottoman diplomacy function? At the outset, one should state that the viziers were the disguised actors “behind the scenes,” directing the foreign affairs of the Ottoman state. How far they incorporated their personal self into the official stance during diplomatic encounters is one of the main questions I will pose in this section. I will try to answer this question while examining the Ottoman envoys entrusting with missions to the Byzantine court.

For now, we may conclude that the old tradition of diplomacy in Byzantium created a well-developed body of offices and officials that were entrusted to conduct tasks and were assigned by the emperor. In the Palaiologan age, that body was centered around *megas logothetes* and *mesazon*, and existed on a diminished scale without losing its prominence in shaping the foreign policy of the empire. The presence of several individuals employed as envoys not only towards the Ottomans but also to other polities as well points to a sophisticated system in Byzantine diplomacy. It means that there were professionals engaged in diplomatic practice and they themselves worked as imperial agents abroad. The picture on the Ottoman side shows a gradual development of the office entrusted with missions related to foreign affairs. As the Ottoman state became centralized, its apparatus began to involve particular departments or individuals whose tasks were designated as such. Ottoman diplomacy was primarily headed by the grand vizirate and conducted largely by viziers and certain individuals to a lesser degree.

⁴²² Kennedy, “Byzantine-Arab diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic conquests to the mid-eleventh century,” 140.

3.1.2 Terminology

Since this thesis uses primary sources in both Byzantine Greek and Ottoman Turkish, the terms occurring and defining particular titles and phenomena in these sources must be explained. Investigating the late Palaiologan period, Sophia Mergiali-Sahas has remarked on the lack of specificity in defining the variant types and ranks of Byzantine envoys and terms of the field. She has drawn attention to that reality with regard to Byzantine sources. Designating only the diplomatic agents, Mergiali-Sahas concluded that there are three terms used in the Byzantine sources to define the diplomatic agents: πρέσβυς (plr. πρέσβεις), πρεσβευτής, and ἀποκρισιάριος (plr. ἀποκρισιάριοι).⁴²³ The last two terms were somewhat less common in the primary sources of the period. Byzantine primary sources, which are used in this study, identify the envoys with two terms without any difference as a token of making a distinction in terms of their limits of authority. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the sources were in accord with each other when identifying the term “embassy” (ἡ πρεσβεία).⁴²⁴ The terms used in Byzantine texts do not specifically refer to or make a distinction between the hierarchical orders among the envoys, whereas the situation in the Western historical sources reveal a clear ranking system. Therefore, it is quite hard to designate what type of envoys the Byzantine authors talk about. Doukas uses both ἀποκρισιάριος and πρέσβυς interchangeably without any difference in terms of types of envoys and their destinations.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Mergiali-Sahas, “A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile,” 589. In Pachymeres, for example, the envoys are termed as οἱ πρέσβεις (e.g. Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 661) or embassy as ἡ πρεσβεία (e.g. Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 661).

⁴²⁴ See for example, Manuel II Palaiologos’s use of the term in one of his letters to Demetrios Kydones: “τὴν πρεσβείαν.” Dennis, *The letters of Manuel II*, Letter 8, 23.

⁴²⁵ For example, the author refers to John VIII’s envoys to Murad II in early 1440 as πρέσβεις (Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 31.8, 269), while he utilizes the term ἀποκρισιάριος for distinguishing the envoy that the Ottoman sultan dispatched to George, the despot of Serbia (Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book

However, there appears to be a clear distinction made by the Byzantine authors while naming a simple messenger (ἄγγελος), whose task was hardly no more than to convey a message to its receiver. The references to a delivery of such a message can be rendered in the verb “ἀγγέλλω” (to send) which designates the action of a messenger. A case in point is from the writings of Manuel II Palaiologos. In his *Funeral Oration* for his brother Theodore, Manuel distinguishes such an individual as a messenger (ἦκέ τις ἀγγέλλων πρὸς ἐμέ), who brought him the news that his father changed his mind about the reinstallation of Theodore to his post in Thessalonike.⁴²⁶ Messengers were likely to be used for indicating a dispatch of an entrusted individual for internal matters such as between two parties in a civil strife, or from an emperor to his son as revealed by the abovementioned example.

Reading primary sources, some cases raise doubts about whether messengers can be identified as diplomatic contacts. One such case would be story of a messenger who was dispatched for the purpose of informing the Byzantine emperor about Murad II's passing on the Hellespont. At first glance, this does not look like a diplomatic mission in its scope or its form. However, the following explanation by Chalkokondyles leads us to understand that it can be considered as a sort of embassy. As narrated by the author, in this way Murad informed John VIII Palaiologos about the developments and further displayed his expectations of good wishes in his dealings with the Christian states.⁴²⁷

32.1, 273) or referring to the envoy of Bayezid I to Manuel II (Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.1, 81) or the envoys of Constantine XI to Mehmed II (Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.11, 305). Also see Doukas, ed. Grecu, 289, ll. 10, 17.

⁴²⁶ Manuel II Palaeologus, *Funeral oration on his brother Theodore*, trans. Chrysostomides, 101. Hereafter “Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*.”

⁴²⁷ “ἄγγελον ἔπεμψε παρὰ τὸν Βυζαντίου βασιλέα.” Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 99; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 6.59, 80

On the other hand, Ottoman sources commonly use the term “ilçi” or “elçi” denoting a messenger, an envoy or an ambassador.⁴²⁸ An Arabic version of the term “sefir” is used in later centuries. There is no distinction in terms of the limits of the “elçi” in charge.⁴²⁹

In the final analysis, historical evidence of the diplomatic encounter between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans often lacks specific technical terminology. As a consequence, the researcher must rely on contextual interpretation of evidence and restricted descriptions of envoys with mostly no detailed information besides the occasional mention of names and titles.⁴³⁰

3.2 Criteria for selection of envoys

Modern studies have hitherto developed several arguments in selection procedures and criteria for the Byzantine envoys. Élisabeth Malamut, in her important study on the Byzantine ambassadors to the Ottomans during the first half of the fifteenth century, argues that the Ottoman rulers were often decisive in the selection of the individuals to be sent to the Ottoman court.⁴³¹ For her, it was not the Byzantine emperors pulling the strings in mutual diplomatic contacts but the Ottoman rulers due to the political and military superiority of the Ottoman state. The overwhelming status of the Ottoman rulers can well be observed from earlier on, that is, from the last quarter of the fourteenth century onwards. Malamut investigates the criteria that played a role in selecting the Byzantine envoys for the missions to the Ottoman

⁴²⁸ For the use of the term in Neşrî's chronicle, see Neşrî, vol. I, 216: “پلچی”

⁴²⁹ Lewis, “Elçi,” 694.

⁴³⁰ Mergiali-Sahas, “A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile,” 589.

⁴³¹ Malamut, “La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 79-95.

court. As she argues, these individuals (Demetrios Leontares, Theologos Korax, etc.) were all appointed representatives to whom the Ottoman rulers approached very positively and found no problem in getting in touch with. This situation, according to her, is observable if one looks at the multiple employment of certain agents. As she claims, the exceptional and contradictory cases ended up in a political crisis. Departing from this argument, she explains the criteria for an ideal Byzantine envoy “appropriate” for a mission to the Ottoman court.⁴³²

Even during the struggles within the Palaiologan dynasty over the throne in the later part of the fourteenth century at the beginning of the reign of Bayezid I, when the Ottoman central state was going through a period of consolidation and its military achievement came as no surprise, the Ottoman rulers managed to exploit these circumstances to their benefit, but not directly played a role as instigators.⁴³³ Malamut’s argument is partly misleading, in this context, because for example in the aftermath of the battle of Ankara, Manuel II Palaiologos gained the upper hand and oriented the foreign affairs of his empire as well as the international affairs of Mehmed or Isa to some extent. Moreover, during the reign of John VIII Palaiologos, Byzantium must not have followed Ottoman advice since the emperor adopted a contradictory attitude towards the Ottomans and his reign witnessed many diplomatic occasions with varying individuals from a large array of backgrounds and wide-ranging characteristics. Furthermore, as various chronicles show and instances of several Ottoman pretenders backed by the court in Constantinople prove, there seems to have been an intentional policy followed by the Byzantine emperors to decide on

⁴³² Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 85.

⁴³³ Murphey, “Bayezid I’s foreign policy plans and priorities: Power relations, statecraft, military conditions and diplomatic practice in Anatolia and the Balkans,” 186.

the reigning Ottoman sultans.⁴³⁴ To what extent the Byzantine court was successful in this is debatable. However, it may be stated that the Byzantine emperors remained to be a challenging actor –at least in the diplomatic arena- and followed policies that were shaped by their interests.

In marking the skills of diplomats in varied fields, what historical sources reveal is a complex but well-defined mechanism of selecting appropriate individuals for foreign missions in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic relations. As a common phenomenon of the Palaiologan period, emperors became ambassadors per se. This section excludes the emperors, who functioned as self-representatives of their own governments by personally contacting the Ottoman rulers. The same is also valid for the Ottoman rulers engaging direct diplomatic contacts with their Byzantine counterparts.

Compared to the instances of the Byzantine envoys, which are mentioned by name in the primary sources, only a few Ottoman envoys are identifiable. We are not provided with ample evidence on the identities of the Ottoman envoys in the fourteenth century considering the frequency of the Ottoman contacts with Byzantium at the same period. Nevertheless, a handful of names may illustrate the early Ottomans' tendencies about the “befitting” envoys not only to Byzantium but also to their other neighbors such as the Mamluks, the Turkish emirates, or the empire of Timur.

Sources frequently refer to envoys who were exchanged between conflicting parties in times of political upheavals in Byzantium. They paint several portraits of envoys with multiple and exceptional characteristics. Although the following

⁴³⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 8, 18.

examples represent internal dispatches of envoys within Byzantium, they give clues about some criteria for envoys. To be appointed as an envoy required possessing some of the criteria or all of them at once. Instances showing these distinguishing qualifications do not necessarily come from the contexts in which envoys are mentioned by name; to the contrary, many cases presenting a variable picture of envoys do not involve any names at all. In all, as revealed through the written sources, they provide evidence for what kind of criteria played a role in deciding on an “ideal” envoy. There are many examples of this, especially in the historical account of John VI Kantakouzenos. Among them are the communications between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, or between John VI Kantakouzenos and the regency government in Constantinople. These instances sometimes offer evidence for the process of choosing envoys and occasionally -with respect to the total number of contacts- provide the identities of envoys. Named as envoys in historical sources, just as the usual and common ones sent to foreign countries, these “internal” representatives functioned as transmitters of demands in times of internal strife and civil wars. As revealed in his *History*, John VI Kantakouzenos opted for envoys with particular abilities. For an embassy to Anna of Savoy in Constantinople, the unnamed *hegoumenos* of the Gaura Monastery and a certain Demetrios Sgouropoulos (PLP 25015) have been presented by the author as befitting individuals. Kantakouzenos thought that while the former was an experienced and honorable person in matters related to politics, the latter, from among the emperor’s *oikeioi*, stood out with his wisdom and capacity to report statements accurately.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 140: “καὶ τὸν τῆς Γαυρᾶ μονῆς ἡγούμενον ἀπολεξάμενος, ἄνδρα ἀρετῆς ἀντιποιούμενον καὶ πολιτικοῖς πράγμασιν ὁμιλεῖν ἔχοντα ἐπιτηδείως, καὶ Σγουρόπουλον ἐκ τῶν οἰκετῶν αὐτοῦ, συνετόν τε ἅμα καὶ δυνάμενον ἀπταιστως τὰ παρ’ ἐκατέρων ἀπαγγέλλειν διαπρεσβεύόμενα, πρὸς βασιλίδι εἰς Βυζάντιον ἐκπέμπει.” This piece is translated into English by McLaughlin. See Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin, 203-207: “And having selected the hegoumenos of

Moreover, during the years of the civil strife in the 1320s, when Andronikos III Palaiologos decided to investigate his grandfather's anger at him, he sent a certain Joseph as an envoy. Kantakouzenos describes the envoy's virtue and high esteem, which were sufficient criteria for an official representative to deliver Andronikos III's message to the reigning emperor, his grandfather. Kantakouzenos writes that Joseph was capable of hiding "his lamp under a bushel."⁴³⁶ From the period of the civil strife between the son and the grandfather, a final example would be a certain Isaac, who was selected as an envoy to Andronikos III. Carrying the message of Andronikos II, this particular man, as argued by Kantakouzenos, was a man of insight and above all of great zeal for virtue.⁴³⁷

Another example from the period of the 1320s of Byzantium is presented by Gregoras, who narrates an embassy of Andronikos III to his grandfather Andronikos II. The author mentions that the young emperor requested either a guaranteed entrance to Byzantium or a delegation from among the leading Byzantine citizens, namely members of the senate, leading ecclesiastical figures, and some educated people to discuss matters because such people were suitable to convey his message to the emperor and to the citizens of Byzantium.⁴³⁸ This piece is important because it shows that, as a common trend in late Byzantine tradition, delivering the message of a sender could not be fulfilled by simple individuals, but required certain qualities.

In an example from the siege of Thessalonike by the Ottomans, one may observe this issue as vividly described. Explaining severe circumstances in the city,

the Gaura Monastery, a man who sought virtue and had suitable experience in political matters, and Sgouropoulos, one of his own *oikeioi*, who was wise and able to report what was said by either of two parties of envoys precisely, he sent them to the Empress in Byzantion."

⁴³⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 24; The translation belongs to Robert Harry Trone. See Kantakouzenos, trans. Trone, 128.

⁴³⁷ "ἄλλως μὲν ὄντα συνετὸν, οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ ἀντιποιοῦμενον καὶ ἀρετῆς." Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 152.

⁴³⁸ Gregoras, vol. I, Book 9.2, 397.

Symeon, the Archbishop of Thessalonike, speaks of the problems of provisioning, which seems to have resulted in the defection of some inhabitants to the besieging Ottomans. In that context, incompatible with the attitude of the Byzantine emperor, the inhabitants of Thessalonike selected envoys and sent them to Murad II asking for the lift of the siege. According to Symeon, this attempt did not result in better conditions in the city. Following this unsuccessful venture this time to seek help from the emperor Manuel II in Constantinople, Symeon mentions an embassy, which comprised of a single individual.⁴³⁹

There was a connection between the ideal criteria for an envoy and the duties assigned to him during a mission. The individuals sent on a mission to the Ottoman court were sometimes likely to carry different qualities compared to other individuals to the Papal See or the Western states, for instance. Theologos Korax, who functioned as both diplomat and interpreter in the Byzantine court for two decades following the battle of Ankara in 1402, is a perfect example. His knowledge of the Turkish language and personal experience with the Turkish community possibly made him a fitting candidate for Manuel II's missions to the Ottoman court.

Byzantine envoys were part of social, political, and intellectual elite. Describing the delicate role of envoys, Nicolas Drocourt asserts that they "have the image and voice of the sovereign abroad."⁴⁴⁰ Based on the descriptions by the primary sources, the characteristics of envoys either derived from their titles or offices they occupied, thus depending on their social status and networks in Byzantine society and bureaucracy, or from their personal merit-moral qualities that

⁴³⁹ Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonike, *Politico-historical works of Symeon Archbishop of Thessalonica (1416/17 to 1429)*, ed. Balfour, IV, 46-49 and VIII, 55-57.

⁴⁴⁰ Drocourt, "Byzantine diplomacy," 252.

had little to do with their rank in society. Some criteria in selecting the diplomatic personnel entrusted with missions both in the Byzantine and Ottoman courts will be identified in the following part of the study: trustfulness, personal affinity or blood connection to the emperor, acquaintance with the language or country in question, ethnic origin, mastery in diplomacy, and experience. The historical sources depict envoys with one or more of these qualities.

The envoys may have belonged to all walks of life as Nicolas Oikonomides argues. However, most of the detectable Byzantine envoys belonged to the higher echelons of society.⁴⁴¹ There are envoys that would fit Oikonomides's description for our consideration, but none of them is known by name. Narrated in Gregoras's *Roman History*, as the author speaks from the mouth of his fictive friend Agathangelos, the author states that he had disciples reaching up the upper levels of social hierarchy, and that some even became envoys (τοὺς δὲ τὰς ὑπερορίους πρεσβείας).⁴⁴² This supports Oikonomides's argument, namely, that envoys could belong to a lower stratum in society but later build up a career and find a place high up in the bureaucracy. However, as most of the documented cases illustrate, the late Byzantine envoys were usually individuals with personal affinity to emperors, from bureaucratic or aristocratic families, from among the members of the *oikeioi*, and the relatives of emperors. Andronikos II Palaiologos chose his loyal men, advisors, and envoys from among the senators.⁴⁴³ The majority of the known envoys in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications belonged either to the aristocracy or the emperor's *oikeioi*.⁴⁴⁴ They could already be occupying certain offices in the

⁴⁴¹ Oikonomides, "Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 1204-1453: Means and ends," 82.

⁴⁴² Gregoras, vol. III, 64.

⁴⁴³ Tsirpanlis, "Byzantine parliaments and representative assemblies from 1081 to 1351," 463.

⁴⁴⁴ The term *oikeios* is used in the period in question referring to emperor's most trusted and closest relatives or some civil dignitaries. See Kazhdan, "Oikeios," 1515. For the term's more extensive

government, either related to foreign affairs or other bureaucratic positions. They could have previously been members of the lower social classes, but as far as the time of their employment is concerned, that was a general tendency since the Palaiologan emperors considered personal confidence paramount. This is why the relatives of the emperors or the *oikeioi* were frequently given prominent offices.⁴⁴⁵ Investigating the last one hundred years of the empire in its diplomatic communications with the West, Stavroula Andriopoulou was able to detect thirty out of seventy-five envoys who were from among the *oikeioi* or the relatives of emperors, which illustrates that such qualities played a remarkable role for the emperors of the late Palaiologoi in their selection of envoys.⁴⁴⁶

In the fourteenth century, the Byzantine court bears testimony to the presence of *archontes*, who were regularly entrusted with missions of embassy abroad. The ambassadorial representation became a field of activity for the high aristocracy during the conflict between Andronikos II Palaiologos and his grandson Andronikos III.⁴⁴⁷ Although that occupation of nearly permanent positions in Byzantine foreign affairs was praised by authors like Manuel II Palaiologos and Isidore, who was the archbishop of Thessalonike (1342-1396), it raised public criticism as it shows itself in Isidore's homilies, because the expenditure and budget that were needed to compensate these *archontes* became a real problem for the people. That turned out to be a burden in the form of taxes.⁴⁴⁸ In the fifteenth century, the picture did not change much, because leading individuals of Byzantine society continued to be

description with contemporary examples, see Kyritses, *The Byzantine aristocracy in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries*, 16-20.

⁴⁴⁵ Verpeaux, "Les oikeioi. Notes d'histoire institutionnelle et sociale," 89-99.

⁴⁴⁶ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 151.

⁴⁴⁷ Tsirpanlis, "Byzantine parliaments and representative assemblies from 1081 to 1351," 458-459.

⁴⁴⁸ Tsirpanlis, "Byzantine parliaments and representative assemblies from 1081 to 1351," 440-441.

entrusted as representatives of the Constantinopolitan court. While speaking of the frequency of Byzantine diplomatic visits to Murad II's court, Chalkokondyles mentions the envoys as the leading men (ἄνδρας τοὺς παρὰσφύ) of the Hellenes, among which the author particularly focuses on the one embassy led by Loukas Notaras, who was a prosperous man.⁴⁴⁹

In general, there was an inclination for entrusting the emperor's men of confidence to significant missions. This trend of the rise of the emperor's *oikeioi* in diplomatic communications was largely observed in Byzantium's relations with the West.⁴⁵⁰ Likewise, in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts, the majority of the individuals can be identified as emperors' *oikeioi*, with the exclusion of some cases, in which agents from different social, and sometimes humbler, backgrounds came out as imperial representatives.

How were the foreign services in other polities formed? Besides giving explanatory information about the administration mechanism of the Byzantine Empire, Byzantine historians occasionally describe how the foreign affairs of other polities functioned, as Chalkokondyles does in his *Apodeixis Historion*. His digressions in the narrative sometimes cover the peculiarities of neighboring people as well as their governmental organizations. In some passages, especially in matters of foreign relations, the author depicts the practice of diplomacy in both Venetian and Ottoman courts. To begin with, in his lengthy description of the Venetian council, after pointing out various offices and their duties, he mentions the council's magistracies (the Signoria) who were able to decide on embassies and negotiate with

⁴⁴⁹ Chalkokondyles uses the word “ὄλβιος” to mean Notaras's prosperity. Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 17; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, 396.

⁴⁵⁰ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 151-166.

foreign powers. These individuals were also actively involved in occasions of receiving foreign ambassadors, which took place in their presence.⁴⁵¹

On the other hand, the picture in the Ottoman diplomacy does not differ in terms of the frequent appearance of the ruler's men of confidence served in diplomatic affairs. While explaining the bureaucratic and hierarchical organization in the Ottoman army, Chalkokondyles gives the structure of the Ottoman ruler's household. He describes the offices in the Ottoman court by pointing out their duties and limits. At that part, a certain group of officials is mentioned as "the ruler's messengers" ([οἱ] τοῦ βασιλέως ἀγγελιαφόροι).⁴⁵² Is it probable that this group of officials constituted a foreign service in the Ottoman state? No particular names from this group appeared in historical evidence. Almost all the recorded instances concerning diplomatic communications with the Byzantine Empire bear the names of the viziers of the Ottoman rulers. As far as the Ottoman envoys are concerned, therefore, there is sort of a pattern that most of the recorded envoys were from among the household (The Porte = Αἱ θύραι) of the Ottoman ruler.⁴⁵³ The only exception is a certain Haji of an ambiguous background, who was sent to John VI Kantakouzenos in order to conclude a treaty during the winter of 1344-1345.⁴⁵⁴

A last example from Chalkokondyles can be mentioned in order to put forth his descriptions of the diplomatic practice of the Ottoman state. Ambassadors, being mostly the viziers in the Ottoman context, had a considerable sphere of influence

⁴⁵¹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 184-185; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 4.36, 322,324. In her PhD dissertation, Aslıhan Akışık carefully investigates the depiction of the Ottoman administrative mechanism as narrated by the Athenian historian. See Akışık, *Self and other in the Renaissance: Laonikos Chalkokondyles and late Byzantine intellectuals*, 162-180.

⁴⁵² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 9; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 5.12, 379-381.

⁴⁵³ For the examples after 1453, see Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 8, 194; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 8.69, 258.

⁴⁵⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 498. For this embassy, there is no entry in Dölger's *Regesten*. See also Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 143.

over the Ottoman rulers by personally advising them what to do in diplomatic ways on certain occasions. Chalkokondyles mentions a case that ended up concluding a treaty with the ruler of Karaman. He underlines the decisive role of Çandarlı Halil, the vizier of Mehmed II, in the process.⁴⁵⁵

The embassy of Theodore Metochites and John Glykys in spring 1294 to the Cilician Kingdom of Armenia, despite its earlier date, is also illustrative in many respects, particularly on the qualities of the imperial envoys in charge. Historian Gregoras explains the reason for the appointment of these individuals.⁴⁵⁶ They were chosen as representatives because they were the most learned men of their time (οἱ κρείττους τῶν τῆνικαῦτα σοφῶν). Aiming to find a bride for the son of Andonikos II Palaiologos, the itinerary of the embassy passed along the shores of the Aegean Sea and reached Cyprus, where its members stayed for a while, and yet eventually, did not like the place much. They then moved to the coastal city of Aigai in the Gulf of Issus. Following their departure from there, after some days they finally arrived at the residence of the king, where they spent many days. Gregoras says that they accomplished whatever Andronikos II had instructed them and brought the bride to Constantinople. It was not just that. There was a direct factor of envoys because they inserted their individual experiences into the whole mission. They performed their duties according to what the circumstances offered them and what they thought useful in the diplomatic dialogue. Besides the experience in politics of their time and the bureaucracy, their additional qualities, proficiency in knowledge, science, and wisdom, were befitting to become envoys. Gregoras states that these notions were

⁴⁵⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 44; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 7.66, 163.

⁴⁵⁶ Gregoras here mentions that John Glykys had written a book on this embassy, yet it did not survive. Gregoras, vol. I, 194.

necessary for an envoy to communicate and win over in conversations while visiting foreign nations. The more you were advanced in rhetoric, the more you accomplished in any disputes.⁴⁵⁷ Such a piece of unambiguous definition of ideal diplomatic corps of emperors in missions to foreign courts was valid particularly in the Byzantine historical narratives describing the late Byzantine period.

Knowledge of language was one of the key elements in matters of diplomatic communications. The tradition of utilizing native speakers or bilinguals in Byzantine diplomacy had its roots in earlier times. Suffice it to bring forth the example of Manuel Holobolos, who was an influential figure in the late-thirteenth-century Byzantine official contacts particularly with the Western states, including the Papacy. He worked in the imperial chancery because he was well-versed in Latin.⁴⁵⁸

Mastery in the language of the visited country was not actually one of the required qualifications due to the fact that during ambassadorial missions the parties employed interpreters. There are no known rules about it; sources do speak about interpreters, but quite often there is no direct reference to their presence. In the Byzantine chancery, there were scribes and interpreters responsible for translating the proposals of treaties or those entrusted to certain ambassadorial missions abroad. Theologos Korax was one of them. Having moved to Constantinople from Philadelphia and partaken in Byzantine bureaucracy after 1402, this man of quite distinguished career is an invaluable example in point. Doukas describes his mastery

⁴⁵⁷ There is a complete translation of the work: Nikephoros Gregoras. *Rhomäische Geschichte, Historia Rhomaike*, van Dieten (Ed.) and Tinnefeld (Trans.). “ἐκλέγονται δ’ οὗτοι μὴ μόνον δι’ ἣν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐτύγγανον ἔχοντες πεῖραν, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὸ πολλῶ τῶν ἄλλων προέχειν συνέσεως ἐμβριθεία, ὅση τε περὶ τὰ θεῖα τε καὶ ἡμέτερα δόγματα καὶ ὅση περὶ τὸν Ἕλληνα λόγον ἡσχόληται.” Gregoras, vol. I, 193-194.

⁴⁵⁸ See Fisher, “Manuel Holobolos and the role of bilinguals in relations between the West and Byzantium,” 210-222.

in the Turkish language.⁴⁵⁹ This quality must have been influential in his career as he was the chief interpreter of the Byzantine court in its contacts with the Ottomans for over two decades.⁴⁶⁰

Providing the most extensive and the only knowledge on Theologos Korax, Doukas's portrayal of this unique individual in his historical account illuminates the envoy's career, which ended up being one of the most famous diplomats of his time.⁴⁶¹ Doukas repeatedly portrays him as having slanderous character and inclined to rogue (ἦν γὰρ πανοῦργος ὡς οὐδεὶς τῶν ἄλλων τῷ τότε καιρῷ, καὶ εἰς τὰς τῶν Τούρκων πράξεις καὶ διαβολὰς πονηρότατος), wickedness and treachery.⁴⁶² Korax's elevation to the imperial chancellery was possible thanks to his frequent visits to the Byzantine palace, his meetings with various officials, and his proficiency in the Turkish language. These factors eventually made him a sought-after man in diplomacy with the Ottoman court. Korax improved his skills by experiencing several diplomatic visits in which he participated together with other Byzantine envoys to the Ottoman court, where he worked as an interpreter transmitting the messages to the viziers of Mehmed I. The recurrent missions brought him a reputation and an opportunity to develop intimate relations with the Ottoman ruler himself, his viziers, and other officials, primarily with Bayezid Paşa, himself an

⁴⁵⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 161: “ἔκτοτε οὖν οἱ πρέσβεις τοῦ βασιλέως εἶχον ὁμοῦ καὶ τὸν Θεολόγον (οὕτω γὰρ ἐκαλεῖτο) συνερχόμενον δια τὴν διάλεκτον.”

⁴⁶⁰ Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 363. See also Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 361.

⁴⁶¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1, 229.

⁴⁶² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.3-4, 231-235; trans. Magoulas, 161-163. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3392; Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 84-85.

Albanian convert and a former Christian who served as the grand vizier of Mehmed I.⁴⁶³

The accusations against Theologos Korax that he engaged in conspiracies against the Byzantine Empire prevailed in the Constantinopolitan community. These indeed seem to have affected the final decision of Manuel II Palaiologos, who put Korax in custody following his suspicious actions during his conversations with Murad II and his magnates/dignitaries (τοῖς μεγιστάνοις αὐτοῦ) gathered together to discuss peace (ὥς δῆθεν πρεσβεύσων τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης). Soon after he died in prison.⁴⁶⁴ Doukas connects the story of the death of Korax with Michael Pylles, a Christian and Ephesian by origin who was serving as a secretary in the Ottoman chancellery at the time and notified Manuel about Korax's betrayal. Doukas identifies Pylles as "indeed and demeanor intractable, lecherous, profligate, and utterly corrupt."⁴⁶⁵ Pylles, as opposed to Korax however, was spared thanks to his renunciation of his faith.

These two men serving for their own sovereigns, Theologos Korax and Michael Pylles, had much in common. Coming from the two different Anatolian cities, Philadelphia and Ephesus respectively, they were both portrayed by contemporary authors as they tried to seek benefits from their counterparts. While Theologos Korax established close connections and had familiarity with the Ottoman court, Michael Pylles was able to inform the Byzantine emperor about the former's betrayal. These scenes of changing attitudes of the Byzantine individuals with governmental positions in imperial bureaucracy or possessing local aristocratic lineage are revealed by Demetrios Kydones, who underlined the instances of the

⁴⁶³ “ἦν γὰρ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον φιλικῶς διακείμενος σὺν τοῖς ἀρχηγοῖς Τούρκοις καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τῷ ἡγεμόνι ὁ Θεολόγος.” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.3, 231. And also, elsewhere on p. 229. See Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between Ottomans and the Latins*, 142.

⁴⁶⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.3-4, 231-233.

⁴⁶⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.5, 235; trans. Magoulias, Book 28.5, 163.

citizens of Constantinople switching sides if they did not succeed in getting high offices.⁴⁶⁶ The attitude of these “madmen,” as named by Kydones, is also mentioned by Manuel II Palaiologos. In his *Funeral Oration* on his brother Theodore, Manuel refers to these individuals changing their side, yet such occasions made the Turks hesitant to fully approve them.⁴⁶⁷ Furthermore, Michael Pylles’s service at Murad II’s court proves that the Ottomans employed individuals in diplomacy from among the people of the conquered territories no matter what their faith was.

The role of competence in Greek language had been prominent in the Ottoman court. Until the latter part of Mehmed II’s reign, Greeks occupied secretarial positions at the Ottoman court. Already during Orhan’s reign the Ottoman court employed a certain Greek called Taronites.⁴⁶⁸ Another example from the court of Mehmed II was the Greek scribe (γραμματεὺς) Demetrios Apokaukos Kyritzes, who became a leading figure in the secretariat. He had served as an envoy to Venice by Murad II for delivering the document of the treaty, which was concluded in February 1446 between Mehmed II and the Venetian Republic.⁴⁶⁹ It was in the early 1460s when another Greek secretary named Katabolinos (γραμματιστὴν Ἑλληνα;

⁴⁶⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1-28.5, 229-235; trans. Magoulias, Book 28, 161-163; Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 324, 254; no. 167, 38; or no. 442, 407, which is translated by Charanis in Charanis, “The strife among the Palaeologi and the Ottoman Turks, 1370 to 1402,” 309; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 142-145. See also Necipoğlu, “Circulation of people between the Byzantine and Ottoman courts,” 105-108. For further examples of deserters to the Turks, see also Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr, “Un Paléologue inconnu de la région de Serres,” 7-9, 12.

⁴⁶⁷ According to Manuel, these men are clearly mad (“περιφανῶς μαίνεσθαι;” “τοῖς μαινομένοις”). See Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 129. Manuel underlines the negative aspects of these men as follows: “As for changing their customs and altering their way of life, they failed to obtain the approval of the Turks since they seem too ready to comply with their wishes. Because of this the enemy distrust the constancy of their newly acquired beliefs. And they are right. For how is it possible for a man to observe strictly what he has adopted on the spur of the moment when he so easily tramples down his life-long customs.” Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 130.

⁴⁶⁸ Philippides-Braat, “La captivité de Palamas chez les Turcs,” 149.

⁴⁶⁹ See Raby, “Cyriacus of Ancona and the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II,” 242; Raby, “Mehmed the conqueror’s Greek scriptorium,” 28; Martin-Thomas and Predelli (Eds.), *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum, acta et diplomata*, II, 370-371.

Καταβολινὸν γραμματέα τῶν θυρῶν)⁴⁷⁰ of the Porte was dispatched to Vlad III, the ruler of Wallachia, in order to invite the Wallachian ruler to Mehmed II's court.⁴⁷¹

Familiarity with the language of the visited country also mattered for the Ottoman rulers in their rendering of envoys to foreign courts. When Murad I decided to dispatch a certain Yazıcı Salih to the Mamluk sultan Barquq, the envoy's knowledge of Arabic was possibly a decisive qualification for his appointment. Furthermore, Salih had previously written literary works in the Turkish language. This might also have played a role in his mission to Cairo. A possibility has been put forward that Murad's choice of this particular man could have served for his plan to attract the hosting ruler, who had inclination and sympathy for Turkish literature.⁴⁷²

The habit of utilizing culturally acquainted individuals in diplomatic missions as envoys was not limited to Byzantine-Ottoman relations but was observed in other contexts as well. In diplomatic contacts with the Western states and the Papacy on exclusively the topics of union and military aid expected against the Turks, John V Palaiologos utilized envoys with certain qualities. Apart from their affinity with the Catholic faith, the emperor preferred those individuals because of their knowledge of Latin. Moreover, when Timur decided to dispatch a mission to Constantinople to prevent a treaty between the Byzantine Empire and Bayezid, this embassy, announcing Timur's campaign against the Ottomans, found its way to Pera on 19 August 1401 by a Genoese vessel. There was a certain Franciscus, a Dominican priest, in the embassy, possibly selected due to his faith, which eased communication

⁴⁷⁰ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 9, 252.

⁴⁷¹ Raby, "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium," 28. Ottoman interpreters (dragomans) of the later centuries became qualified experts in diplomacy and played significant role in conducting foreign affairs. See Vatin, "L'emploi du grec comme langue diplomatique par les Ottomans (fin du XVe-début du XVIe siècle)," 41-47.

⁴⁷² For the historical reference, see Neşrî, vol. I, 238. The possibility was raised by Yüksel-Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial diplomacy and warfare in the Islamic world*, 73-74.

with the Byzantine authorities.⁴⁷³ Timur seems to have benefitted from this individual in his other contacts with Western European polities. There used to be a Dominican named François Sandron, who was in the embassy of the French court sent in response to Manuel II Palaiologos's embassy in the late 1390s.⁴⁷⁴ He was possibly the same man just mentioned as the Timurid envoy.

One of the most important characteristics of an envoy is trustworthiness, a common distinction frequently referred to in the primary sources. Given the prominent role of embassies to foreign nations, envoys were expected to be trustworthy not only in the sense that they were expected to represent their master impeccably, but also in that they were required to be reliable guardians of large sums of money or costly presents. This may explain why in both Byzantine and Ottoman courts, people close to the rulers (i.e. the *oikeioi* and the aristocracy) dominated the embassies.⁴⁷⁵

The *panhypersebastos* Isaakios Asanes,⁴⁷⁶ who was *mesazon* in 1345, served as an envoy in an embassy sent to Süleyman of Karasi. His network and kinship ties, having been married to Arachantloun Theodora, the daughter of the Ilkhanid ruler Abaqa, and Maria Palaiologina, who was married to the Ilkhanid ruler earlier, might have made him a fitting person for such a mission.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷³ Dennis, "Three reports from Crete on the situation in Romania, 1401-1402," 245.

⁴⁷⁴ Knobler, "The rise of Tīmūr and Western diplomatic response, 1390-1405," 343.

⁴⁷⁵ John W. Barker points out the reason for the selection of the *oikeioi* as follows: "Such men [the emperor's men of confidence] were chosen as the sovereign's spokesmen abroad because of their trusted personal ties with the ruler himself, rather than as members of a self-sufficient foreign service." Barker, "Emperors, embassies, and scholars. Diplomacy and the transmission of Byzantine humanism to Renaissance Italy," 158.

⁴⁷⁶ PLP 1494. It should not be confused that this individual is different from a namesake who was an envoy to meet Mehmed I in 1420.

⁴⁷⁷ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 116, 125, 218, 507. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2903.

The utilization of kinship networks in selecting diplomatic agents was not restricted to the parties in question. This inclination is also observable in neighboring polities. While narrating Murad's attack on Karaman, Doukas states that the most trusted officials of the ruler of Karaman were sent to Murad as envoys "offering to surrender large sums of money, the stallion, and the two towns (Aşqyari and Beysari) which he had taken, together with their fields and villages, if only he [Murad] would turn back."⁴⁷⁸

Furthermore, Giovanni Adorno, the podestà⁴⁷⁹ at New Phokaia, tried to establish good relations and secure the status quo by sending letters to Murad II. Murad II had written to Giovanni Adorno asking for one of the latter's trustful servants entrusted with discussing the details of the Ottomans' transportation across the straits by the Genoese triremes and warships.⁴⁸⁰ Doukas emphasizes Adorno's eagerness to provide a means of transportation to the Ottoman sultan. To that end, Adorno dispatched Demetrios Aga with letters to Murad and his viziers. In 1421, Murad sent the envoy back with a certain Hatib, who was carrying the message of the Ottoman ruler together with fifty thousand gold coins in return for the transportation of the Ottomans over the straits at Gallipoli.⁴⁸¹ While Hatib was identified by Doukas as "one of the most prudent and learned of the Turks" and as an envoy to whom fifty thousand *nomismata* were consigned to be handed over to Adorno,⁴⁸² Aşıkpaşazade, who mentions this very embassy, opts to describe him in

⁴⁷⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 209-211. The translation belongs to Harry J. Magoulías. Trans. Magoulías, 174. Murad's sister as the wife of the Karamanid ruler also dispatched letters to the Ottoman ruler to retreat and encourage him to conclude the peace treaty.

⁴⁷⁹ A term used for the authority ruling a Genoese colony.

⁴⁸⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.7-8, 209-211.

⁴⁸¹ PLP 30733. Χατήπη. Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.8, 211; The translation belongs to Harry J. Magoulías. See trans. Magoulías, Book 25.8, 151.

⁴⁸² "τότε σὺν τῷ Δημητρίῳ ἅπαντα καλῶς διαταξάμενοι στέλλουσι μετ' αὐτοῦ Χατήπην ὀνόματι Τοῦρκον, ἕνα τῶν φρονιμωτάτων καὶ τῶν ἐλλογίμων, ὅρκον δώσοντα τῷ Ἀδούρνῳ, καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ

negative terms. The Ottoman chronicler names Hatib as “the one who does not cleanse himself” (taharetsiz Hatib). By insulting this person with such an attribution, the author might have been emphasizing the latter’s close relation with the Genoese and perhaps his connection with Çandarlı İbrahim Paşa. In Aşıkpaşazade’s chronicle, Hatib is portrayed as a person, who was raised by Çandarlı İbrahim.⁴⁸³ We know through other sources that Hatib was a leading merchant of Gallipoli, who conducted trade and established commercial relations with Christians.⁴⁸⁴ Considering how Aşıkpaşazade views the “corrupted” Çandarlı Ali and his “collaboration” with the infidels, which will be treated in the following pages, this reading of Aşıkpaşazade’s opinions on Hatib seems plausible. However, one needs to remember that there are no apparent negative elements directed against İbrahim, with whom Hatib is associated, in Aşıkpaşazade’s chronicle.

In another instance, in order to discuss the details of the message from the pretender Mustafa, who seriously worried about Murad II’s passing the straits, Adorno this time sent his deputy Barnabas de Cornelia to meet with the Ottoman pretender.⁴⁸⁵ Given the proliferation of these cases in Byzantine-Ottoman encounters, representing the trustworthiness was a fundamental and distinctive quality for an envoy. Due to the fact that authorities entrusted large amounts of money or costly gifts in the envoys’ care, they needed to be well-represented in the hosting country;

νομίσματα χιλιάδας πεντήκοντα τοῦ ρογεῦσαι καὶ ἀπαρτίσαι στόλον τοῦ περᾶσαι τὸν πορθμὸν τῆς Καλλιουπόλεως, ἥδη τοῦ φθινοπώρου ἄρξαντος.” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.8, 211. The English translation in quotation belongs to Magoulas, Book 25.8, 151.

⁴⁸³ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 99-100; ed. Atsız, bâb 87, 159-160.

⁴⁸⁴ Hatib, as known also with the name Hacı Ömer bin Halil. His son-in-law, a certain Mevlânâ Hüsameddin, who was the kadı of Bursa, was sent to the Mamluks in 1436. The embassy had a purpose of consulting the Mamluk sultan on a judicial topic. See Yüksel-Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial diplomacy and warfare in the Islamic world*, 218-219 ref. to Feridun Bey (1274), 1: 206.

⁴⁸⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 225-227.

the role demanded that envoys correctly communicate their messages to the receiving party.

The notion of “trustworthiness” was also relevant to communications at local levels. Prior to the surrender of Nicaea, as the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade reveals, a “trusted” individual was selected as an envoy to visit Orhan for reaching a settlement with the Ottomans.⁴⁸⁶

Individuals occupying prominent offices in the Byzantine government are observable throughout the empire’s diplomatic communications with the Ottoman state. Manuel II Palaiologos, when he was to contact Mehmed I in winter 1420/1421 at the Koutoulos district outside of Constantinople, did not dispatch his sons but he chose three leading men (τὸν ἄριστον ἄνδρα; this can also be translated as “the most virtuous” or “the noblest” as well) as his envoys. These were Demetrios Laskaris Leontares (or Leontarios; d. 1431; Δημήτριος Λάσκαρις Λεοντάρης), Isaakios Asanes (Ἰσαάκιον τὸν Ἀσάνην) and Manuel Kantakouzenos (Μανουὴλ τὸν Καντακουζηνόν), who were accompanied by many *archontopouloi* and soldiers.⁴⁸⁷ Among these men, Demetrios had already occupied significant positions in the army and had a successful career as a general. He had also held some civil positions, such as a membership in the senate, and the governorship of Thessalonike under Manuel II’s reign.⁴⁸⁸ On the other hand, sources do not inform us about Isaakios’s position at

⁴⁸⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 41-42; ed. Atsız, bâb 32, 118-119, mentions that the Ottomans made a treaty at the end and sealed the surrender of the city.

⁴⁸⁷ “ἔστειλεν ... μόνους τὸν ἄριστον ἄνδρα ... μετὰ πολλῶν καὶ ἀρχοντοπούλων καὶ στρατιωτῶν καὶ δώρων.” Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16. For this embassy, see the following studies: Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3384; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 351-354; Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 80.

⁴⁸⁸ PLP 14676. Harris, “Demetrius Leondaris: Constantinople to Otranto,” 30; Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, 649; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2-4 and 8.1, 16-18; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 245, 342-344, 351-354, 357-358.

the time of the embassy. As a member of the emperor's *oikeioi*, he certainly comes from a remarkable family of the Asanes. Later on in his career, he became the eparch of Constantinople.⁴⁸⁹ The final envoy in this very embassy is particularly identified with his office by historian Sphrantzes. The *protostrator* (πρωτοστράτορα) Manuel Kantakouzenos is not mentioned anywhere else. Responsible for the organization of imperial troops, the *protostrator* was one of the chief officials in the Palaiologan period.⁴⁹⁰

The diplomatic tradition and the attitudes of each emperor differ several ways. Sophia Mergiali-Sahas and Stavroula Andriopoulou have shown that emperors' reign bears different priorities and characteristics when it comes to the profiles of envoys. Whereas during the first half of the fourteenth century, the Byzantine Empire's diplomatic contacts were dominated by individuals of Latin origin, the practice of employing Latins tended to change after 1347, when John VI Kantakouzenos began to send Greeks, such as Nicolas Sigeros (*protobestiaries*) and George Spanopoulos (*praetor* of the demos), as emissaries to Pope Clement VI in 1348.⁴⁹¹ Furthermore, a change can also be observed in the identities and social classes of envoys that were sent to the Western courts. Under John V's reign, from among a total of twenty-six embassies, just four envoys belonged to the ecclesiastical

⁴⁸⁹ For the early members of the family of the Asanes, see Krekić, "Contribution à l'étude des Asanès à Byzance," 347-355; Trapp, "Beiträge zur genealogie der Asanen," 163-177; Božilov, "La famille des Asen (1186-1460). Généalogie et prosopographie," 135-156.

⁴⁹⁰ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16; Papadrianos, "Ἡ πρωτοστρατορίσσα Καντακουζηνή," 161-165; Kazhdan, "Protostrator," 1748-1749; Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, no. 63, 172-173.

⁴⁹¹ Delacroix-Besnier, "Revisiting Papal letters of the fourteenth century," 159. These Greek envoys were accompanied by a Latin knight called Francesco de Pertuxi. See Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, 66-67.

circle, which might have been an indication of pro-unionist attitudes of the emperor. At this period, the Byzantine church did not accept the union of churches.⁴⁹²

As far as John VIII's envoys to the Western courts are concerned, John Torcello deserves a mention here. Having been the consul of the Catalans and the Sicilians in Constantinople, John Torcello occupied that position until 1434. His Latin origin must have made him a powerful candidate for an embassy and thus, he appeared as a Byzantine envoy on various occasions in the 1440s.⁴⁹³

It is hard to understand the true nature of the late Byzantine-Western relations without examining the roles of three major scholar-diplomats: Demetrios Kydones, Manuel Chrysoloras, and George Gemistos Plethon. None of these prominent figures appeared as imperial envoys to the Ottomans except for Kydones, regarding whose sole mission few details are known. As a *mesazon* for many years under the reigns of John V and Manuel II, Kydones became the key individual leading imperial foreign policy. His writings to several of his friends, including sometimes the emperors, reveal his reactive sentiments about the Ottoman advance. He became one of the supporters of the reactionary party, who argued that the best possible way to defend the empire was to call for military alliances with the Latin West.⁴⁹⁴ Although the role of diplomats with scholarly backgrounds dominated the scene under Manuel II Palaiologos regarding his contacts with the Western polities, the prevalent profile of Byzantine envoys shifted significantly in the following decades. In John VIII's reign,

⁴⁹² One of these four clergies was a certain Paul, the Latin archbishop of Smyrna. See Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 123-124.

⁴⁹³ See Mergiali-Sahas, "A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile," 603.

⁴⁹⁴ Barker, "Emperors, embassies, and scholars. Diplomacy and the transmission of Byzantine humanism to Renaissance Italy," 160. For another example, Manuel Chrysoloras's role in diplomacy with the West, see Mergiali-Sahas, "Manuel Chrysoloras (ca. 1350-1415), an ideal model of a scholar-ambassador," 1-12.

individuals from ecclesiastical circles were most frequently selected for diplomatic meetings with the West.⁴⁹⁵ Notwithstanding this, no scholar-diplomat is attested in Byzantine diplomatic encounters with the Ottomans.

Available sources only rarely render the full identities of envoys. Yet these sorts of references, despite lacking proper names, can still reveal other aspects of diplomatic contacts such as the characteristics or descriptions of individuals entrusted. During the Ottoman interregnum period, as modern historical literature calls it, numerous diplomatic communications are related in historical sources.

Mehmed I, once he had taken refuge in Constantinople, had conversations with Manuel II Palaiologos, to whom he showed great respect. Mehmed considered the emperor his ‘father,’ in the sense of friendship and a cooperative relationship offering mutual benefits.⁴⁹⁶ The Ottoman prince asked for the emperor’s backing in his fight against his brother Musa. The Byzantine aid came after groups of envoys (διαπρεσβευομένων), whose names are not known, were sent to Byzantium, where they were accepted hospitably by the Byzantines (τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὑποδεχομένων). This embassy returned home with the promise of the expected aid.⁴⁹⁷ According to this agreement, Manuel II aided Mehmed in his struggle against Musa at the battle of Çamurlu. In a separate embassy sent to Mehmed in 1413, Manuel II was expecting the young Ottoman prince to be loyal to his commitments; via his envoys, Manuel II requested the surrender of all the lands that Mehmed had promised to the Byzantine emperor during his stay in Constantinople. The embassy established a suitable ground for a treaty, which was concluded on terms favorable to Byzantium: all the

⁴⁹⁵ Mergiali-Sahas, “A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile,” 604.

⁴⁹⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 19.12-13, 131.

⁴⁹⁷ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 167-168; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 4, 292-294.

fortresses on the coast of the Black Sea were returned to the authority of the Byzantine emperor. As our only source for this contact, Doukas does not provide any name, but he refers to the envoys as the emperor's "most noble *archontes*" (Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Μανουὴλ ... ἀποκρισιαρίους στείλας τοὺς εὐγενεστέρους τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτοῦ).⁴⁹⁸

Affinity to the imperial family is another feature of the Byzantine envoys that appeared in the context of Byzantine-Ottoman official relations. In his narration of events leading to the treaty of 22 February 1424, historian George Sphrantzes explains how the embassy for that task was formed. Consisting of three distinguished individuals -Loukas Notaras, Manuel Melakhrenos and Sphrantzes himself- the embassy sought to conclude a treaty of friendship with Murad II. In that context, Sphrantzes underlines some characteristics required to become an official representative of the empire in a foreign mission. Accordingly, Loukas Notaras was chosen for his ability in diplomatic negotiations.⁴⁹⁹ At the embassy, he could negotiate the terms of the treaty; in other words, he was able to decide on things to be discussed and decided during the meetings. On the other hand, Manuel Melakhrenos was selected because he had previously visited Murad to negotiate this treaty, and therefore was acquainted its contents.⁵⁰⁰ Therefore, experience matters here. The reason for why Manuel Melakhrenos was selected confirms that there could be

⁴⁹⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.1, 131-133. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3334; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 79-80.

⁴⁹⁹ On Notaras's capacity to negotiate over the terms of the treaty: see Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26: "ὁ δὲ Νοταρᾶς, ἵνα τελέσῃ αὐτὴν καλῶς κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ὡς χρήσιμος καὶ καλός." Here, Notaras was the leader of the embassy, because it seems that he held the authority to discuss the treaty's articles. In this regard, he was entrusted as a full-fledged ambassador; he was able to discuss all the matters on behalf of the emperor. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3413 and 3414; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 86-87.

⁵⁰⁰ Sphrantzes writes the following for Melakhrenos's experience: "προαπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν ἀμυρᾶν καὶ ἐγνώρισεν, ὅτι θέλει γενέσθαι τὴν ἀγάπην." Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.

various phases of negotiations for a single treaty, as the drafts of the treaty were composed and negotiated over several sessions. For the final member of the embassy, Sphrantzes, as the author explains, the factor of personal affinity to the empress played a role.⁵⁰¹ Furthermore, he carried a sort of secretarial task, which required reporting the course of actions to Manuel II and his son John VIII, who was in Hungary at the time.⁵⁰² In a nutshell, his presence was due to his personal network and his duty as a reporter.

In this case, an example from Byzantine-Western diplomatic contacts may further illuminate the topic. A tendency to include natives or individuals who were ethnically or culturally connected to the opposite party has its roots in Byzantine diplomacy in earlier epochs of the empire. John VI Kantakouzenos's 1348 embassy to Pope Clement VI, for instance, aimed to make the pope revise his opinion about the emperor and also to seek a new crusade as an alternative way to relieve the Turkish threat and to reconsider the union of churches. John VI Kantakouzenos selected three men for this task among whom an individual named Francis (Φρανσῆς) appears with his distinctive qualifications.⁵⁰³ Francis became one of the members (πρέσβεις) for this mission due to his ethnic origin since he was of Latin descent (ἐκ τοῦ Λατίνων γένους). Besides his Latin background, he had long been in the service of the emperor and "was one of those suitable and well-known to the pope" (πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον δεουλευκότα βασιλεῖ, τῶν ἐπιτηδείων δ' ὄντα καὶ γνωρίμων πάπα).⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ "ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς ἀπὸ τὴν ἁγίαν δέσποιναν συγγενίδα αὐτοῦ δὴ τοῦ ἀμῆρᾶ ἀπὸ τὴν μάναν του ..."
Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26. This relationship between the empress and Murad II needs further investigation.

⁵⁰² In Hungary, John VIII visited Sigismund and tried to get military aid against the Ottomans. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, vol. II, 25.

⁵⁰³ The other two envoys were George Spanopoulos (the *protobestiaries*) and Sigeros (the *praetor* of the people). Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 53.

⁵⁰⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 53; trans. Miller, 188-189.

Additional exchange of embassies took place afterwards for the sake of gaining papal support for an allied formation against the Turks; the pope was insisting on the union of churches by convening a synod.⁵⁰⁵ The impression gained is that the personnel of a mission differed depending on the party to whom the embassy was dispatched.

Under the circumstances of the civil war in Byzantium, Anna of Savoy sought to receive military aid against John VI Kantakouzenos. For that purpose, she approached Saruhan and sent the *megas stratopedarches* George Tagaris as her envoy, who occupied the office from 1346 until 1355. George Tagaris was selected for this mission due possibly to his father's acquaintance with Saruhan, who had already spent time with his father during their presence in Philadelphia. The father of George Tagaris previously held the same title as that of his son. Receiving the requested military help from Saruhan in this way, the empress in Constantinople leaned on an individual possessing familiarity at a local level, in the eyes of the recipient.⁵⁰⁶ This example indicates that personal relations also mattered in the appointment of the envoys.

Sources mention individuals who possessed a certain influence over their rulers. Laonikos Chalkokondyles gives an important story about Bayezid's convening of his leading men expecting to hear about military tactics during his campaign in Anatolia shortly before he confronted Timur on the battlefield. Mistakenly identifying him as the son of Ali, instead of the brother of Ali, the author points out this man's significant influence on Bayezid (μέγιστον δὴ παρὰ τῷ

⁵⁰⁵ See for further details, Loenertz, "Ambassadeurs grecs auprès du pape Clément VI (1348)," 178-196.

⁵⁰⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 591: "πέμψαντες Τάγαριν Γεώργιον ..."; Nicol, "Philadelphia and the Tagaris family," 13-14. For George Tagaris, see PLP no. 27399; Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354)," 478.

Παιαζήτη δυνάμενον).⁵⁰⁷ In this meeting, Çandarlı İbrahim, one of Bayezid's viziers and the brother of Ali Paşa, tried to change Bayezid's mind about marching against Timur. All these points clearly indicate that İbrahim was among the influential figures in the foreign policy of Bayezid I. His key role in the Ottoman government resumed for some time after the battle of Ankara.

The practice of employing individuals of foreign origins was also observable in Byzantine diplomacy. Such individuals possessed a considerable role in orienting and directing imperial policy with regard to Byzantium's neighbors. When Michael VIII Palaiologos acceded to Byzantine throne as the first member of the Palaiologan dynasty, his primary aims were to secure his position on the throne and regain the territories of the empire before 1204. His policy can be summarized as "a perpetual effort to maintain a favorable balance of power against a diversity of enemies."⁵⁰⁸ After the capture of Constantinople, Michael sent an embassy to Rome. His choice of two individuals, namely Nikephoritzes and Aloubardes, who formerly served for the Latin emperor Baldwin II as envoys, may indicate an attempt to maintain the currently established acquaintance of these professionals, whose knowledge of Latin made them perfect candidates for such a mission. Although they conveyed gifts probably to make the Byzantine takeover of Constantinople tolerable, their mission nevertheless had a terrible consequence. Pachymeres mentions that Nikephoritzes was tortured to death because the Italians were so infuriated by his news. Perhaps Michael intentionally sent these two individuals and risked them knowing that they could be exposed to such a reaction. In any case, they were two Greeks in the service

⁵⁰⁷ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 142; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 3, 246.

⁵⁰⁸ Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West 1258-1282. A study in Byzantine-Latin relations*, 139.

of the emperor. Foreigners were also used as trusted imperial envoys in the early phase of the Palaiologan period.⁵⁰⁹

Rustam Shukurov has discussed the initial immigrants from the Turkish-speaking hinterland into Byzantium and pointed to their occupation as diplomatic agents or sometimes negotiators. The immigrants who happened to find themselves in bureaucratic circles were highly valued in diplomatic services due to their origin. This particular characteristic seems to have determined the respondent with whom the Turkic envoys shared a common ethnic or cultural background (ὁμόγλωττος).⁵¹⁰ There are several examples of this from the early Palaiologan period through the first quarter of the fifteenth century. An early representative of this method was the employment of a certain Koutzimpaxis (Kocabahşı). Based on the narrative of Pachymeres, this individual with an apparently Turkish name served as an envoy in consecutive missions to the Golden Horde and then to the rebellious groups among the Alans and the Turks in 1302 and 1305.⁵¹¹

The Byzantine secretariat included foreigners from among the individuals possessing specific ethnic backgrounds. Among them, the Latins occupied perhaps the most extensive position, especially in the fifteenth century. Several Latins appeared as members of the secretariat of both Manuel II and later John VIII. Guarino da Verona (1374-1460), a pupil of Manuel Chrysoloras, served as a

⁵⁰⁹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. I, Book 2.36, 227. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West 1258-1282. A study in Byzantine-Latin relations*, 139-141. See also Jacoby, "Multilingualism and institutional patterns of communication in Latin Romania (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries)," 37-38.

⁵¹⁰ Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 240.

⁵¹¹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 379; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2244 and 2286; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 240.

secretary of Manuel II between 1403 and 1408. It is also known that another Latin, Giovanni Aurispa (1376-1459), was employed by John VIII.⁵¹²

Moreover, according to Pachymeres, Andronikos II Palaiologos attempted to reverse the unfortunate circumstances in the East that were accelerated in the aftermath of the battle of Bapheus in 1302. The historian states that the Byzantine emperor pursued a different strategy and arranged a marriage alliance between Tatar Koutzimpaxis and Solymampax, who was a Turkish chieftain around Nicomedia. Koutzimpaxis married his daughter to the Turkish chieftain.⁵¹³ Such an alliance would provide relief for the emperor. Tatar Koutzimpaxis, being a member of Nogai's family, left his country to join the Turks; yet he happened to be captured by the Byzantines. The emperor accepted him, provided that he became Christian. He later entered into Andronikos's inner circle and served as the commander of the region of Nicomedia. Pachymeres narrates that in the beginning, this alliance prevented Solymampax from attacking Byzantine territories. However, it ultimately failed, and both individuals stood against the emperor.⁵¹⁴ This saga of events indicates an important aspect of the imperial foreign policy towards the Ottoman state at its early stage, underlining Andronikos's urgent need to balance the current political situation as opposed to the Turks approaching well into the proximity of the capital. It can be argued that the Byzantine emperor attempted to find allies among the Turkish emirates surrounding his territories. There remained a few well-protected urban centers in Bithynia, such as Prousa, Nicaea, etc., that managed to repel Turkish

⁵¹² Harris, *Greek émigrés in the West 1400-1520*, 72; Cyriac of Ancona, *Later travels*, 3, 53-57, 87-89.

⁵¹³ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 507. Solymampax (Süleyman Paşa) was the son of Candaroğlu Emir Yaman. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "L'installation des Ottomans," 361-362. On these names, a recent study brought about new interpretations: Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 232-233, 252, 371.

⁵¹⁴ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 379; Zachariadou, "Observations on some Turcica of Pachymeres," 262-264.

raids. Koutzimpaxis was a man of non-Byzantine origin and was treated as an opportunity to ease the tense relations with the neighboring Turks.⁵¹⁵ The Patriarch Athanasios also mentions him as Παζής.⁵¹⁶ Based on etymological analysis and information on his life in historical sources, Elizabeth Zachariadou accordingly offers Koca-bahşı as his original name, and posits that Koutzimpaxis was a Turk.⁵¹⁷

Later in his account, Pachymeres mentions Koutzimpaxis again, while describing the emperor's affairs regarding the Golden Horde ruler Toqtai (r. 1291-1312). Koutzimpaxis had already extended his influence over the region and established a marriage connection with Alan's leader Kyrsites, which made him the authority over "the shores." Andronikos II Palaiologos sent him to Toqtai together with other *archontes*. Koutzimpaxis seems to have been the chief envoy in this embassy. Despite Koutzimpaxis's ill intentions toward the Byzantines, as Pachymeres writes while he explains how the Alans attacked the Byzantine people around Neas in Thrace, the emperor unaware of Koutzimpaxis's intentions and did not believe what he heard about Koutzimpaxis, who was held responsible for these calamities.⁵¹⁸ Koutzimpaxis seems to have been frequently selected as an envoy to the Golden Horde due to his background as already mentioned above. In 1305, after the battle of Apros against the Catalans, Andronikos II entrusted him with the task of negotiating with rebellious Alans and Tourkopouloi, because he was of the same race

⁵¹⁵ "The situation was too confused and ill-defined for the emperor to make agreements of his own with the leaders of the Turkish tribes. It was difficult to discover who they were; and it would in any case be an admission of defeat and morally distasteful to try to negotiate with them. This was a case where war was preferable to diplomacy." Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 127 referring to Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 379, 441-445.

⁵¹⁶ Talbot, *The correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople*, 114-116; 361-362.

⁵¹⁷ Zachariadou, "Observations on some Turcica of Pachymeres," 262. Despite the fact that these individuals with probable Turkish ethnic background were converted to Christianity and became 'Byzantines,' they were not treated as actual Byzantines but considered as barbarian and godless in the sources. See, Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 252.

⁵¹⁸ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 627-629.

and the same language (τῷ γὰρ ὁμοεθνεῖ τε καὶ ὁμογλωσσῳ).⁵¹⁹ In the Byzantine court, negotiators were often selected according to the acquaintance of the chosen individuals to the language or any personal experience in the country in question. Likewise, two years later, the Byzantine princess Maria Palaiologina entered into negotiation with Osman because she had had previous experience with the Asians.⁵²⁰

In a similar vein, the case of John Vatatzes should be investigated. It indicates the principal role of acquaintance with the language of the hosting party in employing capable individuals in diplomatic contacts led by the Byzantine emperors. Having carried the title of *megas stratopedarches*, John Vatatzes seems to have been selected as an envoy to the Sarukhanid emir due to his fluency in the language of the Turks.⁵²¹ Interestingly, there was also another factor in his employment to that particular address: that is, his familial links to the house of Karasi, a neighboring Turkish principality, were established through his daughter's marriage with Süleyman of Karasi. Therefore, both established kinship and familiarity with the language constituted two factors that influenced his selection.⁵²²

Around the summer of the year 1305, Andronikos II Palaiologos sought a truce with the Catalans in Gallipoli.⁵²³ Nikephoros Gregoras mentions that the Catalans invited five hundred Turks as their allies to Gallipoli. Later he added that many Turks voluntarily joined the Catalan army.⁵²⁴ The emperor needed to compose

⁵¹⁹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 603; Zachariadou, "Observations on Some Turcica of Pachymeres," 262-264; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 233.

⁵²⁰ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 13.25, 683 and Book 13.35, 701-703.

⁵²¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 552. There was another individual named George Tagaris, who was also *megas stratopedarches*, employed in a Byzantine embassy to the Sarukhanid Emirate. See Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 552-553; PLP 2518. See also Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354)," 478.

⁵²² Gregoras, vol. II, 741; Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354)," 478-479.

⁵²³ Modern Gelibolu.

⁵²⁴ Gregoras, vol. I, 228-229. See Oikonomides, "The Turks in Europe (1305-13) and the Serbs in Asia Minor (1313)," 159. An investigation of Byzantine communications with the Catalan

an embassy to negotiate peace. A certain Jacques was a candidate. He was Roger de Flor's secretary and then was captured in Tenedos while carrying a letter to the people of Sicily. Andronikos II was doubtful about the faithfulness of this man. As Pachymeres writes, due to his attachment to his nation, Andronikos at first suspected Jacques of being untrustworthy; but after Jacques swore to him, he did not see any obstacle in dispatching him as an imperial envoy. A Latin interpreter by the name of Korones was also entrusted to accompany him. The embassy included three other emissaries, none of whom are known by name.⁵²⁵ Pachymeres relates that once the embassy arrived at the fortress of Gallipoli, the people of the fortress took them as hostages to guarantee them immunity and provided a horse for each of the emissaries. They assigned security for each of the riders in order to protect the envoys from a possible attack and to prevent them from being disturbed by the people nearby.⁵²⁶ Pachymeres narrates a long speech of the envoys, who transmitted the emperor's words. After listening to the Byzantine representatives in charge, the Catalans did not respond to questions raised about the peace agreements. The author describes the speech of the Catalans as that of the arrogant version of the Italian

mercenaries may help us reconstruct Byzantine diplomacy in context. Although the Catalans were not a state nor had a permanent center, the Byzantine Empire developed diplomatic contacts with them. In the spring of 1303, Andronikos II signed a treaty with the Catalans. He thus accepted the offer that came from the leader of the Catalan Grand Company, Roger de Flor. The Catalans were well-organized Spanish mercenaries, who had a fame in warfare and yet costed the empire a lot. In September 1303, accompanied by approximately 6500 men Roger arrived in Constantinople. Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 128-129. Venice and Genoa played an important role in this development because they created an image that Byzantium was suffering a grave problem and that it was in urgent need of military help. The Genoese later took an active part in providing their ships that carried the Catalans to Constantinople. According to Pachymeres's testimony, these groups, during their stay in the capital, constituted a serious problem for the government because they entered street fighting with the Genoese. Their restlessness continued when the emperor sent them to Kyzikos for the winter of 1303-1304. While Pachymeres frequently talks about the Catalans' greed and complains about the destructions they caused, Ramon Muntaner "presents them as misunderstood heroes constantly being deceived by the wily Greeks." Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 129; Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 527-541. See also Jacoby, "The Catalan company in the East: The evolution of an itinerant army (1303-1311)," 153-182.

⁵²⁵ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2285.

⁵²⁶ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 615-619.

language and states that they primarily talked about their requests from the emperor.⁵²⁷

Although it has been clearly shown that the “Byzantinized” Turks were used in the empire’s diplomatic communications with the Turkic-speaking polities in order to ensure the effectiveness, the same cannot be proven by concrete historical records as far as the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts are concerned.⁵²⁸ We do not possess enough evidence that would enable us to conclude that agents in diplomatic communications between the two polities knew or showed performance in the language of the visited country apart from the single exception of Theologos Korax. When viewed from the perspective of the Ottomans, it seems more likely that the agents appearing in diplomatic missions may have known Greek, possibly due to their alleged close connections with the Byzantines. Yet overall, it cannot be stated with certainty. All this lead us to dwell more on the assumption that interpreters might have played a central role in these contacts. As for the available and appropriate source of manpower well-versed in the languages of Greek and Turkish, one may examine the circumstances across the region, where both Greek and Turkish linguistic and cultural elements intermingled. The symbiotic relation ended in the plurality of the socio-cultural milieu. In this respect, even from the late eleventh to the early twelfth century and onwards, Byzantine sources describe a bilingual group bearing two ethnic descents: *mixobarbaroi*. Anna Komnena asserts that the offspring of a mixed marriage spoke Greek, but from one of the parents she still marks the barbarian connection.⁵²⁹ Rustam Shukurov underlines the key place of the Greek

⁵²⁷ Pacyhmeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 617-625.

⁵²⁸ Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 253-254.

⁵²⁹ *The Alexiad of Anna Komnena*, 234, 485-486. See also Chapter 2.4. “Marriage diplomacy” in this thesis for further information on the *mixobarbaroi*.

language within the environment of the Seljuk ruling elite, especially for individuals with a Greek mother, most of whom spoke Greek to some extent. Shukurov further claims that some of the Seljuk sultans had a dual identity comprising of Turkic/Persian and Greek ethnic and cultural elements.⁵³⁰ The family of Maurozomes provides an excellent example of this phenomenon. Some members of the Maurozomai developed personal loyalty and friendship with the Seljuk ruling elite, alongside whom they occupied important offices at the Seljuk court in Konya. This signifies their political function within the Seljuk Sultanate.⁵³¹

Similarly, bilingualism still ranks among the cultural characteristics of the interaction zones by the late fourteenth century. Manuel II Palaiologos describes the experiences that he gained during his companion with Bayezid I. He contends that there were some descendants in Ankara who could speak Greek and serve as translators in the religious dialogue that the emperor engaged in with a Muslim müderris.⁵³² In addition, Nikolaos Notaras was Manuel II's interpreter (*diermeneutes*) and was sent several times as a diplomatic agent to various official bodies. For example, he was in an embassy dispatched to Charles VI of France in the spring of 1398.⁵³³ Being a Genoese citizen of Galata at the same time, Nikolaos Notaras' competent career brought him considerable wealth.⁵³⁴

Besides the aforementioned characteristics, the skill of negotiating, as we may call it, is less frequently mentioned in the historical record. Demetrios Kydones critiques the inappropriateness of the envoys sent by Manuel II Palaiologos for an

⁵³⁰ Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 133-134.

⁵³¹ For the family and its connection with the Seljuk court, see Redford, "Maurozomes in Konya," 48-50.

⁵³² Reinert, "Manuel II Palaeologos and his müderris," 40-41.

⁵³³ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3269, 3271.

⁵³⁴ Matschke, "The Notaras family and its Italian connections," 59-72, especially 62-65; Ganchou, "Nikolaos Notaras, mésengyos tôn Ausonôn, et le mésastikion à Byzance au XV^e siècle," 151-181.

embassy visiting Pope Urban VI in 1385, when Manuel was ruling in Thessalonike as the governor of the city and needed support from the pope. The two Orthodox monks, Pothos and Euthymios, did not actually possess enough qualified skills for the art of negotiating. Manuel gives his reasons for selecting these ill-qualified envoys as a lack of resources, as he defines it. Responding to Manuel in one of his letters, Kydones criticized Manuel for not making him aware of the embassy. He was obviously discontented with the envoys and thought that they were not suitable for such a mission.⁵³⁵

Another quality to be examined among envoys was their relative prestige in society, which often carried befitting features that helped bolster the prestige of the state abroad. In an assembly that was formed by the supporters of Michael Komnenos Palaiologos (i.e. Michael VIII Palaiologos), it was decided that the person who could perform emperor's and state's affairs as well as accept various embassies from different nations should bear the proper title, the closest to one of the emperors, as appropriate to the honor of the Roman nation.⁵³⁶

To conclude this sub-chapter, the characteristics of an ideal envoy did not seem to change over time. Étienne Dolet, who was entrusted as an envoy in the first half of the sixteenth century for various French missions to countries like Venice, underlined that an envoy should be middle-aged, able and esteemed. Also, he should possess the following particular characteristics: "He should be 'suitable to his office in figure, face and stature.' He should 'possess such ability as a speaker as to be able to turn, lead, draw, and compel the minds of those with whom he may be

⁵³⁵ Manuel II Palaiologos, *The letters of Manuel II Palaeologus*, ed. and trans. Dennis, no. 8, 20-23; Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 302, 219-222; Loenertz, "Manuel Paléologue et Démétrius Cydonès," 107-109.

⁵³⁶ Gregoras, vol. I, 71.

dealing.’”⁵³⁷ Apart from the ideal and presentable appearance of the envoy in face and stature, all other qualities seem parallel to those of the ideal Byzantine envoy as observed in the Palaiologan era. Perhaps the physical quality of an envoy also mattered, but our sources do not speak about it as a factor.

In order to historicize the role of the prevailing notions in selecting distinguished individuals for diplomatic missions in Byzantium’s history, one should consider that similar virtues, such as remarkable talent for oratoring and gathering intelligence, an upright character, wisdom, and a sound social background, were highly valued across the centuries.⁵³⁸ As the Byzantines were masters of mimesis, one must interrogate the origins of these ideals that have been presented so far as ideal characteristics of Byzantine and Ottoman envoys; and I argue that the best place to find the answer is the Ancient Greek historiography. Thucydides, in his descriptions of the agents of diplomacy in the Peloponnesian War, underlines some of the ideal traits that have been discussed in this sub-chapter: elevated social status, reliability, individual skills and talents, and an individual’s capacity to interfere and lead negotiations. Many of the the aforementioned traits of an ideal Byzantine ambassador, therefore, fit well into Thucydidean descriptions. What appears in the Byzantine historical narratives owes much to the ancient Greek literary legacy,

⁵³⁷ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome. The rise of the resident ambassador*, 79 referring to Dolet, “De Officio Legati,” 82-85.

⁵³⁸ See for personal experience of Michael Psellos in selecting his colleagues for an embassy that he took part in, *The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, trans. Sewter, 215-230. For an example from the earlier centuries, see Beihammer, “Strategies of diplomacy and ambassadors in Byzantine-Muslim relations of the tenth and eleventh centuries,” 374; Drocourt, “Passing on political information between major powers: The key role of ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its neighbours,” 91-112.

which brought about extensive reuse of these themes in describing the criteria for selecting envoys.⁵³⁹

3.3 Identities and careers of envoys

In a world where travel and communication were relatively primitive, envoys occasionally exerted a great deal of authority and discretion in the implementation of foreign policy in the late Middle Ages. An envoy fulfilled three main functions as a representative of his polity, an active negotiator, and a transmitter. The last two depended on whether he had full-fledged capacity or not. Of course, there were levels of diplomatic representation determining the limits of the envoy's authority. This sub-chapter will evaluate each diplomatic contact in terms of the envoys in charge of conducting negotiations, delivering a message of their principals or fulfilling any sort of mission. This person might be a simple letter carrier, who could not necessarily say a word during his visit beyond his mission's requirements; or a full-fledged envoy, who could negotiate on behalf of his principal/sovereign.

To put it another way, in this part of the study, utilizing prosopographic research, I explore the envoys themselves who are addressed by their names in primary sources. The main purpose here lies in an attempt to reconstruct the personal careers of these individuals with an emphasis on their lineage, their titles/positions occupied, their experiences in diplomacy, and their involvement into missions that they were entrusted to. Moreover, for each detectable embassy that took place in both directions, this sub-chapter seeks explanations for possible connections and networks among these individuals.

⁵³⁹ Chittick and Freyberg-Inan, "'Chiefly for fear, next for honour, and lastly for profit': An analysis of foreign policy motivation in the Peloponnesian War," 69-90.

It would be superfluous to treat here at length the Byzantine envoys that were dispatched to the polities other than the Ottoman authorities in the period under consideration. However, suffice it at the moment to sketch a general picture. From the early fourteenth century onwards, chronological hiatuses in historical evidence do not point to an undisturbed communication between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. Rather, as far as the empire's Western respondents are concerned, the names of envoys proliferate.⁵⁴⁰ One can trace the identities of envoys in Byzantine-Ottoman official contacts as far as the sources display their names. Apart from some preliminary examples, in which rulers themselves or a few certain individuals from among the imperial family appeared as diplomatic agents, it can be argued that the number of identifiable Byzantine envoys visiting the Ottoman court increased by the turn of the fourteenth century and further intensified after the late 1410s onwards.⁵⁴¹ Even during the first half of the fourteenth century, the Byzantine contacts with the Mamluk Sultanate, although a few of them denote names of envoys, seem to have been far greater in number than the ones that took place with the Ottomans. A similar situation can be observed as far as the Ottoman diplomatic communications with polities other than the Byzantine Empire are concerned. For the early decades of the fourteenth century, there are fewer known individuals that can be identified by the primary sources, which, however, for the same period paint busy traffic of embassies back and forth between the Ottoman court and various neighboring polities, such as the Genoese, the Mamluks, and other Turkish emirates. The relative scarcity of the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts in the first decades of the fourteenth century

⁵⁴⁰ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*.

⁵⁴¹ Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why Malamut approached the envoys in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 79-95.

does not seem to be exclusively a matter of primary sources. As all the sources used here are in accord, it took some time for the Ottomans to develop official contacts with the Byzantine court. Once the Ottoman state became more of a political entity different from its early-stage tribal formation without a firm base, it engaged in diplomatic communications with the neighboring polities, primarily the Byzantine Empire, more frequently.

It may be argued that, in general, a number of Byzantine representatives are referred compared to a larger body of unknown envoys entrusted to visit the Ottoman court. Likewise, and unfortunately, compared to the few instances of Byzantine envoys, Ottoman representatives are even less known.

Based on the primary sources used in this study, the frequency of diplomatic communication between rulers of both parties increased from the 1380s onwards, although the scarcity of historical evidence constitutes a serious drawback for an extensive comprehension of the 1380s. Regarding that bit of the fourteenth century, while the Byzantine sources narrating the events of the period focus on the capture of Thessalonike by the Ottomans, the Ottoman chronicles were composed long after the period.⁵⁴² The reasons behind the high percentage of the diplomatic contacts that are concentrated after 1400 would be the fact that it was a fluctuating period both for the Byzantines, who suffered a long siege of their capitals, and for the Ottomans, who were impacted by a decisive defeat at the hands of Timur. The table below shows the number of embassies in each decade (Figure 1).

⁵⁴² Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "From Avlona to Antalya: Reviewing the Ottoman military preparations of the 1380s," 251. The main target of the Ottoman forces was Thessalonike in the 1380s. See Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 42-44, 48. See also Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 35-65; Dennis, *The reign of Manuel in Thessalonica*.

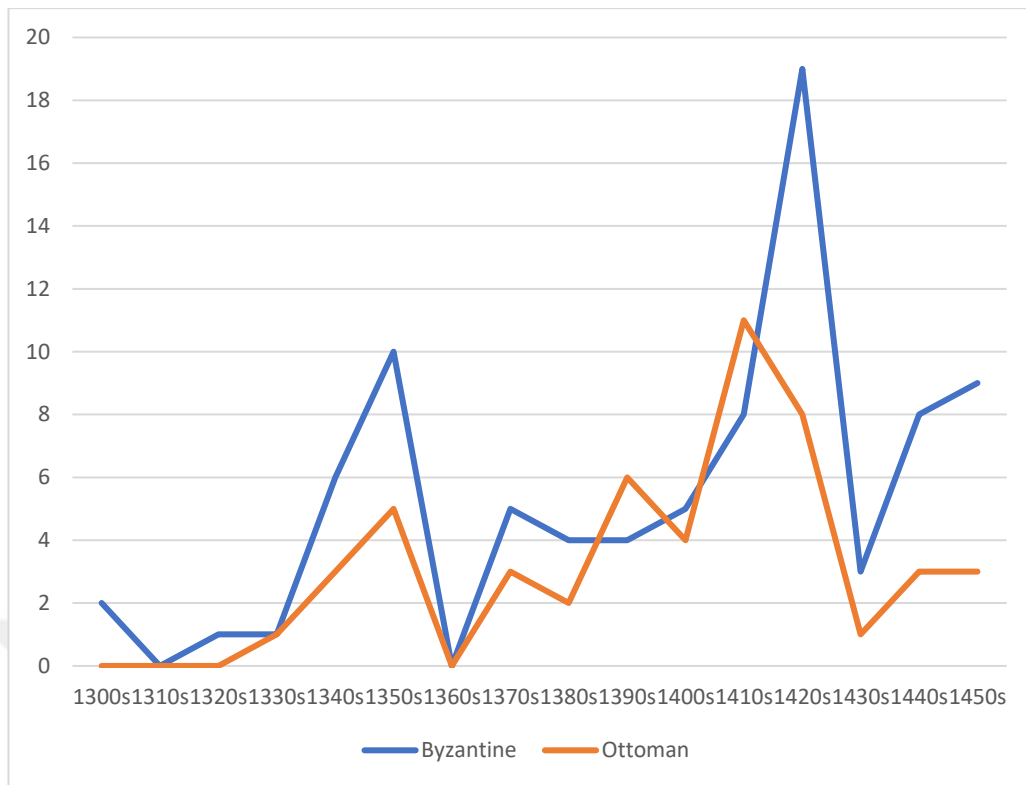


Figure 1. Number of embassies in each decade

As the scholarship of both Kantakouzenos and Gregoras present, contacts increased during the reign of John VI Kantakouzenos. The 1360s, however, reflect an abrupt decline. It was only by the 1370s onwards that contacts began to be observed once again. The rise in the number of contacts became more apparent when the dynastic struggles among the sons of Bayezid were finally settled. The reigns of John VIII and Murad II indicate a relative decrease in frequency of embassies, which showed an upward tendency around the final years of the Byzantine-Ottoman encounter. All in all, it is possible that the observable frequency of embassies may reflect the perspectives and biases of the authors of historical sources, who tended to describe contemporary events more often. The high frequency observed in the 1350s possibly stems from the nature of the sources.

The authors of the Byzantine histories of the period under consideration in this study express their point of view on the subjects that might have included certain events in their narratives. That is, to frame it in Roger Scott's words, one can observe "the intrusion of the author's person into the subject."⁵⁴³ With that in mind, where does the line of personal intrusion lie? In other words, how must the historian frame her research into the narratives of these authors? It is one of the tasks of the historian to distinguish the history-as-event and history-as-account.⁵⁴⁴

Despite the fact that envoys were usually anonymous, there are some exceptions: occasionally, diplomatic contacts reveal the names, professions, and other characteristics of individuals. At this point, it is worth pausing for a moment to discuss the identities of the envoys that were employed in diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. Compared to the overall cases referring to embassies in the primary sources, a relatively lower percentage of their members are known by name. For most of the fourteenth century, one can find details about various aspects of envoys that go beyond just names. These references present invaluable data on how the ambassadorial visits took place, how they were received and hosted, the experiences of envoys during their journeys and duties, the ways they transmitted messages of rulers to their masters, etc., which will be interpreted in Chapter 4. The embassies with names of Byzantine envoys in charge are mentioned largely from the late fourteenth century onwards and almost exclusively in the accounts of three Byzantine historians (Doukas, Chalkokondyles and Sphrantzes). These three historians, who lived in the fifteenth century, mostly treated the earlier years briefly by utilizing the works of preceding authors and

⁵⁴³ Scott, "The classical tradition in Byzantine historiography," 63.

⁵⁴⁴ Stanford, *A companion to the study of history*, 17-18.

conducting their own research through different means. On the other hand, the works of other authors such as Pachymeres, Gregoras or Kantakouzenos mostly lack personal details of envoys sent to the Ottomans. These sources, however, do mention envoys but do not give many clues as to their identities. In contrast, what they provide concerning the Byzantine envoys to the West is more satisfying, as the names of several individuals visiting Western courts appear more frequently in these accounts.⁵⁴⁵

Compared to the Byzantine envoys, the names of the Ottoman envoys were often recorded by authors of historical sources from the mid-1340s onwards. Yet if we observe the entire Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts in their fullest extent, we find that only a very small percentage of records bears the names of individuals despite the total recorded embassies in both directions reaching up to 134 in my research.

In the Byzantine court, however, we are able to detect more individuals who acted as envoys of missions addressed to the Ottoman rulers. A total number of twenty different envoys are mentioned in records as being responsible for diplomatic tasks visiting the Ottoman court or an Ottoman official *per se*. In terms of chronological appearance of these individuals, a quick list would be as follows:

Maria Palaiologina, Demetrios Kydones, John Holobolos, Theologos Korax, Demetrios Laskaris Leontares, Isaakios Asanes, Manuel Kantakouzenos, Lachanas Palaiologos, Markos Palaiologos Iagaris, Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos, Matthew (Matthaios) Laskaris, Angelos Philommates, Manuel Melakhrenos, Loukas

⁵⁴⁵ Kantakouzenos, for example, mentions a certain Kallinikos who was dispatched to Serbia. The author gives more names of the envoys visiting the Western courts, such as the *megas stratopedarches* Andronikos Palaiologos and John Aplesphares, or a certain John Roger, who were dispatched to the tsar of the Bulgaria. Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 187-188, 298-301. See Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2710.

Notaras, George Sphrantzes, Manuel Stachitzes, Paul Asanes, Laskaris Mamalis, George Chalkokondyles, and Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris (See Table 1).

Table 1. Names and Missions of the Byzantine Envoys Visiting the Ottomans

No.	Name of the envoy	Number of mission	Date
1	Maria Palaiologina	Single	*Spring/Summer 1307
2	Demetrios Kydones	single	*Early 1381
3	John Holobolos	Single	*6 August 1401
4	Theologos Korax	Multiple	*Autumn 1416 *ca. June 1421 *April 1422 *June 1422
5	Demetrios Laskaris Leontares	Multiple	*October 1420 *Spring 1421 *1421 (?)
6	Isaakios Asanes	Single	*October 1420
7	Manuel Kantakouzenos	Single	*October 1420
8	Lachanas Palaiologos	Multiple	*ca. June 1421 *June 1422
9	Markos Palaiologos Iagaris	Multiple	*June 1422 *1429
10	Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos	Single	*Late Spring/Early Summer 1422
11	Matthew Laskaris	Single	*Late Spring/Early Summer 1422
12	Angelos Philommates	Single	*Late Spring/Early Summer 1422
13	Manuel Melakhrenos	Multiple	*Summer 1423 or before 22 February 1424 *February 1424
14	Loukas Notaras	Multiple	*February 1424 *1424 *Before 26 March 1452
15	George Sphrantzes	Multiple	*February 1424 *1429 *September 1429 *6 December 1448
16	Manuel Stachitzes	Single	*April 1432
17	Paul Asanes	Single	*Autumn 1437
18	Laskaris Mamalis	Single	*Early 1440
19	George Chalkokondyles	Single	*Winter 1446
20	Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris	Single	*March 1449

In the Ottoman court, on the other hand, departing from the relative lack of named individuals who functioned as Ottoman envoys visiting the Byzantine court,

apart from the cases in which the rulers themselves were in direct contact with their Byzantine counterparts, one finds a handful of people, mostly belonging to a circle of the courtly elite. Two of these names were from the Çandarlı family: Çandarlı Ali and Çandarlı İbrahim. The others were a certain Haji; Fazlullah, who was the kadı of Gebze and the later vizier; and finally, İsmail, the ruler of the beylik of Isfendiya.

In order to understand the role of these individuals and how they ended up in these positions, one needs to trace the descendants of the late medieval Byzantine and Ottoman families within the fluid political milieu of the Balkans and Asia Minor. Most of the Byzantine envoys mentioned by name belonged to the leading aristocratic families of the Palaiologan period. Likewise, with the only exception of Haji, who is mentioned in an embassy in 1344-5 exclusively by Kantakouzenos and whose enigmatic origin is a subject of debate, the other four detectable diplomatic agents of the Ottoman court shared distinguishing social backgrounds. Until the 1390s, apart from that certain Haji, no Ottoman envoys are named in historical evidence. It was after that stage that the sources began to refer to particular names who possessed the title of Ottoman envoy in diplomatic contacts with Byzantium. These dates coincide with the rise of the Çandarlı family in the Ottoman bureaucracy; this change can also be attributed to the fact that the Ottoman state apparatus was becoming more institutionalized.

Concerning the Middle Ages, Matthew Smith Anderson argues that:

(...) there was then little or nothing in the way of institutions concerned solely or even mainly with the formulation and conduct of foreign policy. Professional diplomats and any idea of diplomacy as a career with a distinct nature and demands of its own did not exist.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁶ Anderson, *The rise of modern diplomacy 1450-1919*, viii.

The debate over whether there were ‘career diplomats’ in the Byzantine Empire or in the Ottoman state is a crucial one. In contrast to the argument by Anderson and as far as the sources tell, however, we can talk about the phenomenon of “career diplomats,” because many instances show that there were certain individuals who specialized in diplomacy. Envoys from varied backgrounds and professions can be observed in Byzantium’s contacts with the Ottomans. Prosopographic investigations illustrate that the majority of the attestable envoys were coming from significant familial backgrounds or were holders of prominent bureaucratic offices. The appearance of some individuals exclusively in diplomatic contexts enables us to conclude that they could be named as career diplomats. Some envoys were purposely preferred for certain courts. The experience that these men gained during their service, thus, opened the gates of a career for such individuals.⁵⁴⁷ Mazaris, the author of a satire entitled *Journey to Hades* written in 1414-1415, underlines that this expertise made these “career ambassadors” privileged.⁵⁴⁸ Although the envoys known thanks to the historical sources were not particularly trained in diplomacy and found themselves employed as diplomatic representatives, some Byzantine envoys (e.g. Theologos Korax or Demetrios Laskaris Leontares) built up their careers by fostering a close relationship with the emperor.

The function of these individuals entrusted with diplomatic tasks by the Ottoman rulers could largely be observed in the decisions and politics of the Ottoman state. A similar situation can be observed when we consider the Byzantine individuals entrusted with diplomatic duties to the Ottoman court. As various cases

⁵⁴⁷ See Malamut, “De 1299 à 1451 au coeur des ambassades byzantines,” 105.

⁵⁴⁸ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 167-168.

illustrate, a monopoly of some individuals dominated the missions. However, this exclusiveness was given to a group of people and restricted in short terms. While the Byzantine examples do reveal some envoys with backgrounds other than the higher strata of the society, the Ottoman approach to its relations with Byzantium shows a relatively uniform character mostly dominated by the figures of the Çandarlı family except for short periods of interruption.

We need to think about the network among the individuals entrusted abroad. To do that, before delving into the peculiarities of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic agents, a discussion of background and career of envoys who participated in negotiations with Rome may be helpful. Makarios Makres, who used to be the superior of the monastery of Pantokrator in Constantinople, was sent by John VIII Palaiologos to Pope Martin V (1417-31) as an envoy to negotiate the union of churches. Following the embassy, he came back to the monastery. Sphrantzes, who talks about the embassy, was Makarios's friend and he supported the monk at important stages in the latter's career. Sphrantzes functioned as an intermediary here by introducing and promoting the monk in the eyes of the imperial government and thus probably enabled him to be selected as an envoy to the Pope. This instance, therefore, underlines the network among individuals who had missions abroad.⁵⁴⁹

Another important agent in union diplomacy was a certain Gerontios, who was another superior of the same monastery. He was among the team who participated in the council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1439) and eventually signed the

⁵⁴⁹ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 21.5, 70.

decree. Gerontios's presence in the diplomatic expedition of the Byzantine Empire in the council was possibly related to his unionist tendencies.⁵⁵⁰

The reign of John VIII Palaiologos witnessed several other members of ecclesiastical or clerical circles who appeared as diplomatic agents. There were, for example, two bishops from the Kellibara Monastery. Isidore, on the one hand, was one of the envoys of John VIII Palaiologos (in 1433), while Gregory is mentioned in sources in 1448 with diplomatic duties to Italy and Pope Nicholas V.⁵⁵¹ There is no bishop or a member of the Byzantine ecclesiastical circle visiting the Ottoman court contrary to the high percentage of these clerical men who happened to be diplomatic agents to the Western states including the papal See.

On the topic of how networks played a role in further elaborating one's career as diplomatic representative, the career of Paul Asanes offers a helpful example. He was initially a diplomat in the service of Byzantium and then became the governor of the capital during the council of Ferrara-Florence. His duties in diplomatic communications, among which there was an embassy to Murad II's court in Autumn 1437, must have brought him kinship ties with the reigning dynasty. After a short time, following the council at Ferrara-Florence, he went to the Peloponnese with Demetrios, the brother of John VIII Palaiologos, to whom he married his daughter Theodora on 16 April 1441. He would soon die that same year of a stroke.⁵⁵² This is an example of how experience in diplomacy could open up opportunities in one's life and establish advantageous personal links.

⁵⁵⁰ Gautier, "Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator," 25–26. See PLP, no. 3874. After his return to the capital, Gerontios participated in anti-unionist activities.

⁵⁵¹ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3515; Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 129-131.

⁵⁵² Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 25.2, 90.

Primary sources sometimes identify the envoys with reference to their names, qualities, official positions, and careers. As far as the available historical sources present, the diplomatic tradition in late Byzantium seems to have been intensified in the empire's communications with the Western polities (i.e. Venice, Genoa, the Papacy, etc.). This was possibly an innate feature of the sources, which reflect a distorted picture. The Byzantine envoys who visited the Ottoman court are less known compared to the ones that were entrusted with the Byzantine diplomatic missions going to the West. For the period between 1354 and 1453, Andriopoulou found 75 different names in Byzantine embassies who made visits to the Western powers. In almost two thirds of a total of 194 embassies, the names of the envoys were recorded.⁵⁵³ As for the present topic, apart from the ones in which emperors/rulers were negotiators, 19 Byzantine envoys and 5 Ottoman envoys can be identified, although the overall number of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications reached 134, whereas the names of the majority of the representatives remain unknown. We must underline that some individuals were entrusted with more than one mission. Covering both outgoing and incoming embassies, the Appendix includes the traffic of envoys in both directions. It provides a list of references to all diplomatic encounters between the two polities as they are mentioned in Byzantine and Ottoman sources. Compared to the Byzantine embassies, visiting the Ottoman court, the percentage of named envoys is much lower regarding the Ottoman embassies visiting the Byzantine court. Among 84 different occasions of Byzantine embassies visiting the Ottoman court, we are able to

⁵⁵³ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 97-98.

detect 29 instances recording the names of the agents referred; on the other hand, just 5 Ottoman envoys are known by name among 49 distinct cases.

What follows is an all-inclusive attempt to list, analyze, and interpret every identified envoy that was either sent from the Byzantine Empire or received there. In the Appendix all these known individuals are listed, and described in terms of the embassies in which they were entrusted, how and with which identifications they were designated, what the structure of embassies looked like, and whether any other members took part in missions, and if so, how many. I will consider all individuals chronologically as they appear in historical evidence. Quite a few embassies were narrated by direct eyewitnesses, who personally observed the diplomatic occasions described. Therefore, I dwell in particular on descriptions of the embassies, which were narrated via different sources to contemporary authors and later written down.

If one searches for the very beginning of the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic encounters, there are a few primary sources that actually reflect contemporary evidence. In the face of such a scarcity, some historical accounts bear crucial and unique knowledge illuminating this twilight of the Byzantine diplomatic contacts with respect to the Ottoman emirate in the early fourteenth century. For the early years of Osman's emirate, let alone the Ottoman sources (which were composed much later and thus often offer a somewhat incorrect chronology), Byzantine historians present information on his and his warriors' deeds along the Byzantine frontier rather than the origins of these people.⁵⁵⁴ Although Byzantine contemporary sources do not throw much light on the history of the early years of the Ottomans, these accounts nevertheless have been regarded as the most reliable.

⁵⁵⁴ Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 144.

George Pachymeres's *Historia*, in this regard, occupies a prominent position.⁵⁵⁵ Departing from the earliest evidence, which this source draws attention to, on the emergence of the Ottomans as a political actor along the eastern/southeastern frontiers of Byzantium, scholars are able to reconstruct the sociopolitical circumstances within which *Historia* was composed.

The first attestable Byzantine envoy to the Ottomans can be discerned thanks to the historical narrative of Pachymeres. In this unique instance, it was a Byzantine princess, Maria Palaiologina, who entered into negotiation with Osman because she had prior experience in Asia and with the people from the East. In the spring or summer of 1307, Maria, who was the sister of the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos and was commonly known as “the lady of the Mongols (τῶν Μουγουλίων οὕτω πως δέσποινα ὀνομαζομένη)”⁵⁵⁶ due to her earlier marriage with Abaka Khan, was sent with “sufficient men” to Nicaea.⁵⁵⁷ She was entrusted with a twofold purpose: to calm the aggressive expansion of the Ottomans, and to promote and settle a matrimonial alliance with Kharbanda (Olcaytu Khan). (If Pachymeres did not mean just Maria's entourage by the expression “sufficient men,” he may have meant “well-armed” men, i.e. an army or a group of soldiers). In this case, her basic purpose turned out to be of a defensive nature. According to Pachymeres, the confrontation carried diplomatic intentions. Osman could have been approached by the princess personally, since Pachymeres narrates her extremely arrogant way of communication

⁵⁵⁵ Συγγραφικαὶ ἱστορίαι (*Syngraphikai historiai*=“Historical narration”).

⁵⁵⁶ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 701. This embassy is not mentioned in Dölger, *Regesten*.

⁵⁵⁷ Pachymeres narrates it as follows: “συνάμα λαῶ τῷ ἀρκοῦντι πέμπει πρὸς Νίκαιαν” (together with sufficient men [he] sent [her] to Nicaea). Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 683. Maria at first was intended to be the wife of the Ilkhanid ruler Hülagü. Upon the latter's death before the bride reached the Ilkhanid court, Maria married Hülagü's son, Abaka Khan. She remained Abaka's wife until he died in 1282, after which Maria returned to Constantinople. Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 673; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 80.

(ἐξ ὑπερτέρου φρονήματος); this contact could also have occurred through letters or messengers transmitting her determined mind to defend the most important Byzantine city in Bithynia (i.e. Nicaea). Maria then threatened Osman by contacting to Kharbanda, who according to the rumor was preparing an army to come to the Byzantines' aid. Osman, however, reacted to Maria's approach by sending thirty thousand men from the inner regions of Anatolia against the Byzantine Empire. When this menacing news reached Andronikos, he regarded them carefully and finally sent new emissaries to Osman, this time adopting a moderate approach. The Byzantine embassy carried many magnificent gifts to the Ottoman ruler.⁵⁵⁸ Yet, Osman's reaction became even more aggressive, manifesting in his attacks against the countryside around Nicaea and his siege of Trikokkia.⁵⁵⁹

This information about the consequences of this first-recorded diplomatic encounter between the two polities in history is only embedded in Pachymeres's account. The narrative concludes with an enigmatic withdrawal of the Ottomans to fortified places of Bithynia upon learning of a rumor of thousands of marching Ilkhanids. These series of missions show that substantial embassies could be dispatched depending on the course of communication centered around a single theme. In this context, an imperial woman happened to be an imperial envoy particularly appointed with such a task because she was "the lady of the Mongols" and had an acquaintance with the Ilkhanids, whose rumored military aid was imminent.⁵⁶⁰ Her acquaintance with Ilkhanid culture could have been a prominent

⁵⁵⁸ "βασιλεὺς πέμπων ἐπολυώρει σφᾶς συχνοῖς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέσι φιλοτιμήμασιν." Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 701. See also Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 240-241.

⁵⁵⁹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 701-703. For the information that Osman occupied much of Bithynia in and around 1306 and 1307, see Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 705-707; 709-711. Trikokkia is possibly modern Koçhisar. Zachariadou, "Histoires et legends des premiers ottomans," 65; De Groot, "Koçhisar," 247-248.

⁵⁶⁰ Sources do not provide sufficient information on whether the Ilkhanid military support arrived.

factor in Andronikos II's selection. One of Maria's aims was to settle the alliance with Kharbanda; yet how she could make this happen remains unknown to us. Her secondary task was to hamper the Ottoman advance. The embassy also points to the presence of an alternative method for approaching Osman, which Andronikos enacted while possibly aiming not to fail any diplomatic attempt. By that attitude, the Byzantine emperor might have intended to calm the fury of the Ottoman ruler. At any rate, Maria's embassy coincides with a turbulent moment due to the accrued economic problems caused by the constant raids of the Catalans and the Turks as well as the harsh climate conditions, all of which together made the empire's economy more fragile.⁵⁶¹

The reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos is itself characterized by general neglect towards the empire's Anatolian territories, as is also narrated by contemporary accounts. In search of an equilibrium following the tensions of the thirteenth century, the emperor had faced towards the West. Perhaps the empire's relative "inactivity" in Anatolia during this period may explain why there are few recorded instances of official diplomatic contacts around this time.⁵⁶²

The next recorded diplomatic contact does not yield any named individuals, yet it indicates that diplomatic communications did exist even in this early stage of Byzantine-Ottoman relations. During the civil strife in the 1320s, Andronikos II Palaiologos sought alliances against his grandson. In this context, John VI Kantakouzenos in his *Histories* mentions one of the first appeals of the Byzantines to

⁵⁶¹ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II*, 195-196. The Byzantine Empire had been engaging close relations with the Mongols from earlier on. Michael VIII Palaiologos established friendly relations with the first Ilkhanid ruler Hülegü by a treaty in 1260. For further ties between Byzantium and the Mongols and later the Ilkhanids, see Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the thirteenth century*, 294.

⁵⁶² Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II*, 243

the Ottomans.⁵⁶³ In an atmosphere disadvantageous for the old emperor Andronikos II due to the decreasing support of several factions within Byzantium in his fight for his rule, his grandson Andronikos III, the co-emperor sojourning in Selymbria, received the news about his grandfather's alliance with the Turks. The news was informing the united forces heading against the young co-emperor that a Turkish army had arrived at the capital from the East, via the Bosphorus, and joined the grandfather's troops in Constantinople. According to Kantakouzenos, upon hearing this, Andronikos III was amazed by his grandfather's decision to call the Turks for help. Based on the information that they were coming from the East; it is safe to assume that these Turks must have been none other than the Ottomans.⁵⁶⁴ The appeal of Andronikos II resulted in failure when the Constantinopolitan and Turkish troops refrained from a fight with the forces of Andronikos III and eventually fled. Andronikos II provided the Turks with all logistical needs, including the transfer over the Bosphorus. We later hear about the allied Turkish forces' request for ships to cross over to Asia Minor.⁵⁶⁵ This instance constitutes a sign of the Ottomans taking a side in the Byzantine civil strife. Asking for military support against his grandson Andronikos III, the old emperor tried to create an army out of Turkish troops. There is not a direct reference to an embassy, but such a call for military support from the Ottomans must have required some sort of diplomatic contact. In this regard, we might consider this event as the second ambassadorial

⁵⁶³ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 150-153. This piece of evidence appears nowhere else. Dölger does not mention this embassy in his *Regesten*.

⁵⁶⁴ See Wittek, "The taking of Aydos Castle: A Ghazi legend and its transformation," 662-672. Nicomedia was conquered by the Ottomans in 1326. Particularly explained by the late-fifteenth-century Ottoman chronicles, such as Aşıkpaşazade and Neşrî, the Ottoman attacks against Mesothynia, especially the assaults on its eastern-most parts and the north of Nicomedia, are dated to the 1320s, when major towns in the region suffered great assaults at the hands of the begs of Osman.

⁵⁶⁵ "ἅμα δὲ καὶ ναῦς οἱ Πέρσαι πρὸς τὴν διάβασιν ἤτοῦντο." Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 52.

communication between the two polities in the historical record, after the first series of exchanges between Andronikos II and Osman, in which, as discussed above, Maria Palaiologina played the role of an envoy.

For the next seventy-five years after the first identified Byzantine envoy is attested in primary sources, both Byzantine and Ottoman sources do not provide any name of an envoy going from Byzantium to the Ottoman court. It is only with the mention of Andronikos IV Palaiologos's son that an envoy was identified after a long hiatus in historical evidence. The name of the envoy is not provided; yet he is identified as a member of the imperial family. The text of the treaty of November 2, 1382, between the Byzantine Empire and the Genoese in Galata bears a prominent reference to this otherwise-unknown diplomatic contact. According to the treaty which was composed by a Genoese public notary and is kept in the Genoese State Archive today, Andronikos IV asked for a fortress from Murad, and for that request he chose his son as his envoy.⁵⁶⁶ Following a rebellion in 1373, Andronikos IV became the emperor by usurping the throne from his father, John V. (The envoy could not have been John VII, who by then was not even ten years old.)⁵⁶⁷ At the time of the embassy, Andronikos IV was in a state of conflict with John V, trying to overcome him and obtain the throne for himself.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁶ See Loenertz, "Fragment d'une lettre de Jean V Paléologue à la commune de Gênes 1387-1391," 37-40. The Latin text of the treaty reads as follows: "Item nepos meus de uoluntate [iu] patris sui iuit ad turchas et petebat castrum <unum>. Item post mortem imperatoris domini Andronici exaltauerunt et fecerunt laudem nepoti meo in Peyra." Ibid., 38. See also, Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 50-51; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 283-284.

⁵⁶⁷ On John VII, see Zachariadou, "John VII (Alias Andronicus) Palaeologus," 339-342; Oikonomides, "John VII Palaeologus and the ivory pyxis at Dumbarton Oaks," 329-337.

⁵⁶⁸ For the rebellion of Andronikos IV in 1373, see Dölger, "Zum aufstand des Andronikos IV gegen seinen vater Johannes V im Mai 1373," 328-333; Loenertz, "La première insurrection d'Andronic IV Paléologue (1373)," 334-345; Elam, "Babalar ve oğullar: IV. Andronikos Palaiologos ve Savcı Çelebi'nin isyanı (1373)," 29-74.

Our sources do not refer to any other Byzantine individuals by name in the fourteenth century. In that period of relative silence of the sources revealing no Byzantine diplomats, there *was* an individual mentioned as an Ottoman envoy. John VI Kantakouzenos asserts in his personal account that there were many diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. Narrating some of them, he does not usually provide names of envoys except for a certain Ottoman Haji (Χατζής = “Hacı”), who was dispatched by Orhan to the Byzantine court under Kantakouzenos’s rule for the purpose of concluding a treaty in the winter of 1344-1345.⁵⁶⁹ There is no information on this person in any other source. It has been argued that as a slave of the Ottoman ruler, this individual might have possessed a Greek origin, which enabled him to use his native tongue in communication with the Byzantine authorities for this very treaty.⁵⁷⁰ The name “Hacı,” commonly observed in the Turkish society of the age, actually means a “pilgrim” and was utilized as either a name or as a sobriquet. A couple of individuals with this sobriquet are known from among the Turkish envoys. One of them was Hacı Hayreddin Halil Bey, who was sent to the Mamluk sultan by Mehmed I in 1420.⁵⁷¹ There is another “Hacı,” Hacı Sartı of Theologos, who was an envoy of Juneid, the ruler of Aydın, entrusted with a mission to the podestà of Chios in August

⁵⁶⁹ "Βασιλεὺς δὲ ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς πυθόμενος, ὡς βασιλεὺς πρεσβεῖαν ποιοῖτο πρὸς Ὀρχάνην ἐπὶ συμμαχία, πέμψας καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπραττεν, ὅπως αὐτῷ μᾶλλον, καὶ μὴ Βυζαντίοις πρόσθοιτο. καὶ εἴλετο Ὀρχάνης τὴν πρὸς Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν βασιλέα μᾶλλον συμμαχίαν, καὶ πέμψας Χατζήν τὸν εὐνοῦχον, ἐτέλει τὰς σπονδὰς (truce)." Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 498. See also Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 143.

⁵⁷⁰ Beihammer, “Crusade, civil strife, and the Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354),” 479.

⁵⁷¹ Yüksel-Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial diplomacy and warfare in the Islamic world*, 207.

28, 1413.⁵⁷² Moreover, an envoy of Murad II named Hatib was sent to the Genoese Giovanni Adorno; he was also known as Hacı Ömer bin Halil.⁵⁷³

Kantakouzenos does not discuss some of the embassies between 1351-1355 which he sent to Orhan; these encounters are only treated in Gregoras's text. Why did Kantakouzenos omit these embassies from his personal account? His choice must have been partly related to the fact that he did not want to be viewed as a close associate of the 'barbarian' Ottomans. This is possibly because there was a strong contingent of society, both within the clergy and within the Byzantine society more broadly, who refused any act of submission to the Ottomans. Regarding the alliance with Orhan, for instance, Kantakouzenos writes that it was the regency government who initially appealed to Orhan, not himself.⁵⁷⁴ The self-fashioning as an innocent man who always sought the empire's interests remains the dominant portrait of the author himself throughout the work. Gregoras was once Kantakouzenos's close friend, but in his historical account, he offers a sharply contrasting view of what is depicted by John VI and in general adopts a contrary position to the emperor's account, though not sometimes openly. Therefore, Gregoras' narrative provides further details regarding the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic encounters particularly in the later years of John VI Kantakouzenos's reign.

Interestingly, the early Ottoman sources, which were composed in the course of the fifteenth century, do not point to alliances organized by the request of John VI Kantakouzenos between the Turks and Byzantium, in the sense that the Turkish ghazis gained wealth from the lands they passed and they were invited to Europe and

⁵⁷² Fleet, "Turkish-Latin diplomatic relations in the fourteenth century: The case of the consul," 610.

⁵⁷³ Yüksel-Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial diplomacy and warfare in the Islamic world*, 218.

⁵⁷⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 507. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2903.

therefore provided with circumstances that were not directly created by the initiatives of the Ottomans. As for the core of Aşıkpaşazade's account, Yahşi Fakih's chronicle, which does not exist today, Elizabeth A. Zachariadou explains the question of his conscious selection of events. She argues that Yahşi Fakih must have avoided the topics that would otherwise lend credence to accusations against the Ottomans or anything that would show their failure or weaknesses as opposed to the other states. The authors of the early Ottoman histories tended to neglect the alliances of the Ottomans with the 'infidel' Byzantines because they aimed to firmly construct a strong layout for the Ottoman dynasty. Thus, any inclusion of such details would not suit their aims.⁵⁷⁵ Ahmedi, in his "Tevārīḫ-i Mülūk-i āl-i 'Osmān," the last chapter of his world history *İskendernāme*, follows a similar treatment and prefers not to mention some details in the course of events he describes. For example, while he talks about Timur's victory over Bayezid, he stresses that it would be better not to present the former's 'cruelties'.⁵⁷⁶

The next instance in which sources referred to the identified Byzantine envoys to the Ottoman court was in reference to the members of a joined embassy, the aim of which was to conclude a peace treaty with Sultan Bayezid. Having besieged the city of Constantinople for almost seven years by that time, Bayezid was posing a threat not only to Byzantium but also to others such as Venice and Genoa as well. An archive report from the Venetian Senate shows that, on August 6 in the year 1401, a team of envoys set off from Constantinople to pay a visit to the Ottoman

⁵⁷⁵ Zachariadou, "Histoires et legends des premiers ottomans," 54-56.

⁵⁷⁶ Silay, "Aḥmedi's History of the Ottoman dynasty," 155-156. See also Fodor, "Aḥmedi's Dāsītān as a source of early Ottoman history," 41-54.

ruler and searched for a possibility for a cessation of the siege and hostilities.⁵⁷⁷

Apart from one member each for the Venetians and the Genoese, a member of the family of Melissenos and a certain John Holobolos (Ἰωάννης Ὀλόβωλος) represented the Byzantine Empire in this mission.⁵⁷⁸ Leaving the member of Melissenos family aside for a moment, an explanation would further illustrate the extraordinary profile of John as an imperial envoy. Having completed a career with duties in several ecclesiastical positions, including the the positions of archdeacon and *megas chartophylax* of Hagia Sophia earlier in his career, as well having made a visit to Russia in 1375, John Holobolos was the Archbishop of Gothia at the time of the embassy.⁵⁷⁹ No records have survived showing the consequences of this diplomatic attempt in 1401, which included the Byzantines' request for the maritime castles and places that had been at the hands of Byzantium before the war against Bayezid.⁵⁸⁰ In this instance, the selection of representatives in Constantinople was probably made by John VII, who was serving as the regent in absence of Manuel II during the latter's Western journey in search of military and financial support against the Ottomans. Gothia was designated as the name of the region in Crimea, where an archbishopric was located. It is also probable that Gothia was a sort of a title, which was held by the individuals in Constantinople.⁵⁸¹ John Holobolos by the latter half of the year 1403 took a monastic habit.

⁵⁷⁷ On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3196 and 3197; Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir l'histoire des croisades au XIV^e siècle*, vol. I, 112-113. Cf. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 211-212.

⁵⁷⁸ PLP 21044.

⁵⁷⁹ MM, vol. II, 292, 304, 348, 372.

⁵⁸⁰ Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 212. See also the comments voiced by P. Wirth, as stated by Barker: Wirth, "Zum geschichtsbild kaiser Johannes' VII. Palaiologos," 592-600.

⁵⁸¹ For the Byzantines living in the Crimea at that period, see Balard, "The Greeks of Crimea under Genoese rule in the XIVth and XVth centuries," 23-32.

Some members of the family of Holobolos seem to have occupied prominent positions in Byzantium. A Manuel Holobolos, a contemporary of John Holobolos, was an imperial secretary, whose dialogue with Mazaris became one of the popular satires of Byzantine literature. Earlier members of the family are attested with various designations in the Byzantine society. Another Manuel Holobolos (born ca. 1245) held the office of *grammatikos*.

This allied embassy had another member from the family of Melissenos, possibly Andronikos Apokaukos Melissenos (Ἀνδρόνικος Ἀπόκαυκος Μελισσηνός).⁵⁸² His name is attestable in various documents dated to the period between 1397 and 1409. As an *oikeios* of Manuel II Palaiologos, he is known to be a senator by October 1397.⁵⁸³ Later in his career, he seems to have engaged in the diplomacy of the empire. His name appears among the witnesses of the treaty of May 22, 1406, between the Byzantine Empire and Venice.⁵⁸⁴

As far as the sources reveal, Manuel II Palaiologos's reign bears by far the highest number of identifiable envoys who found themselves in the Ottoman court. Three individuals out of a total of nine under the reign of Manuel II were members of a single embassy that visited Mehmed I in the winter of 1420-1421: Demetrios Laskaris Leontares, Isaakios Asanes and Manuel Kantakouzenos.

To begin with, Demetrios Laskaris Leontares (c. 1360s-1431), an erudite man raised in bureaucracy, held a prominent role in the military history during the reigns of John VII, Manuel II and John VIII respectively. He served as a general in the Byzantine army for a long time.⁵⁸⁵ Doukas calls Leontares as “an intelligent man and

⁵⁸² PLP 17809.

⁵⁸³ MM, vol. II, no. 686, 566; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3196; Cf. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 196, 304, Appendix IV.

⁵⁸⁴ Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 196-197.

⁵⁸⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.5, 173-175. For the individual, see PLP 14676.

versatile in the art of war” (ἄνδρα συνετὸν καὶ περὶ τὰ πολεμικὰ εὐστροφον).⁵⁸⁶ This depiction of Doukas with the phrase “ἄνδρα συνετὸν” seems to have been a stereotype for Doukas’s identification of an “ideal envoy” that he prefers throughout the narrative. It can also be found while he describes Çandarlı İbrahim as “ἄνδρα συνετὸν καὶ εὐθῆ”⁵⁸⁷ or Lachanas Palaiologos and Markos Iagaris, Manuel II’s envoys to Murad II, as “ἄνδρας εὐγενεῖς καὶ συνετούς.”⁵⁸⁸

In a similar vein, Sphrantzes describes Leontares as an excellent man (τὸν ἄριστον ἄνδρα).⁵⁸⁹ Throughout his career, Leontares occupied several positions in bureaucracy. He is attested as a member of the senate of Constantinople by August 1409.⁵⁹⁰ Demetrios was acting as a regent of the Despot Andronikos Palaiologos, the son of Manuel II in Thessalonike. In 1416, when Leontares was the governor of Thessalonike and had been holding this position since 1408, Mehmed I confronted Leontares, who provided shelter in the city to the fleeing the pretender Mustafa and Aydınoğlu Juneid. Following the conflicting years among Bayezid’s sons, Mehmed had prevailed over his brothers. The new sultan saw these two individuals (i.e. Mustafa and Juneid) as a threat to his sovereignty. Some Venetian documents illuminate how an agent of Mustafa was in quest of political support in Constantinople.⁵⁹¹ Mehmed asked for their surrender from Leontares. Having informed Manuel II in Constantinople about Mehmed’s request via a letter, Leontares waited for the emperor’s orders, as due to the law he could not hand over a

⁵⁸⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 18, 113; Cf. Doukas, trans. Magoulias, 101, translates this part as “a prudent man, adept in the art of warfare.”

⁵⁸⁷ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 203.

⁵⁸⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.2, 231.

⁵⁸⁹ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16.

⁵⁹⁰ Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 304, Appendix IV referring to MM, vol. II, no. 686, 566.

⁵⁹¹ Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir l’histoire des croisades au XV^e siècle*, vol. I, 225; Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 1563, 131-132.

fugitive. In the letter which Manuel wrote in response (διὰ προστάγματος λέγων γράφει), addressing Mehmed, the Byzantine emperor frequently referred to the symbolic father-son relationship between himself and the Ottoman ruler. In that letter, Manuel was reminding Mehmed about their promises that the emperor would be a father and the Ottoman ruler as son to Manuel.⁵⁹² This initial confrontation at least partly explains why Demetrios Leontares was selected for further embassies to Mehmed I in 1420 (possibly in October in Koutoulos) and 1421 (in Adrianople). It was highly possible, as stated by Elisabeth Malamut, that he had a good relationship with Mehmed, who must have preferred him to negotiate over matters between the two states.⁵⁹³ As already mentioned, in 1416, Manuel II ordered Leontares to bring both refugees from Thessalonike to Constantinople. After some time, both Mustafa and Juneid were released. On the issue of the Ottoman pretender Mustafa, Manuel II tried to obtain the upper hand against the Ottomans by making an agreement with the pretender, who was kept as a hostage in Lemnos by the order of the emperor. Manuel

⁵⁹² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 157-159; trans. Magoulias, 124. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3361 and 3362; Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 80. The issue of associating the Byzantine emperor with a father figure, or regarding him as a father is prevalent in Doukas’s narration. As a similar language used by Süleyman as mentioned by the author, Süleyman sees Manuel as his father. See Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 157-159: “ἐγὼ ἔσομαι σοι εἰς υἱόν, σὺ δὲ πατὴρ ἐμὸς ἔσῃ.” The pretender Mustafa was also calling Manuel his “father” and states that he obeys the emperor like a son to his father: “ὡς υἱὸς πρὸς πατέρα.” See, ed. ed. Grecu, Book 24.1, 181. This situation reveals the subordinate position of the Ottomans in front of the Byzantine emperors. It prevailed after the battle of Ankara by the treaty in 1403 signed between Bayezid’s eldest son Süleyman and various political parties including the Byzantine Empire, Venice, Genoa, the Hospitallers of Rhodes and the duke of Naxos. In absence of Manuel II, who was searching for aid in Europe, his nephew John VII signed the treaty, whose clauses were favorable to Byzantium because the Ottomans returned some territorial gains including Thessalonike back to the Byzantine Empire. The agreement included some more advantages for the Byzantine emperor, who no longer had to be a tributary to the Ottomans, whose control on the straits were also restricted and made dependent on the permissions of both Byzantium and other political parties of the treaty. See Dennis, “The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403,” 72-88, which bears the text of the treaty in 77-80; Zachariadou, “Süleyman Çelebi in Rumili and the Ottoman chronicles,” 268-296. For a general overview of the superior-subordinate relationship revealed through the terms of addressing used by Manuel II and Süleyman, and later by Mehmed I for one another, see Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 33-34.

⁵⁹³ Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 80-81. On this embassy, see also Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3385.

then provided ships under the command of Demetrios Leontares and disembarked them at Gallipoli in September 1421.⁵⁹⁴ This means that Leontares was serving as a general during his mission in the same year as an envoy to the Ottomans.

In an attempt to win over Murad, the other son of Mehmed I, Manuel II wrote letters to Şarabdar İlyas, the tutor and “kidnapper” of the pretender Mustafa, aiming to bring Murad to Prousa. According to Doukas, Manuel provided İlyas with enough gold for mercenary bands to fight against Murad.⁵⁹⁵ Manuel’s last diplomatic attempt to intervene in a political struggle or to trigger political unrest among the members of the Ottoman dynasty, that is, supporting Mustafa against his brother Murad, did not bring success to Byzantium. According to a source, whose reliability is dubious, even a marriage of Mustafa with the daughter of Ilario Doria, who was the Genoese husband of Manuel’s half-sister Zampia, was proposed.⁵⁹⁶ Mustafa came to Constantinople to receive Byzantine protection and aid on 30 September 1422. In the end, Manuel’s final diplomatic effort failed.

As a Byzantine envoy, Leontares stands as a distinctive example, because he was not recorded in an embassy before 1416, when he appears first as an individual engaged in diplomatic communication with the Ottomans. Leontares’s name appears as a witness among some of the emperor’s *oikeioi* in Manuel II’s treaty with Venice in 1418. His absence in Byzantine Western diplomatic missions until his first experience as a respondent facing Mehmed I’s requests in 1416 makes his

⁵⁹⁴ İnalcık, “Murad II,” 165.

⁵⁹⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.6, 235-237; trans. Magoulias, 164. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 3394.

⁵⁹⁶ Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 368, f.n. 120; for the argument that she was illegitimate daughter of Manuel II, see Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 253, f.n. 88, and 474. For the argument that she was the natural daughter of Manuel II, see Ganchou, “Ilario Doria, le gambros génois de Manuel II Palaiologos: beau-frère ou gendre?” 71.

employment as the leader of a diplomatic encounter worth investigating. At the document of this very embassy, he is designated as “the interpreter (*diermeneutes*), *kavallarios* and kyr Demetrios Leontarios.”⁵⁹⁷ As Mark C. Bartusis has put forward, the title of *kavallarios* in the context of Leontares connotes “more than a cavalry soldier” and simply means “a mark of distinction, almost a title of nobility, certainly indicating a (lesser) aristocrat.”⁵⁹⁸ Leontares later witnessed the treaties of 1423 and 1431 that were concluded with Venice. He no longer retained these designations of *kavallarios* and interpreter in the documents of these treaties, but was identified as an *oikeios* of the emperor and kyr.⁵⁹⁹ In 1416, upon his initial encounter with Mehmed I in the latter’s request of Mustafa and Juneid to be handed over to the Ottoman ruler, Leontares’s first meeting with Mehmed I possibly gave way to his second contact with him a few years later, in 1420.⁶⁰⁰ This embassy aimed to collect information about Mehmed’s plans after he secured his throne following a series of battles against his brother Musa. Manuel II supported Mehmed during the Ottoman civil war. The Byzantine emperor became now curious about what would await him if Mehmed prevailed after this bloody struggle. Mehmed had a plan to move to Anatolia. In this context, he stopped by Constantinople for a meeting with the emperor. In order to welcome the Ottoman ruler outside of the city, Manuel II, apart from Demetrios Laskaris Leontares, assigned two of his envoys, Isaakios Asanes and Manuel Kantakouzenos, who will be investigated in the following pages.

In the aforementioned meeting, the Ottoman ruler was hosted lavishly by the entrusted courtiers, *archontopouloi*, and soldiers with gifts presented in a welcoming

⁵⁹⁷ MM, vol. III, 162, lines 27-28.

⁵⁹⁸ Bartusis, “The Kavallarioi of Byzantium,” 343-350.

⁵⁹⁹ MM, vol. III, 172, line 25 and 185, lines 31-37.

⁶⁰⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 157-161; trans. Magoulias, Book 22.5, 124-125.

milieu.⁶⁰¹ This warm, showy reception might be read as an attempt to create a strong image in the eyes of the Ottoman prince. Under the leadership of the supreme general Leontares, this setting could serve to create such an image. After Mehmed was welcomed by the Byzantine embassy at Koutoulos, the Ottoman ruler was led to Diplokionion while conversing with the general on the way. The existence of a strict Byzantine protocol there still indicates the preservation of the superior image of the Byzantine emperor vis-à-vis the Ottomans, because the Byzantine embassy was entrusted to bring a foreign ruler to the emperor. It was not the emperor approaching Mehmed. From Sphrantzes's perspective, the reason for the selection of these individuals to meet Mehmed was that the Ottoman ruler had broken his oaths and did not act according to existing agreements; some *archontes* and members of the clergy also harbored discontents about the visit of Mehmed. The historian adds that this was why Manuel did not send his sons, instead of a group of officials, to greet the Ottoman sovereign.⁶⁰²

Demetrios Laskaris Leontares is attested again in a succeeding embassy in the following year (1421), for which Sphrantzes provides historical context. Manuel II sent the embassy to Mehmed I, who had crossed the sea at Gallipoli and returned to Adrianople at that time. This instance reveals further aspects of the previous diplomatic encounter headed by Leontares in the suburbs of Constantinople. This time, it was Demetrios Leontares, who was instructed to learn the sultan's future intentions, to submit a report, and to remind Mehmed of the friendship and respect that the Byzantines had shown to him via the gifts that Leontares had presented to

⁶⁰¹ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16. "... μετὰ πολλῶν καὶ ἀρχοντοῦλων καὶ στρατιωτῶν καὶ δώρων" (with many *archontopouloi* and soldiers and gifts).

⁶⁰² Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16.

Mehmed in the earlier embassy. Therefore, we understand that in the previous embassy, it was Leontares who presented the gifts. In return, for his present mission, Leontares was received with great honor and affection.⁶⁰³ He was told by the Ottoman ruler that the latter had a health problem. Mehmed promised him a dinner meeting where they might talk. The Byzantine envoy had to wait for the meeting “for a few days”; but he was not able to fulfill his duty, because, after three days, Mehmed died. Leontares had a difficult time delivering the news about the sultan’s death to the emperor and was kept in his quarters (τὴν κατοῦναν αὐτοῦ) for some time.⁶⁰⁴

Sphrantzes’s account provides further insights into the circumstances. Accordingly, there were also messengers who worked for Leontares. Sphrantzes’s words reveal the difficulty that Leontares had to face during his stay at the Ottoman court in Adrianople following Mehmed’s death. The Byzantine envoy was literally trapped there, because the roads to Constantinople were all closed and his messengers could not deliver his messages to the Byzantine court. Sphrantzes talks about how one of Leontares’s messengers found a way to deliver his message to the imperial capital: one messenger reached Constantinople via a sea route, after he got to Mesembria first, possibly because the land route eastwards from Adrianople was insecure and occupied largely by the Ottomans.⁶⁰⁵

Following this embassy and the death of Mehmed, the latter’s secret plan for taking over Constantinople became apparent. This created pressure on the Byzantine emperor from certain segments of the capital. These social groups were opponents to

⁶⁰³ “εἶδεν οὖν αὐτὸν [τὸν ἀποκρισιαρῆκιον] ὁ ἀμνηρᾶς μετὰ τιμῆς καὶ ἀγάπης ...” Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.4, 16.

⁶⁰⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.1, 14.

⁶⁰⁵ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 8.2, 18.

Manuel II's policy of friendship with Mehmed. It may be, therefore, helpful to comment more on the Byzantine foreign policy towards the Ottomans and internal factions with different considerations and political views. Mehmed's death was followed by a series of meetings conducted to decide on the policy towards the Ottomans and a new dynastic problem raised after the sultan's death. In these meetings, we see evidence for different parties supporting alternating views within the Byzantine leadership.⁶⁰⁶ In Byzantium, a consensus has never been reached about the initiatives to receive military help from the Turks.⁶⁰⁷ Leontares's presence could be related to a desire to broadcast Byzantine military might by showing it off to a foreigner. This notion of attracting foreign official visitors or rulers during their sojourn in Constantinople seems to have been retained at least in a political context in which Byzantium gained superiority. On the other hand, Mehmed's compromise with Leontares might have made the latter the best candidate for Byzantine embassies towards the Ottomans until 1421. Possibly, in the same year, which is in 1421, Leontares appeared again in the diplomatic scene. This time he was dispatched to the pretender Mustafa, the uncle of the new ruler Murad, in order to discuss matters related to the latter's recent occupation of Gallipoli and actions that seemed contrary to the sworn oaths in return for the Byzantine support to Mustafa to take the throne from Murad. Leontares was charged with full authority for that mission.⁶⁰⁸

The last time Demetrios Laskaris Leontares's name appears in historical documents is the Byzantine-Venetian treaty on 26 May 1431, on which he had his

⁶⁰⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 8.2-3, 18.

⁶⁰⁷ For factions in Constantinople, the political attitudes of the people and the aristocracy, see Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*.

⁶⁰⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 24.12, 199.

signature. He was recorded as an “οἰκεῖτος” of John VIII Palaiologos.⁶⁰⁹ To sum up, since John VIII played the card of the pretender Mustafa, whom he tried to establish an independent power in Europe, the diplomatic personnel linked with the interests of the pretender shared a similar destiny and disappeared both from the diplomatic scene and the historical evidence.⁶¹⁰

The Leontares family did not become one of the prominent aristocratic families, which dominated the late Byzantine bureaucracy and diplomacy. Only two members are known to have been envoys under Constantine XI Palaiologos’s reign. Andronikos Bryennios Leontares appears in historical evidence in 1451 when he was employed in consecutive missions to several places in Italy including Venice. The other member was Andreas Leontares, who visited Alfonse V of Aragon in 1453.⁶¹¹ There is no sign that any other members of the family were entrusted with diplomatic missions. Another Demetrios Leontares, the aforementioned Demetrios’s grandson, is attested in a manuscript note, which reveals his position as a notary (νοτάριος). Since the office of the notary was also responsible for certifying the imperial treaties with foreign states, this single depiction of him as the holder of this title led Jonathan Harris to suggest that this younger Demetrios may have worked in the imperial office, where the treaties and official documents were composed. Hence, this makes him possibly an individual engaged in diplomatic service.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁹ MM, vol. III, 185, nr. 39. See Rance, “Finding the right words: A letter to the emperor (Laur. Plut. 55.4, f. 197v). Books, education and rhetoric in a late Byzantine household,” 55, f.n. 83.

⁶¹⁰ See Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 83, where she notes as follows: “L’échec de la diplomatie de Jean VIII était probant et en même temps celui du personnel lié aux intérêts de Düzme Mustafa et après ces événements l’on n’entendit plus parler de Dèmètrios Léontaris sur la scene politique: il fut définitivement écarté.”

⁶¹¹ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 137, 379.

⁶¹² Harris, “Demetrius Leondaris: Constantinople to Otranto,” 30. See also Oikonomides, “La chancellerie impériale de Byzance du 13e au 15e siècle,” 172-173; Kazhdan and Cutler, “Notary,” 1495; Maltezos, “Portrait of the notary in the Latin-ruled Greek regions of the 14th century,” 121-132.

There was another member in the embassy in which Demetrios Laskaris Leontares seems to have served as the chief official out of Constantinople welcoming Mehmed I in 1420-1: Isaakios Asanes (Ἰσαάκιος Ἀσάνης).⁶¹³ Available sources attribute him a very prominent position by the year 1400, when he was acting as the eparch of Constantinople. He probably owed this office to his affinity to the reigning emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, who was his uncle. Under the Palaiologan regime, the emperor commonly tended to select their representatives in diplomatic missions from among the relatives, as is the case here. Nothing is known about the position that he occupied during his mission with Leontares. Yet, one might guess that he might have been holding a significant office until his death as a monk in 1429.⁶¹⁴

Likewise, historical evidence bears testimony to other examples in which several members of a particular family could serve in the imperial diplomatic service in varying contexts. Among these was the Kantakouzenos family. Although several members of the family had served as envoys to different polities during the last two centuries of the empire, only two of them can be attested as diplomats in the missions to the Ottoman court. Manuel Kantakouzenos, then a *protostrator*, was chosen as one of the members of the delegation, which was sent to Mehmed I with an aim to meet the Ottoman sultan near Constantinople in the winter of 1420-1421.⁶¹⁵ (This was the embassy that Leontares participated in, as mentioned above.)

In April 1422, another member of the Kantakouzenos family, Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos, together with Matthaios Laskaris and Angelos Philommates, partook in an embassy to the Ottoman ruler Murad II in order to

⁶¹³ PLP 1493.

⁶¹⁴ MM, vol. II, 333; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16 and Book 17.9, 46.

⁶¹⁵ Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, no. 63, 172-173. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16; Cf. Dölger *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3384. Guiland, "Études de titulature et de prosopographie byzantines. Le protostrator," 172-173.

maintain peace in the context of the Ottoman siege of Constantinople.⁶¹⁶ Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos occupied the office of *mesazon* during the reigns of both John VIII and Constantine XI. From among the *oikeioi* of the emperor John VIII (i.e. the emperor's cousin), he played an active part in the diplomatic communications of the Byzantine Empire concerning not only the relations with the Ottomans but also with the Western polities as he was present at the conclusion of the treaties between Byzantium and Venice several times in between 1423 and 1448.⁶¹⁷

There are other members of the Kantakouzenos family who were entrusted with various diplomatic missions to polities such as Venice (Andronikos Kantakouzenos, in 1324⁶¹⁸; Theodore Kantakouzenos, autumn 1398⁶¹⁹ and Andronikos Palaiologos Kantakouzenos, in April 1448⁶²⁰) and the French Kingdom (Theodore Kantakouzenos, on 1 July 1397⁶²¹).

The embassy sent to Murad II's court in 1422 comprised three distinguished members. Two of them (Kantakouzenos and Laskaris) were among the *oikeioi* and the third one (Philommates) was an experienced imperial secretary. The embassy is known thanks to Sphrantzes's account, in which the author mentions that these envoys were brought in chains in front of the walls of the city on June 15 by Murad himself when he approached to besiege Constantinople. The historian describes them

⁶¹⁶ For Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos, see PLP 10962.

⁶¹⁷ Verpeaux, "Contribution à l'étude de l'administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων," 287-288; Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, no. 75, 192-195 ref. to MM, vol. III, 172, 24; 185, 33; 215, 22; 224, 5.

⁶¹⁸ MM, vol. III, 104; Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, 152-153.

⁶¹⁹ Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, 165-166.

⁶²⁰ Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, 179-181.

⁶²¹ Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, 165-166; Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. I, no. 951, 221.

as being sent earlier (οὗς προαπέστειλαν εἰς ἐκεῖνον διὰ κατάστασιν ἀγάπης) to the Ottoman ruler “to arrange a treaty of friendship.”⁶²²

It is worth identifying these envoys in detail. Being a cousin-german (ἐξάδελφος) of John VIII Palaiologos, Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos was possibly in the close circle of John VIII, who could have promoted him as a candidate for an embassy in 1422 to Murad II’s court in order to arrange a treaty of friendship. After the incident of the pretender Mustafa, Murad attacked Thessalonike and then besieged Constantinople in 1422.⁶²³ This very embassy was among a series of embassies aiming to dissuade Murad from the siege and reach an agreement on acceptable terms. Demetrios Palaiologos Kantakouzenos was accompanied in this mission by two other prominent individuals: Matthaïos Laskaris and Angelos Philommates. As mentioned above, Sphrantzes’s chronicle relates the details of their custody, which lasted for over a year at the hands of the Ottomans. They were released in 1424 when a peace treaty was finally concluded between John VIII and Murad.⁶²⁴

In the context of John VIII’s policy concerning the incident of the pretender Mustafa, Demetrios supported John VIII, then the co-emperor. On the other hand, the reigning Manuel II tended to abide by the existing agreements and thus supported Murad in his reign.⁶²⁵ This triggered a process that led to a proliferation of John

⁶²² Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22; the translation belongs to Marios Philippides. Sphrantzes, trans. Philippides, 27. The same story of the Byzantine envoys who were brought in front of the walls as chained is also told in John Kananos’s account. See John Kananos, ed. Cuomo, 18.

⁶²³ See John Kananos, ed. Bekker; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 320.

⁶²⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 8.3, 18 and Book 10.1, 22. For Barker, “this peace at once proved the wisdom of Manuel’s old policies and at the same time deprived the Empire of their results. No less significant, however, is the fact that this accord of 1424 also gave Byzantium its last respite from the Turks, the long, ominous calm before the final storm of 1453.” Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 374-383.

⁶²⁵ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 8.3, 18.

VIII's policies on the Ottomans and paved the way for John VIII, to whom his father handed over the authority. The 1422 embassy took place under such circumstances, in which Murad II seems to adopt a hostile attitude against his rival. As a *mesazon* during the reign of John VIII, Demetrios became an influential figure in the emperor's diplomacy not only with the Ottomans but also with the West.⁶²⁶ His presence during the treaties with Venice various times between 1423 and 1447 makes him a prominent figure in the empire's Western diplomacy.⁶²⁷

Selecting this individual may have been a sign of John VIII's gradual authority over the foreign policy of the Byzantine Empire, which was still ruled by his father Manuel II by the time of the embassy in 1422. As the emperor's eldest son, John VIII had held the title of co-emperor since 1408 and had recently been made *autokrator* on 19 January 1421,⁶²⁸ which effectively sealed his status within the imperial court. He became the *de facto* emperor during the final years of his father's life. Overall, the embassy shows how the co-emperor tried to balance the preexisting cadre occupying prominent offices in the empire's foreign policy by introducing possibly the youngest member of the team from among his close circles.

Demetrios Angelos Kleidas Philommates (Ἀγγελὸν τὸν Φιλομμάτην) was another figure entrusted in that embassy.⁶²⁹ Unlike his professional career, which bloomed at the beginning of the 1430s, his two recorded employments to the Ottoman court took place in 1422, both aiming to conclude a treaty in the face of the Murad's siege of Constantinople. These consecutive embassies embodied the same diplomats, Angelos Philommates, Demetrios Kantakouzenos (PLP 10962), and

⁶²⁶ Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, no. 75, 192-195.

⁶²⁷ Verpeaux, "Contribution à l'étude de l'administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων," 287-288; Nicol, *The family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)*, ca. 1100-1460, no. 75, 193.

⁶²⁸ Dölger, "Die krönung Johannis VIII. zum mitkaiser," 318.

⁶²⁹ PLP 29927.

Mattaïos Laskaris, none of whom appeared once again in the Byzantine-Ottoman contacts as far as the sources are concerned. Since treaties could require multiple visits of the parties, the number of embassies with the purpose of finalizing them could have been more than what is already recorded. Sphrantzes presents a limited but clear identification for Angelos Philommates. The historian described him as *grammatikos*, a distinguishing feature from other envoys of the whole period of encounter with the Ottomans.⁶³⁰ Among the all-time envoys sent to the Ottoman court, he is the only individual who is known to be defined with that title.

There is almost a decade between Angelos Philommates's Ottoman embassies and his second recorded mission to the Papacy in 1431. Here, the question of his professional activity remains. After 1431, he participated in various embassies. Furthermore, he became one of the secular members of delegations pursuing negotiations over the issue of the union. In these embassies, the Latin sources identified him as either *grammatikos* or the emperor's secretary and once referred him as "orator."⁶³¹ Under Manuel II Palaiologos, Angelos Philommates carried the title of imperial secretary, which was previously occupied by Manuel Holobolos. Angelos Philommates then served under John VIII, too.⁶³²

To turn back to the Byzantine embassy dated 1422 with three members, one should mention the other two envoys in the mission apart from Demetrios

⁶³⁰ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10, 22.

⁶³¹ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 118-119 referring to Ceconi, *Concilio di Firenze*, no. 124. Sylvestre Syropoulos also refers him as *grammatikos*. Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 118, l. 12.

⁶³² See Laurent's remark in Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 103, f.n. 11 referring to Loenertz, "Pour la chronologie des oeuvres de Joseph Bryennios," 25; also, Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 141, f.n. 7. Philommates's (PLP 29927) career as a diplomat as attested in primary sources coincided the period between 1422 and 1435. Holobolos (PLP 1568) left his office (*grammatikos*) around the early 1414 to Philommates. See Mergiali-Sahas, "A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A profile," 600. See Garland, "Mazaris's journey to Hades: Further reflections and reappraisal," 192.

Kantakouzenos. Matthaios Laskaris (Ματθαῖον τὸν Λάσκαριν) was another member of the embassy. Among the *oikeioi* of the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, he was recorded as a senator by 1409 in Constantinople, which might indicate that he was the eldest member of the embassy.⁶³³

Markos Palaiologos Iagaris (Μάρκος Παλαιολόγος Ἰάγαρις), also known as Iagros, a member of the Palaiologan family and from among the *oikeioi* of the emperor John VIII, accompanied his colleague Angelos Philommates in various missions to the West.⁶³⁴ Together with the Dishypatos brothers, John and Manuel, these two individuals (i.e. Markos Palaiologos Iagaris and Angelos Philommates) became the most preferred envoys in Byzantium's diplomacy with the West throughout the 1430s.⁶³⁵ Accompanied by Lachanas Palaiologos, Markos was dispatched to Murad II on 8 June 1422.⁶³⁶ Given that this was true, how should one interpret this embassy, which was long before Markos Iagaris professionally started his diplomatic career as *megas primikerios* under John VIII's reign in ca. 1430?⁶³⁷ The unique source providing the names of the envoys for this mission is Doukas, who described both envoys as illustrious and prudent (ἄνδρας εὐγενεῖς καὶ συνετούς) without giving any clue about their titles.⁶³⁸ In other words, no information is at hand concerning Markos's office during his first recorded employment with the Ottoman court.

⁶³³ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10, 22. PLP 14552.

⁶³⁴ PLP 7811.

⁶³⁵ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, II, 17; II, 20; V, 22-23.

⁶³⁶ On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3388; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 82; Balivet, *Romanie byzantine et pays de Rum Turc*, 105-109.

⁶³⁷ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 170-171.

⁶³⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28, 231; trans. Magoullias, 161-162; Kananos, ed. Bekker, 465. See Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 360, f.n. 108 interprets different accounts for the embassies in 1422.

The purpose of the embassy was twofold. The Byzantine envoys were to present “convincing” arguments that attributed to Bayezid, the murdered vizier of the Ottoman court, all the evils that had come down on Murad II. They also requested the handover of the two sons of the new sultan. Prior to this embassy to Murad II’s court, a Venetian document dated 29 November 1417 concerning the Venetian diplomatic initiatives for peace negotiations between Byzantium and the Prince of Achaia, refers to Markos Palaiologos Iagaris as an envoy of John VIII, then the co-emperor. The document bears direct records of an interview that was held with the Byzantine envoy by a certain Bernabo Loredan.⁶³⁹ This piece of evidence, proving a very early start of the envoy’s career, may indicate that Markos Palaiologos Iagaris was among the leading individuals of John VIII, who later entrusted him with many diplomatic tasks. Sphrantzes mentions him in another embassy dated to June 1429, the aim of which was to discuss the issues concerning Patras. It was sent by Constantine XI, then the despot of the Morea, to Murad II, following an Ottoman embassy carrying an ultimatum warning the Byzantines to depart and discontinue the siege of Patras. Same as the one above, it was an embassy conducted by two envoys. It consisted of the narrator of the embassy, that is, the historian Sphrantzes, and Markos Palaiologos Iagaris. At the time of the mission, Markos was holding the title of *protovestiarites* (πρωτοβεστιαρίτης). Sphrantzes adds that Markos later became the *protostrator*.⁶⁴⁰

Later in his career, Markos Palaiologos Iagaris occupied the office of *megas stratopedarches*.⁶⁴¹ His absence in Byzantine-Ottoman ambassadorial contacts in his

⁶³⁹ Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 1680, 161.

⁶⁴⁰ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.5, 66. See also Philippides, *Constantine XI Dragaš Palaeologus (1404-1453): The last emperor of Byzantium*.

⁶⁴¹ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 118, l. 1.

‘professional’ career makes us think that during his ‘active’ years he was possibly occupying a bureaucratic position about which sources remain silent. All his other recorded embassies, a total of six trips, to the destinations in the West (the Papacy and Venice), postdate his missions to the Ottomans, in which Markos was always accompanied by another envoy(s). He did not appear as a single representative in any of his diplomatic duties.

Markos Iagaris was among the team of diplomats dispatched to Venice and to Pope Martin V for negotiations on a council of the Church early in 1430 (ca. February/March).⁶⁴² When Iagaris concluded his mission by securing the convening of a church council agreed by the Pope, who promised financial and military aid to the Byzantines, and announced the news to the emperor John VIII, he carried over the response of the emperor. Therefore, the envoys could have been selected for consecutive embassies, which centered on a single topic or motivation. Once the topic began to be discussed by an agency of a particular envoy, then he became a strong candidate for the following visits as follow-ups on the same topic. It might reasonably be due to the fact that he knew the subject and the process well, and also, he was well acquainted with the sending ruler as well as the hosting one; although in Markos Iagaris’s second visit to Rome in ca. spring 1431, a new Pope Eugenius IV was recently elected.⁶⁴³

Markos Iagaris participated in that mission bearing the title *megas stratopedarches* (μέγας στρατοπεδάρχης).⁶⁴⁴ In the same mission he was

⁶⁴² Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 122, l. 26; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3425. For his mission to Venice as πρέσβις, see Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 278, l. 5.

⁶⁴³ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 124, l. 5; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.5, 66; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3431.

⁶⁴⁴ See Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3425; Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, II, 15: 12, 1; Pseudo-Sphrantzes, (Bonn ed.), II, 9: 156, 14; Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, II, 12, 7: “γράμματα.”

accompanied by two other individuals with clerical positions: a *megas protosynkellos* (μέγας πρωτοσύγκελλος) and an abbot from Pantokrator monastery, Makarios Makres. He undertook a second mission to the Pope (Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 3431) with an abbot of the Mangana Monastery Makarios Kurunas and the *grammatikos* Demetrios Angelos Kleidas, whose order we do not know; but the embassy was clearly related to the union issue and the council.⁶⁴⁵

Many members of the Iagaris family built up their professional careers during the reign of John VIII Palaiologos.⁶⁴⁶ Among them was Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris (PLP 7808), who was sent to Murad II in 1437 before John VIII left for the council of Ferrara according to Sphrantzes.⁶⁴⁷ Later in his career, in 1438, with his capacity as *mesazon* he was attested in an embassy to the Pope Eugenius IV. Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris was a relative of the emperor John VIII.⁶⁴⁸ Therefore, during his occupation of the office of *mesazon* between 1437 and 1449 as one of the 4 defined *mesazontes* of the reign of John VIII, Andronikos Iagaris occasionally served as an imperial envoy to various destinations.⁶⁴⁹ Another attempt to remove the animosity between the two rulers took place in March 1449, when Constantine XI Palaiologos sent an envoy to Murad II. According to Malamut, this

⁶⁴⁵ See also for another mission to Pope Eugenius IV by Markos Iagaris, Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3436 ref. to Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, II, 19: 15, 22 ff.; II, 20: 17, 9; Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 31.1, 265.

⁶⁴⁶ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 174.

⁶⁴⁷ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 23.8, 84. There is a debate whether this embassy is the same one, which Paul Asanes was entrusted. See Laurent, *Les 'Mémoires' du grand ecclésiarque de l'Eglise de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438-1439)*, 183, f.n. 4.

⁶⁴⁸ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 150.

⁶⁴⁹ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3405.

individual, who was carrying gifts to the Ottoman ruler, might have been Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris.⁶⁵⁰

Further members of the family appear in the sources as active individuals in the empire's diplomatic affairs until the end of the empire. In 1452, a certain Manuel Palaiologos Iagaris was sent to Rome to Pope Nicholas V to ask for help against the Turks.⁶⁵¹ An inscription at the gate of Pege reads “Μανουήλ τοῦ Ἰάγαρι” in majuscule letters, proving that it was Manuel Iagaris who sponsored repair works on the land walls. This evidence shows that the family of Iagaris was wealthy enough to financially support the defense of Constantinople.⁶⁵²

Regarding the mission in 1437, Sphrantzes offers as the name of the envoy as Andronikos Iagaris; however, on the contrary, I would argue that the busy program of Andronikos Iagaris, whom the emperor John VIII entrusted with different missions to neighboring polities leads us instead to accept Syropoulos's testimony, which gives the name of Paul Asanes as the imperial envoy for that mission. In Autumn 1436, Andronikos was on a mission to Trebizond and Georgia in order to bring the delegations of the local prelates to the council of Ferrara/Florence, before which a joint departure was being planned from Constantinople.⁶⁵³ Elizabeth Malamut likewise tends to accept Syropoulos's testimony on this embassy. For

⁶⁵⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.1, 279. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3524; Malamut, “La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 89.

⁶⁵¹ Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, I, 19, 1; Malamut, “Les ambassades du dernier empereur de Byzance,” no. 25; Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 306.

⁶⁵² Philippides, “Venice, Genoa, and John VIII Palaeologus' Renovation of the Fortifications of Constantinople,” 390. The bad situation of the land walls is touched upon by a contemporary of the siege of Constantinople in 1453, Bishop Leonardo, who put Manuel Iagaris on the target finding him responsible for not using imperial funds for the repair of the land walls but their own benefit. For the inadequacy of building and labor capacity in Constantinople, see Matschke, “Builders and buildings in late Constantinople,” 315-328.

⁶⁵³ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3458.

Malamut, it is plausible because on the one hand, Paul Asanes was a friend of Demetrios Palaiologos the despot, who was going to be Paul's father-in-law and on the other hand, Demetrios was supporting the pro-Turkish fraction.⁶⁵⁴

If we examine the case closely, it is necessary to give further details. As already discussed, for the embassy that Sphrantzes mentions Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris as the Byzantine representative, there is contradictory information in Sylvestre Syropoulos's memoirs. According to this prominent patriarchal official, who participated in the Council of Florence in 1438-9 and wrote his testimonies, the title of envoy in this mission was bestowed to a certain Paul Asanes.⁶⁵⁵ According to Syropoulos, Paul Asanes was assigned to the position of governorship of Constantinople (ἡ κεφαλὴ τῆς Πόλεως).⁶⁵⁶ Approximately three years later than his probable visit to the court of Murad II, in 1441, he appears in the historical record as a supporter of Demetrios Palaiologos, John VIII's brother and adversary, by not approving the union of churches announced in the Council at Florence. It has been raised as a possibility that he might have sided with an opinion favoring the conciliation with the Ottomans rather than the Latins, as reminded by Murad's viziers in his embassy in Adrianople.⁶⁵⁷

The Asanes family was one of the high-ranking aristocratic families of the Palaiologan era. Having familial ties with the reigning dynasty, its members occupied prominent positions in the Palaiologan government. A certain member of the family, on the other hand, namely Constantine Asanes, is recorded as an envoy to

⁶⁵⁴ Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 88.

⁶⁵⁵ On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, 3475.

⁶⁵⁶ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 544, l. 12.

⁶⁵⁷ Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 279-280.

the Papacy in 1369.⁶⁵⁸ Moreover, earlier in the fifteenth century, Isaakios Asanes, another member of the family as mentioned above, served as an imperial representative in the delegation entrusted to meet Mehmed I outside of Constantinople. Some members of the Asanes family appeared as envoys to the Western courts.⁶⁵⁹

Upon his return from the Council of Florence, John VIII decided to relieve Murad II's doubts regarding a possible alliance with the Latins and a consequent formation of an anti-Turkish league. He thus dispatched another embassy to the Ottoman court.⁶⁶⁰ This interpretation can be refined by taking into account the testimony of Doukas, who dwells on John VIII's attempt to explain to the Ottoman ruler the main reason to go to Italy: to settle dogmatic problems in Christianity. In this instance, no records can be found concerning the identity of the Byzantine envoys on that mission.⁶⁶¹ A follow-up mission was possibly assigned to the same individuals who were already engaged in the process at its earlier stages. Therefore, as Malamut speculates, Paul Asanes might have served as an envoy in the succeeding embassy, which took place in the summer of 1439 or the following months until February 1440.⁶⁶²

Another member of the Asanes family, the above-mentioned Paul's son Matthaios Asanes, was serving under Demetrios Palaiologos, the despot of the Morea

⁶⁵⁸ PLP 1503.

⁶⁵⁹ See Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 359.

⁶⁶⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 31, 269: "ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς πέμπει πρέσβεις πρὸς τὸν Μουράτ δεικνύων εὐγνωμοσύνην καὶ ἀκραίον φιλίαν εἰς αὐτόν." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 80: "Ἕλληνες μὲν ὡς ἐπ' οἴκου ἐκομίζοντο, τῷ τε βασιλεῖ Ἀμουράτῃ πρέσβεις πέμποντες ἡξίουσαν αὐτῷ εἰρήνην ποιῆσθαι καὶ ἐμπεδῶσαι αὐτῷ τὰς σπονδάς."

⁶⁶¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 31, 269; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 80; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 6.31, 43.

⁶⁶² Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3492; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 87-89.

who tried to gain sovereignty against his brother Thomas. In the year 1449, Demetrios needed Murad II's military support, which came via the troops led by Turahan Beg. For that immediate request to win over his brother, Demetrios had sent Matthaïos Asanes as an envoy to the Ottoman court. Furthermore, in 1459, Matthaïos appeared again, and this time in the context of an embassy aiming to negotiate a marriage of his niece, the daughter of Demetrios Palaiologos and Theodora Asanina. For that, he visited the court of Mehmed II as an envoy.⁶⁶³

It was during the emperor John VIII Palaiologos's return voyage from Florence in late January in the year 1440, when the vessel in which he and his large entourage was in could not move for a couple of days due to a problem caused by an underwater rock. They ultimately set sail. While they were sailing along the shores of the strait, already after several days spent on the sea, the emperor and his huge team, which accompanied the emperor's lions and dogs as well, a generous and friendly offer came from the governor of Gallipoli. He sent one of his men (ἓνα ἐκ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ ἀνθρώπων τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν) to the vessel in order to greet the emperor and to inform him that the governor was at his command if the emperor would need a rest in the castle or around. In return for that invitation, an imperial envoy was entrusted with carrying the message of the emperor: Laskaris Mamalis.⁶⁶⁴ This otherwise unknown individual conveyed the positive response of the emperor with a special present (a silver vase) to the host.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶³ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 39.1, 152: “ὄντος εἰς τὸν ἀμνηρᾶν ἀποκρισιαρίου”; cf. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 277-279.

⁶⁶⁴ PLP 16558.

⁶⁶⁵ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, XI, 22, 544. On that particular embassy, see also Kioussopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 60, 89. For an earlier member of the family of Mamalis, Nikolaos Mamalis (PLP 16559), who was sent as an envoy to Crete thrice by Manuel II Palaiologos between 1398 and 1401, see Ganchou, “Giacomo Badoer et kyr Théodôros Batatzès, ‘chomerchier di pesi’ à Constantinople (flor. 1401-1449),” 66, f.n. 59. For other members of the family (Theodore, George, Andreas Doukas), who are attested at the beginning of the fifteenth

For the Byzantine embassies of the 1420s, we have the good fortune to know many names of diplomats visiting the Ottoman court. One of them was Lachanas Palaiologos (Λαχανάς Παλαιολόγος)⁶⁶⁶, whose first employment took place in June 1421, when he accompanied Theologos Korax on a mission to Murad II's court with an aim of requesting the two of Murad's brothers as hostages. His second mission had the same purpose. In June 1422, Lachanas Palaiologos was dispatched to Murad II together with Markos Palaiologos Iagaris.⁶⁶⁷ Not much is known about this individual apart from these two missions. The same demand proposed twice must have made the Ottoman ruler angry, so that, according to the testimony of John Kananos, Murad II put both members in prison.⁶⁶⁸ The individuals of that mission are mentioned later by Sphrantzes and the date of it could be placed around summer 1423.⁶⁶⁹

Lachanas Palaiologos's family name bears testimony to his connection with the ruling dynasty of the Palaiologoi; however, we are not able to detect his exact identity in the absence of adequate references. During the first embassy to the Ottoman court, where he was accompanied by Theologos Korax, the two men were met by Bayezid Paşa.⁶⁷⁰ Korax's affinity with Ottoman court, as is commonly stated in the sources, must have been a prominent factor in his selection for this embassy. He might have been viewed as a person capable of easing the matter at hand. On the other hand, the second embassy temperately approached Murad II by presenting

century as *oikeioi*, see MM, vol. II, 543-546; Kioussopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, Appendix, 180.

⁶⁶⁶ PLP 21502.

⁶⁶⁷ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.4, 173; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3388. See also Balivet, *Romanie Byzantine et pays de Rum Turc: Histoire d'un espace d'imbrication Greco-Turque*, 105-109.

⁶⁶⁸ Kananos, ed. Bekker, 465; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22; Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1-7, 231; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3391.

⁶⁶⁹ Sphrantzes, Bonn ed., 118. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3407.

⁶⁷⁰ For Bayezid Paşa, see *Gazavât- Sultân Murâd b. Mehmed Hân*, 13.

arguments that Bayezid Paşa was the main reason for the “misfortunes” of Murad. Bayezid Paşa was already dead therefore, the embassy seemed eager to place the blame on the late vizier.

Taken as a whole, all recorded embassies in which sources reveal names of the entrusted envoys, one may realize an evident concentration of the significant majority of the cases that occurred around the year 1422 when Murad II besieged Constantinople.⁶⁷¹ Facing a dire situation posed by Murad’s troops, John VIII Palaiologos in Constantinople approached the Ottoman ruler to find a cure to end the blockade. Theologos Korax was a distinguished candidate for that purpose in many ways, particularly because he had had a close relationship with the Ottoman court for many years. Thus, we see him as the most frequently attested individual with a mission to the Ottoman court. He appeared as an envoy a total of four different times. His first appearance coincides the year 1416, when he was selected as a member of an embassy, whose other members are not named in our source. The purpose of that embassy was to remind Mehmed of the agreements on the expenses for the pretender Mustafa. This might have taken place in the following years because the agreement on the expenses was just made in Autumn 1416. But there is a possibility that the amount would be paid in parts, therefore the year 1416 can be correct.⁶⁷² Both before and during Murad II’s siege of Constantinople, Theologos Korax was dispatched by Manuel II Palaiologos to the Ottoman ruler consecutively in April and June 1422.⁶⁷³

⁶⁷¹ Chalkokondyles emphasizes that episode of Byzantine history as an instigator of alarming circumstances, because due to the policy of Manuel II Palaiologos concerning the pretender Mustafa, whom the emperor played as a card against Murad II: “In this matter, out of sheer folly, the Greeks moved closer to utterly destroying their affairs and themselves, and they came very close to seeing their city enslaved by Murad.” Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 5, 365.

⁶⁷² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.7, 163. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3365.

⁶⁷³ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3390 and 3392. Cf. Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 83-84.

The emperor, aiming to negotiate peace terms (ὥς δῆθεν πρεσβεύσων τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης), was influenced by the suspicions of the Constantinopolitan public regarding Theologos Korax and thus picked him for that mission. The envoy “pitched his tents (πήξας αὐτοῦ τὰς σκηνὰς) inside the Church of the Life-Giving Fount near the city wall,” and met with Murad and his nobles in front of the city walls.⁶⁷⁴ Doukas gives Korax credit for his persuasive attempts to conclude peace; however, this did not suffice to dissuade the Ottoman ruler from the siege.

On the absence of Theologos Korax in the previous two embassies sent to Murad for the purpose of ending the siege of Constantinople, Doukas mentions that Korax was suspected by the Constantinopolitans because he was planning a plot for the sake of the Ottomans. Following a remarkable career lasting more than two decades, Korax’s failure in that embassy in June 1422 ended with his arrest, torture, and death shortly thereafter.⁶⁷⁵

Theologos Korax may be considered as a foreigner who took an active role in Byzantine foreign relations. Originally from Philadelphia, Korax came to Constantinople during his youth when Timur’s army was approaching Western Anatolia. He ascended the ranks of bureaucracy thanks to a friend of his and consequently became an interpreter at the Byzantine court. Based particularly on what Doukas writes in his narrative, Korax’s knowledge and fluency in the Turkish language seem to have provided him with a wonderful career in diplomatic

⁶⁷⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28, 231. The translation belongs to Magoulas. See Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 162.

⁶⁷⁵ Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 361; Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 363.

correspondence. Yet, as a general rule, historical sources tend to describe him as an enigmatic and even suspicious character.⁶⁷⁶

Furthermore, being a relative of the emperor John VIII Palaiologos, Loukas Notaras is attested thrice in the history of diplomatic contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. The first one is related to a treaty that was concluded on 22 February 1424 between Manuel II Palaiologos and Murad II. This event is considered to be his first appearance as holder of an official post, in the government with a capacity to conduct the negotiations properly (but not yet as a grand duke).⁶⁷⁷ Loukas Notaras's efforts and attempts to secure peace between the two states on this occasion are mentioned in various important Byzantine sources. Both Sphrantzes and a Byzantine short chronicle in the Marciana Library (the chronicle of Mioni) confirm that the peace treaty signed in 1424 took place thanks to Notaras's endeavor.⁶⁷⁸

The second time that Loukas Notaras appeared as an envoy was in the same year of 1424. This event is mentioned alone in Doukas's account, which gives the reason for the mission as acclamation of the commencement of Murad II's reign. Only a few months elapsed between Notaras's first and second missions. Upon the first one, in which he was the chief negotiator for the treaty, this time he visited the

⁶⁷⁶ A certain intriguing issue is especially noteworthy. The references to Korax find themselves exclusively in Doukas's account. Sphrantzes, on the other hand, a contemporary to the affairs in which Korax took part, does not refer to him at all, and neither does Chalkokondyles.

⁶⁷⁷ PLP 20730. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 28. On the source of wealth of the Notarades and their rise to power thanks to their support towards the co-emperor Andronikos IV and later to his son John VII, see Laiou-Thomadakis, "The Greek merchant of the Palaeologan period: A collective portrait," 108-110; Laiou, "The Byzantine economy in the Mediterranean trade system: Thirteenth-fifteenth centuries," 220, n. 25; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 193, 214-215; Matschke, "The Notaras family and its Italian connections," 62. For further bibliography on Loukas Notaras, see Runciman, "Lucas Notaras, gambros tou basileôs," 447-449; Harris, "Despots, emperors, and Balkan identity in exile," 647. See also Ganchou, "Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de Constantinople ou les 'relations étrangères' de l'élite byzantine au XVe siècle," 162; Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 175-177.

⁶⁷⁸ Mioni, "Una inedita cronaca bizantina (dal Marc. Gr. 595)," 71-87; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 28.

new Ottoman sultan bearing him many gifts.⁶⁷⁹ His first mission may have affected his second one, because Murad became accustomed to his face. His significant place in the Byzantine court seems to have been indisputable. Loukas Notaras was quite active during the reign of John VIII, for whom he served as an advisor.

The final time as attested in the historical records, Loukas Notaras appears as an envoy possibly before 26 March in 1452, when he was *mesazon* at the Byzantine court.⁶⁸⁰ Upon Mehmed II's plan to erect a tower at the Bosphorus (i.e. Rumelihisarı), Constantine XI Palaiologos made an attempt to dissuade him and dispatched an embassy in which Loukas Notaras held the rank of chief negotiator. According to Kritoboulos, the Byzantine embassy consisted of the emperor's associates; the author did not name any of them. Doukas also refers to this particular embassy, but omits any further details about the identities or details of the envoys. Loukas's name is mentioned only by the Ottoman chronicler Neşrî, who depicts an ungracious portrait of the envoy. As described by him, the Byzantine emperor sent the 'infidel Kir-Luka, (i.e. Kyr Loukas)' his 'vizier,' in order to ask for mercy. However, as Neşrî continues, Mehmed II did not pay a compliment to the envoy at all.⁶⁸¹ Another source illuminating this event is the account of Nicolò Barbaro, who speaks of many embassies sent to Mehmed II due to the fear of the Byzantine

⁶⁷⁹ “ἔστειλε γὰρ ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν κύριον Λουκᾶν Νοταρᾶν τὸν αὐτοῦ μεσάζοντα σὺν δώροις πολλοῖς” Doukas ed. Grecu, Book 29.3, 24. On this embassy, see Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 87.

⁶⁸⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.6, 297-299; Neşrî, vol. II, 688; Kritoboulos, trans. Riggs, 17; Nicolò Barbaro, *Diary of the siege of Constantinople 1453*, 9. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3542; Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 90.

⁶⁸¹ “Şöyle rivayet ederler ki, çün ol yıl askerde kale yarağı tamam oldu, hemen bahar olduğu gibi, Sultan Mehmed, Halil Paşa’ya emr etti: ‘Lala, bu yıl İstanbul’u yaylarım’ deyip, asâkir-i ‘azîm cem’ edip, Hunkâr İstanbul’a müteveccih oldu. Andan İstanbul’un tekvuru, veziri Kir-Luka nâm kâfiri elçiliğe gönderip, aman diledi. Hunkâr elçiye aslâ iltifat etmedi. El-hâsıl, buyurup, esbâbı ihzar edip, İstanbul’un üzerine düştüler. Etrâf-ı ‘âlemden kendi ihtiyariyle varan askerin nihâyeti yoktu. Belki askerden çoktu.” Neşrî, vol. II, 689. For the use of the title “kyr” in the Byzantine society, see Kontogiannopoulou, “Le qualificatif kyr dans la société byzantine,” 209-226.

emperor. Once the construction of the castle at the Bosphorus was completed in August 1452, two envoys from one of the embassies were detained by the Ottoman ruler and later beheaded. Nicolò Barbaro says Constantine XI had been attempting to present gifts to Mehmed through these embassies.⁶⁸²

In order to better understand how Loukas Notaras was viewed by his contemporaries, one should look at Sphrantzes's writings, in which Notaras is portrayed as a self-centered and greedy man. Sphrantzes, a fervent supporter of the union of churches, held very different political beliefs than Loukas Notaras, who obviously favored the anti-union party. The author's biases about the *megas doux* reflect a disguised disfavor towards him. The political and courtly interests of both individuals often conflicted, particularly during the reign of the ultimate Byzantine emperor. Sphrantzes had long been in contact with Loukas Notaras. They even were employed as imperial envoys on a diplomatic visit at Murad II's court, where they were entrusted to conclude a treaty in February 1424.⁶⁸³ The rivalry between the two individuals reveals itself in the words of Sphrantzes. While Loukas Notaras maintained his utmost position (*megas doux*) in the bureaucracy ranked after the Constantine XI Palaiologos, Sphrantzes could not obtain his desired positions in the government despite his close relations with the emperor, until he was finally honored by the title of *megas logothetes* in 1451.⁶⁸⁴ Notaras's self-commitment to his duties in the reigns of the last two emperors of the Byzantine Empire, nevertheless, were confirmed by the authors like Kritoboulos or even Sphrantzes himself.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸² Nicolò Barbaro, *Diary of the siege of Constantinople 1453*, 9.

⁶⁸³ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 16; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 5.26, 395-397; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.

⁶⁸⁴ See Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 33 and 34, 118-130.

⁶⁸⁵ Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, 82; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 32.7, 116; Runciman, "Lucas Notaras, gambros tou basileôs," 447-449; Ganchou, "Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de

It is necessary to bear in mind the contradiction that Loukas Notaras showed on the one hand an anti-union stance, but also developed very close economic and political ties with the Genoese on the other. Having accepted Genoese citizenship in 1444, he placed much of his wealth in the bank of St. George in Genoa and married his daughter Euphrosyne to the Genoese George Gattilusio.⁶⁸⁶

Towards the end of the Byzantine Empire, the change in the dominant feature of the aristocracy may reveal further dimensions in the empire's political outlook. The aristocracy gradually shifted hands and became dominated by a mercantile elite, which dropped its connections with the Byzantine court and represented an independent social group benefitting from economic opportunities and concerned with their commercial potential. This was observable in several isolated parts of the empire, such as Thessalonike, where the aristocracy was utterly engaged in trade. In this context, some families accumulated great wealth thanks to their involvement in the regional and inter-regional trade networks. The Notaras and Iagaris families were among those that possessed a distinctive capacity for commerce.⁶⁸⁷ On the eve of the fall of Constantinople, Loukas Notaras, who married a woman who was possibly a daughter of the late John VII, gained much prominence and wealth due partly to his father's (Nikolaos Notaras) fortune. This may explain the temperate approach of Loukas Notaras and his expectation of calm relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state. The family members accumulated great wealth via a variety

Constantinople ou les 'relations étrangères' de l'élite byzantine au XVe siècle," 164. Doukas does not describe Loukas Notaras in a negative way.

⁶⁸⁶ See Nicol, *The Byzantine lady: Ten portraits, 1250-1500*, 98; Ganchou, "Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de Constantinople ou les 'relations étrangères' de l'élite byzantine au XVe siècle," 152-154.

⁶⁸⁷ Matschke, "The Notaras family and its Italian connections," 59-72; Harris, "Constantinople as city-state, c. 1360-1453," 119-140.

of means including trade, and it was Loukas Notaras himself who duly managed to secure his family's wealth.⁶⁸⁸

Furthermore, the Notarades were actively entrusted with diplomatic duties. As an interpreter (διερμηνευτής), Nikolaos Notaras, the father of Loukas Notaras, had served at the court of Manuel II Palaiologos and retained the same position until 1426.⁶⁸⁹ Together with Marshal de Boucicault, Nikolaos was sent as a member of the embassy that addressed Charles VI of France.⁶⁹⁰ On his other visit as an envoy to Italy and France, he conducted his own business besides his diplomatic mission. Nikolaos Notaras was a perfect example of a merchant envoy. Early in his career, he was a young merchant who established commercial ties with Genoa and Venice. Based on his great wealth and close commercial connections with Genoa and Venice, Nikolaos Notaras's identification as *diermeneutes* possibly indicates that he was primarily a merchant, but in topics where his contribution was considered important, he was employed as an imperial envoy.⁶⁹¹ This title was closely associated with the members of the Notarades, as it was also possessed by Nikolaos's son.⁶⁹² Like his father, Loukas Notaras became so exceedingly wealthy that he tried to pay for release of his son, John Notaras, by paying off a large amount of money following the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans.⁶⁹³

⁶⁸⁸ Stathakopoulos, "The dialectics of expansion and retraction: Recent scholarship on the Palaiologan aristocracy," 98.

⁶⁸⁹ Kioussopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 63.

⁶⁹⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 19.9, 129. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3271.

⁶⁹¹ Mergiali-Sahas, "A Byzantine ambassador to the West and his office during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: A Profile," 599. Nikolaos Notaras was recorded as an interpreter (Νικολάου Νοταρά διερμηνευτοῦ τοῦ καβαλλαρίου) in the Byzantine-Venetian treaty of 1418. See MM, vol. III, 162.

⁶⁹² Matschke, *Die schlacht bei Ankara und das schicksal von Byzanz: Studien zur spät byzantinischen geschichte zwischen 1402 und 1422*, 176; Guiland, "Grand interprète," 22.

⁶⁹³ Doukas, trans. Magoulias, Book 19, 109.

Both sides sometimes approached each other through envoys or lesser representatives without appearing in person. Laonikos Chalkokondyles mentions an instance in which Bayezid, the vizier of Murad II, accompanied by Murad's leading men arrived in Constantinople in order to discuss matters related to the treaty made regarding Mehmed I's sons. Chalkokondyles depicts them all together as envoys. He later asserts that among them, it was the vizier Bayezid, the vizier of Murad, who approached the co-emperor, John VIII Palaiologos. The vizier made his proposals via an envoy. The presence of an envoy in this exchange illuminates a practice of using a messenger of lesser significance to convey the proposals to the hosting sovereign. No face-to-face meeting seems to have occurred between Bayezid and John VIII.⁶⁹⁴

The central position of the Ottoman ruler's chief viziers in foreign affairs prevailed at least from the reign of Murad I onwards. What all the available Ottoman sources reveal is the dominant figure of the vizier in various stages of diplomatic contacts. The viziers were usually the leading actors behind the scenes as they decided the official attitude on a particular topic, directed diplomatic processes, and often appeared themselves as diplomatic representatives. Parallel to the consolidation of the family of Çandarlı within the Ottoman state, it became evident that the viziers began to be entrusted as envoys.⁶⁹⁵ The first instance of this phenomenon is possibly from the year 1394, when Bayezid I called Manuel II Palaiologos to come to the Ottoman court as a subordinate. For this purpose, he selected "Çavuşbaşı Ali" (head sergeant - *πρωτος κιαούσμπασις*) to convey the message to the Byzantine emperor.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁴ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 2; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 5.2, 367.

⁶⁹⁵ For the fundamental bibliography on the Çandarlı family, see Taeschner and Wittek, "Die vezirfamilie der Ğandarlyzāde (14./15. Jhdt.) und ihre denkmäler," 58-115; Uzunçarşılı, "Çandarlı Zāde Ali Paşa vakfiyesi," 549-576; Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı vezir ailesi*; İnalcık, "Ottoman methods of conquest," 103-129; İnalcık, "Centralization and decentralization in Ottoman administration," 27-52; Wittek, "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople," 1-34.

⁶⁹⁶ See Mss. Codex Barberini graecus 111, Vatican Library, f. 18v, ll. 1-2.

As a sign of Byzantine inferiority and vassalage in front of the Ottomans, Manuel occasionally joined the army of Bayezid when needed and called upon. This way of claiming a superior position also showed itself in convening the vassal rulers in the Porte. Contrary to tradition, Manuel and other Christian rulers agreed not to behave as they were expected and decided not to join Bayezid's invitation. Bayezid told his envoy Ali that if Manuel would not accept his request, Bayezid would wage war against the Byzantine Empire. The chronicle mentions Ali's breach of duty and his espionage: he actually did not say what the message conveyed, but instead revealed to Manuel that Bayezid had evil intentions against the emperor. In spite of Ali's words, Manuel gave the Ottoman envoy a message as a response along the lines of Bayezid's request. The event is known in modern historiography as the Serres meeting. It was planned to take place during the winter of 1393-1394. The story is also narrated by Laonikos Chalkokondyles, but in a slightly different way. First, the author mentions Ali as "one of Bayezid's powerful men" by further giving his father's name as Hayreddin. At the time of the embassy, Çandarlı Ali was a vizier at the Ottoman court.⁶⁹⁷ On the other hand, Chalkokondyles reports two rumors about how Bayezid's message was or was not delivered. He presents two different circumstances. The first one is that Ali read the message in public, possibly in court. However, the second one, as Chalkokondyles attributes to some sources, is the argument that Ali had a conversation with Manuel privately and told him not to attend Bayezid's call. In the end, despite Manuel's words approving his attendance, the emperor did not visit Bayezid's court.⁶⁹⁸ This argument has influenced the

⁶⁹⁷ PLP 659. See Baştav, "Grekçe Anonim Osmanlı Tarihinin kaynakları (1374-1421)," 154.

⁶⁹⁸ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 76. Aşıkpaşazade has a very interesting story in which he depicts another corruption story of Ali. This story also shows how the Byzantine churchmen were viewed even among the Ottoman court elite. When Bayezid I once ordered to massacre all of the *kadıns*, who were not content with their salaries, Ali Paşa called one of Bayezid's courtiers, a certain

generally negative perception of the members of the Çandarlı family in post-Byzantine historiography. Furthermore, Chalkokondyles refers to the words of Manuel sent prior to Bayezid's embassy, according to which he delivered his negative message not to come to the Porte again. Therefore, a Byzantine embassy preceded the one headed by Ali.⁶⁹⁹ The actual intention of the Ottoman ruler was to murder Manuel due to his disobedience.⁷⁰⁰ An anonymous Greek Chronicle, dated possibly 1532 *terminus ante quem*, narrates this diplomatic encounter by asserting the dubious attitude of the Ottoman vizier, which predominates not only the overwhelming majority of the Ottoman chronicles but also finds its way in some Byzantine or Western sources.⁷⁰¹ Consequently, in the Serres meeting, Manuel did not obey Bayezid's invitation, and this paved the way for the Ottoman siege of Constantinople. A similar treatment of the issue of intimate relationship with the Byzantine court representing the friendly policy of Çandarlı Halil towards the Byzantine Empire can be found in Sphrantzes's account. It was only Halil Paşa who

Arab (Maskara Arap), and asked him to save the *kadıns* from Bayezid's order of massacring them. Arab asked Bayezid if he would permit him to go to Constantinople as an ambassador in order to request monks from the emperor because they were literate and for the purpose of making them new *kadıns* instead of the existing Ottoman ones. Bayezid called Ali Paşa asking him whether the *kadıns* were illiterate. In the end, Ali Paşa was able to reorder the salaries of these *kadıns* for their benefit. It is one way of expressing Ali Paşa's hypocrisy in this narrative. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 69-71; ed. Atsız, bâb 63, 138-139. According to the Ottoman sources, Arab himself was also participating in the fraud. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 69-71; ed. Atsız, bâb 63, 138-139. Because Ali Paşa offered him a thousand florins for releasing the *kadıns*. Neşrî, vol. I, 336.

⁶⁹⁹ 16. *asırda yazılmış Grekçe Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi. Giriş ve metin (1373-1512)*, trans. Baştav, 101; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 76.

⁷⁰⁰ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 76-77; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.27, 131-133; Taeschner and Wittek, "Die vezirfamilie der Ğandarlyzâde (14./15. jhdt.) und ihre denkmäler," 60-115, esp. 68 ff.

⁷⁰¹ The only edition of the Codex Barberini Graecus 111 is published by Zoras, *Χρονικὸν περὶ τῶν Τοῦρκων Σουλτάνων (κατὰ τὸν Βαλβερικὸν Ἑλληνικὸν Κώδικα 111)*. Philippides (trans.), *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman Sultans 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*; the source is partly translated into Turkish by Baştav, 16. *asırda yazılmış Grekçe Anonim Osmanlı Tarihi. Giriş ve metin (1373-1512)*, 101. Şerif Baştav marks the possibility that the author of the Anonymous chronicle had the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade at his command. See Baştav, "Grekçe Anonim Osmanlı Tarihinin kaynakları (1374-1421)," 149-160. For a recent analysis of the manuscript, see Sakel, "A probable solution to the problem of the *Chronicle of the Turkish Sultans*," 204-220.

tried hard to discourage Murad II from changing his plan to attack Constantinople in the absence of John VIII in 1437.⁷⁰²

The anonymous Greek chronicle (Codex Barberini 111) claimed that Ali, the sultan's first "çavuş" as the source describes him, did not even convey Bayezid's message, and instead revealed the sultan's malicious intentions against Manuel.⁷⁰³ Prior to Ali Paşa's embassy, the emperor was saved by the grand vizier during Bayezid's convention of his Christian vassals to a meeting at Serres in late 1393 or early 1394. Bayezid was insistent on firmly establishing his authority over the Balkans. He thus invited his Christian vassals to a meeting at Serres (or Véria-Turkish Kara-ferye) in order to make them confirm their vassalage. At this meeting, as both Manuel Palaiologos and Chalkokondyles relate, Bayezid intended to kill the emperor.⁷⁰⁴ For Chalkokondyles, the grand vizier was the emperor's "close associate and was courted by him with much money."⁷⁰⁵ Furthermore, the so-called suspicious character of Çandarlı Ali was also commonly narrated by Aşıkpaşazade. According to him, Ali was a man of self-indulgence, who helped Bayezid to convene a *şarap* and *kebab meclis*.⁷⁰⁶

An event, possibly predating the one above, occurred in a place called Güzelcehisar, a castle above Boğazkesen (Anadoluhisarı) in the Bosphorus.⁷⁰⁷ After

⁷⁰² Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 23.10, 84.

⁷⁰³ Mss. Codex Barberini graecus 111, Vatican Library, f. 18v, ll. 1-2. Philippides (trans.), *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman Sultans 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*, 28.

⁷⁰⁴ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 75. "It is said that Bayezid spoke about being ready to kill him [Manuel II], but shortly afterward changed his mind. He was saved from destruction by Ali, the son of Hayreddin." Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, Book 2.25, 129. See Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 138-143; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 112-118.

⁷⁰⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 74-75; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.25, 129.

⁷⁰⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 69-71; ed. Atsız, bâb 63, 138-139.

⁷⁰⁷ Aşıkpaşazâde, ed. Atsız, 137; Neşri, vol. I, 328-330; Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, *Tacü't-tevârih*, vol. I, 148; Eyice, "Anadoluhisarı," 147-149.

seizing the control of the castle of Şile along the Black Sea Coast of the Bosphorus, the sultan sent an embassy, whose members are not named in historical texts, to Manuel II demanding that the emperor should leave Constantinople and surrender it to the Ottomans. Bayezid I threatened to march against the city if the emperor rejected this ultimatum, as related by Aşıkpaşazade, who writes that the emperor responded to this embassy by offering peace to the Ottoman ruler, and thus sent bribes via a prominent individual as envoy.⁷⁰⁸ Aşıkpaşazade does not name Manuel's envoy, but referred to him as a "very respectable person (gayet hürmetli elçidir)."⁷⁰⁹ Aiming to reach a peace agreement, this anonymous Byzantine envoy was carrying "a hundred fish (yüz balık)" which were filled up with gold and silver. One person who Aşıkpaşazade named is Çandarlı Ali Paşa, Bayezid's grand vizier, who was waiting for Manuel's bribe-carrying envoy with a crate and a money bag in the aforementioned castle.⁷¹⁰ The embassy must have been sent before the proposed meeting at Serres because it speaks of a treaty; it therefore appears to have been a final mission following a series of embassies. Aşıkpaşazade and the *Annales ecclesiastici* give the terms of the treaty in more detail in contrast to Doukas, who was a contemporary to these events and refers to Bayezid's request to assign a *kadı* to deal

⁷⁰⁸ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67-68; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137. On this embassy, see also Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3263 and 3264.

⁷⁰⁹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67-68; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137.

⁷¹⁰ Aşıkpaşazade here uses expressions like "söz kesen" and "dil tutan" referring to the function of bribes, denoting a meaning of promising not to tell anyone about the incidence: "Tekvür dahı bu sözi işidicek yüz balık elçi göndürdi. Bağur, bağursağı altun ve gümüş dolmış, Ali Paşaya geldi. Paşa dahı sanduğ ile, keseyile balıklara karşı vardı. Zîrâ gayet hürmetlü elçidür. Sulha, maslahata gelmişlerdür. Söz kesen ve dil dutan bile getürmişler idi. Ali Paşa dahı hündkâra vardı. Gayet temelluk etdi İstanbul tekvürinden. Elhâslı hündkârı râzı eyledi kim İstanbul içinde hündkârın kadısı otura. Ve bir mahalle mescidi ola. Yıldı on bin filöri harac vere. Bu Tarik üzerine sulh olındı. Darakçı Yenicesi hisarı halkını ve Göynük hisarı halkını sürüb getürdi İstanbula. Ol mahalleyi etdi ve ol mescidi yaptı. Ve kadı dahı nasb etdi. Masâlih-ı müslimîni ol kadı görür isi. Kâfir, müsülmana hükm etmez idi. Bayazîd Hana kim Temür vartası vâki olduğında tekvür ol mahalleyi sürdi ve ol mescidi yıkdı. Şimdiki demde ol halkdan Tekvür Dağında bir köy vardır. Göynüklü derler." Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67-68; ed. Atsız, bâb, 61, 137.

with the cases of the Muslims in Constantinople and his some further unidentified “unjust and calumnious” demands (φόρτους ἀδικίας καὶ συκοφαντίας).⁷¹¹ Although Franz Dölger offers a date in Autumn 1396 or Autumn 1397 for these very incidents, both the Ottoman source and Doukas date this treaty to 1391, whereas the *Annales ecclesiastici* provides a later date as 1393 for the event.⁷¹² However, as it was put forward by David Jacoby, a *kadı* was already assigned in Constantinople by 1391.⁷¹³ For that reason, the presence of a *kadı* must have been reaffirmed in 1396 by John VII.⁷¹⁴

According to the Ottoman sources, peace was eventually agreed upon thanks to Bayezid’s satisfaction with the following terms: a *kadı* would reside in Constantinople, the Muslims inside the city would have a mosque, and the emperor would give an annual tribute of 10,000 florins to the Ottomans.⁷¹⁵ Yet sources state that the conditions accepted did not last long. After Timur defeated the Ottomans at the battle of Ankara, as Aşıkpaşazade mentions, Manuel II decided to destroy the mosque; at the same time, the inhabitants within the quarter in Constantinople were driven out.⁷¹⁶

Doukas refers to this communication but only mentions the embassy sent by the Ottoman ruler to Manuel. Without giving any names or pointing out Ali’s role,

⁷¹¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 77; the translation belongs to Harry J. Magoulas. See Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 83; Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67-68; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137; Neşrî, vol. I, 328-330.

⁷¹² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 13.5, 7. Necipoğlu, “Ottoman merchants in Constantinople during the first half of the fifteenth century,” 159, f.n. 2.

⁷¹³ Jacoby, “Foreigners and the urban economy in Thessalonike ca. 1150-ca. 1450,” 121, f.n. 255. See Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425). A Byzantine emperor in a time of tumult*, 171, f.n. 148.

⁷¹⁴ Neşrî, vol. I, 330 gives the date of the treaty: 1396 (798 A. H.).

⁷¹⁵ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67-68; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137. One of Bayezid’s primary objectives was to seek for the advantages of the Ottoman merchants in Constantinople indicates the density of commercial dealings with Byzantium.

⁷¹⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67-68; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137. On the reinstallation of the *kadı* around the 1430s, Bertrandon de la Broquière in 1432 mentions that there was an authority who was responsible for the judicial affairs of the Muslims. *Le voyage d’outremer de Bertrandon de la Broquière*, ed. Schefer, 165.

Doukas reports the Ottoman demand of assigning a *kadı* to deal with the judicial affairs of the Muslims in Constantinople, but he places this request before Bayezid's ultimatum of Constantinople's surrender.⁷¹⁷ Despite some differences and the lack of any identification, Doukas's account is significant, as it loosely corroborates the events recounted by Aşıkpaşazade.

As already discussed, one observes a very negative image of Ali Paşa in Aşıkpaşazade's narrative. In this instance, Ali appears as a "bribe-taker," who also flattered Bayezid in the interest of the Byzantine emperor. Aşıkpaşazade's description of Ali Paşa's acts in favor of Manuel's interest requires further investigation, because it is after all a depiction of an Ottoman grand vizier as a diplomatic intermediary between the Ottoman sultan and the Byzantine emperor. This depiction also signals Ali Paşa's sphere of influence, and perhaps his personal political choice of compromise.

Aşıkpaşazade's prejudice against Çandarlı Ali is related to a fifteenth-century phenomenon well-interpreted in Ottoman historiography (and even pre-existing in texts like "*Ahval*").⁷¹⁸ This can be explained with an event where a letter from Mehmed I addressed to Yakub Beg, the governor of Ankara, was replaced with a forgery by Ali Paşa.⁷¹⁹ Pointing to treacherous activities of certain people are not rare

⁷¹⁷ Possibly the demand of a *kadı* occurred right after the commencement of the reign of Manuel II in 1391 February, whereas, for Doukas, the demand to surrender the city must have taken place after the battle of Nicopolis (25 September 1396) and during the long siege of Constantinople by the Ottomans. See Kastritsis, "Çandarlı family;" Ménage, "Djandarlı," 444-445.

⁷¹⁸ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 69-71; ed. Atsız, bâb 63, 138-139.

⁷¹⁹ Neşrî, vol. II, 456-458. See İnalçık, "How to read 'Âşık Pasha-Zâde's History,'" 139-156; Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 110-112; Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 18. Çandarlı Ali was criticized in both Aşıkpaşazade and other Ottoman Chronicles for "amassing treasure and trying to build a centralized state from the acquisitions of the gazis." Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 88, f.n. 21. For the inclination of the primary sources viewing the Çandarlı family "as the root of all social and political evil," see Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 117.

in this tradition, and many sources make similar connections to the Çandarlı family.⁷²⁰ Ottoman chronicles incorporate such negative interpretations as a retrospective projection after the last grand vizier from the family, Halil, who was executed in 1453. Halil is presented as plotter or troublemaker, according to Aşıkpaşazade, who attributes similar depictions to several other Ottoman viziers, such as Mevlânâ Rüstem.⁷²¹ Aşıkpaşazade, as a member of a “ghazi-sufi elite,” was sharply offended by the newly emerged learned elite in the Ottoman court, and the ghazi-sufi elites were also losing power during the centralization of Ottoman imperialism. Dimitris Kastritsis analyzes the individual careers of the Çandarlı family members to understand their role in the early Ottoman state as a newly-emerged-learned-elite in the Ottoman court. The earliest known member of the family was Çandarlı Ali’s father, Kara Halil-Hayreddin, who was also the grand vizier by ca. 1365 during Murad I’s reign.⁷²² Kara Halil was a leading individual behind the centralization of the Ottoman state through the transformation of its government institutions, central treasury and taxation system.⁷²³ Based on the agendas of local power-holders, Aşıkpaşazade and Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles detested these centralizing characteristics. The disappearance of the egalitarian

⁷²⁰ Another important Ottoman chronicler Neşrî does not mention Ali Paşa in this diplomatic contact. In Neşrî’s chronicle, there is no obvious criticism against the grand vizier Ali Paşa. See, İnalçık, “How to read ‘Âshık Pasha-Zâde’s History.” On the other hand, Çandarlı Ali was questioned in the Ottoman historiography on his view on the raising the siege of Constantinople by arguing that a longer siege might have triggered the European powers to help Byzantium against the Ottomans. See Başar, “Osmanlıların fetihten önce gerçekleştirmiş oldukları İstanbul kuşatmaları,” 121. However, Başar does not give any reference.

⁷²¹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 69-71; ed. Atsız, bâb 63, 138-139.

⁷²² Aşıkpaşazade points out that the “corruption” started with Halil, the father of Ali and İbrahim. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 69-71; ed. Atsız, bâb 63, 138-139. Dimitris Kastritsis marks the significance of Kara Halil Çandarlı as follows: “[He] is considered the first grand vizier, because in his person the roles of vizier and general (beylerbeyi) were combined for the first time.” Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 232.

⁷²³ For Kafadar’s interpretation of the negative perceptions of the Ottoman chronicles on the Çandarlı family, see Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 110-112. Also see Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 233-234.

process of the early decades in the Ottoman state, as Paul Wittek once put it, in which the frontiersmen acted collectively, brought about antagonism against the newly emerged and favored learned elite.⁷²⁴ To sum up, Dimitris Kastritsis shows that the anti-Çandarlı attitude of Ottoman chronicle tradition already existed prior to the execution of Halil, such as in the *Ahval*.⁷²⁵

Having presented all these instances of Ali Paşa's corrupted attitudes, it can be argued that although these accounts might appear at first glance to result from Ottoman sources prejudiced against him, the evidence suggests that there was a certain level of communication between Ali and Manuel, who perhaps benefited from this as much as possible. These instances support the possibility that the unfavorable stories told against Ali in particular, but in the general sense against the Çandarlı family, if we consider other references to other members of the family, such as Çandarlı İbrahim or Çandarlı Halil Paşa, were also narrated by the Greek speakers. It could be an influence of Chalkokondyles's Turkish sources which could well abound in his narrative. Moreover, the bad fame of Ali Paşa is also evident in some Western sources. As the senior negotiator of Venice for the treaty of 1403, which was signed between Süleyman, the eldest son of Bayezid and various Christian powers including Byzantium and Venice, Pietro Zeno reports that he personally bribed the grand vizier Ali Paşa (as he calls "el tuto presso lo signor") in order to set free five hundred prisoners who were in the hands of the Ottomans.⁷²⁶ Moreover, a late fourteenth-century Catalan source, *La Història de Jacob Xalabín*, sheds

⁷²⁴ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 18.

⁷²⁵ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 18.

⁷²⁶ Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403," 82-86; Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 271-272; Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 54-56.

additional light on the rumors and common negative image concerning Çandarlı Ali Paşa.⁷²⁷ The anonymous story of Yakub Çelebi, the son of Murad I, coincides with the latest part of Murad I's reign. According to the story, the Ottoman ruler had trouble finding a cure for his sick wife. For the treatment she needed, as the source points out, Murad dispatched envoys to the emperor in Constantinople and to the Venetian bailo in Pera, who both responded to the call positively.⁷²⁸ Since this account corresponds to what other primary sources provide as historical evidence, there seems to be no reason to discard the story as mere fiction. The story gives an interesting picture of Ali Paşa, who had a close relationship with Yakub Çelebi. According to the story, Murad I ordered a certain Ali, who is identified in the text as the son of the grand vizier Ali Paşa, to kill his son Yakub Çelebi. The story goes on by telling how Yakub was saved by the "son" Ali. They together escaped from the court with the help of Çandarlı Ali, who helped them hide themselves. Therefore, the author draws a picture of a man who did not obey the sultan's order, which perhaps points to how the negative image of Çandarlı Ali became widespread in society of this period. More interestingly, it can be observed in a work of Catalan literature, which might have obtained the story from Turkish sources.⁷²⁹

The influence of the Çandarlıs on the Ottoman rulers is also observable in relations with other polities, such as the Karamanoğlu dynasty. The Ottoman sultan Murad I heeded the advice of Çandarlı Ali Paşa on marching against the Karamanoğlu ruler, who had broken a treaty.⁷³⁰ Furthermore, during Bayezid I's march against Timur's army in Anatolia, as Chalkokondyles narrated (possibly from

⁷²⁷ *Yakup Çelebi'nin öyküsü*.

⁷²⁸ *Yakup Çelebi'nin öyküsü*, 56-59.

⁷²⁹ *Yakup Çelebi'nin öyküsü*, 10.

⁷³⁰ Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı vezir ailesi*, 33.

his Turkish sources), Çandarlı Ali approached the Ottoman ruler to change his mind. In Chalkokondyles's words, the grand vizier was "a man second to none in prudence among his [Bayezid's] retinue" (ἄνδρα δὴ τῶν παρ' ἑαυτῷ τὰ ἐξ σύνεσιν οὐδενὸς λειπόμενον).⁷³¹ Concerned by Timur's much larger army, Çandarlı Ali warned the sultan about possible dire consequences. If we believe Aşıkpaşazade, Ali succeeded somehow in persuading Bayezid not to attack Timur immediately but advised him to wait for some time to let Timur's forces enter the Ottoman lands. After that, Ali volunteered for an embassy through which he would seek reconciliation between his ruler and Timur.⁷³² In both campaigns, Ali was portrayed as a protector of the status quo.

The role of Çandarlı Ali in maintaining Ottoman policy towards Manuel II is indicated by Chalkokondyles. As also mentioned by the Anonymous Greek Chronicle, Codex Barberini 111, Çandarlı Ali was employed as an envoy visiting Constantinople as the representative of Bayezid in around 1394.⁷³³ In the context of Chalkokondyles's description of the Ottoman vizier, one may infer an image of close ties between Ali and Manuel, because a little earlier in his account Chalkokondyles maintains an argument on the alleged corruption of the Ottoman vizier.⁷³⁴ Upon drawing such a background, Chalkokondyles presented Ali's embassy to Manuel's court, where the Ottoman envoy had a public audience and even went further and

⁷³¹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 141. The translation belongs to Kaldellis, trans., Book 3.51, 247.

⁷³² See Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 141; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, 245-247; also, for other aspects, Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 74-75.

⁷³³ On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3234.

⁷³⁴ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 75-77; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2, 129, 133. See for Chalkokondyles's words in ed. Darkó, vol. I, 75: "ἐπήμυνε δὲ αὐτῷ τὸν ὄλεθρον Ἀλῆς ὁ Χαρατίνεω παῖς, ὃς συνήθης αὐτῷ ἐτύγχανεν ὧν καὶ χρήμασιν ὡς τὰ μάλιστα ἐθεραπεύετο ὑπ' αὐτοῦ." The translation of this piece according to trans. Kaldellis, Book 2, 129, is as follows: "He [Manuel] was saved from destruction by Ali, the son of Hayreddin, who happened to be his close associate and was courted by him with much money."

convened with the emperor in private. In that meeting, Ali is said to have warned Manuel not to visit Bayezid's court. This particular case may indicate that the Byzantine emperors, similar to what was argued by Malamut for the Byzantine envoys, could well decide on the Ottoman envoys with whom they got into contact.

At the time of the embassy (1394), Çandarlı Ali held the post of the grand vizier, which he occupied between 1387 and 1406. After Bayezid's defeat at the battle of Ankara, Çandarlı Ali seems to have played an important role in Süleyman's political activities until his death on 18 December 1406. Ali's sphere of influence in the Ottoman government gradually increased. In the treaty of 1403 with the Byzantines, it becomes evident that considering the long-lasting impact of calm relations between the Byzantines and the Ottomans, he bolstered the notion of accommodation with the Byzantines.

According to the Ottoman chronicle Oruç Beg, Manuel II Palaiologos was a friend to Süleyman Çelebi, and even established a marriage alliance with him. The emperor also established strong ties and a relationship of allegiance with Mehmed I.⁷³⁵ These all suggest that perhaps Manuel had a deliberate policy of establishing links with Ottoman high bureaucrats to help himself obtain personal diplomacy with the sons of Bayezid. Çandarlı Ali appears as a prime example of such a high-ranking bureaucrat, with whom Manuel had established personal ties. Manuel might have adopted such a policy especially in order to consolidate his empire in advantageous circumstances following the battle of Ankara.

The brother of Ali Paşa, Çandarlı İbrahim, was also among the influential figures in the foreign policy during Bayezid I's reign. On this figure, Chalkokondyles

⁷³⁵ Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, ed. Öztürk, 43.

provides another important story about Bayezid's gathering of his leading statesmen to devise military tactics during his campaign in Anatolia shortly before he confronted Timur on the battlefield. In this meeting, Çandarlı İbrahim tried to change Bayezid's mind and advised him not to march against Timur. Mistakenly identifying him as the son of Ali, Chalkokondyles pointed out that İbrahim was "a man who was very influential on Bayezid" (μέγιστον δὲ παρὰ τῷ Παιαζήτῃ δυνάμενον).⁷³⁶ On the other hand, Doukas portrays İbrahim with positive remarks. For him, İbrahim was "a prudent and guileless man (ἄνδρα συνετὸν καὶ εὐθὲς), unaccustomed to the shameless wanton behavior and profligacies of the Turks" and became the grand vizier after Bayezid Paşa's death.⁷³⁷ Dimitris Kastritsis argues that as İbrahim defected to Mehmed I's court from Constantinople, he must also have had diplomatic connections with Byzantium and the Genoese settlement in Galata, as did his brother Çandarlı Ali.⁷³⁸ The similarity between the anecdotes about a certain Blind Şahmelik ("Kör Şahmelik") and those about Çandarlı İbrahim has led some scholars to think that these two figures were the same person. As related in various sources, around 1410-1411 he was sent to Manuel demanding a tribute from the emperor.⁷³⁹ Şahmelik was the vizier of Musa Çelebi, another son of Bayezid. When Musa Çelebi occupied the Ottoman throne, he organized attacks against Constantinople and its environs between 1411 and 1413, continuing his father's 'aggressive' policy.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁶ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 3, 141-145; trans. Kaldellis, Book 3, 247-253.

⁷³⁷ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 203, trans. Magoulias, 146-148.

⁷³⁸ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 247. Kastritsis argues that the reason why İbrahim was not treated negatively in Ottoman chronicles as opposed to his father or his brother was twofold. First, he defected to Mehmed I's court, and secondly, he was not that powerful compared to his brother Ali. See Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 247.

⁷³⁹ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 165-166. Kastritsis thinks that that specific name might have been used as a sobriquet for İbrahim.

⁷⁴⁰ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 82-83; ed. Atsız, bâb 69, 147.

While Musa was making assaults in Byzantine territories, Şahmelik had been dispatched to Constantinople to collect the annual tribute; yet, instead of fulfilling his mission, he took refuge there. After a while, Şahmelik found his way to the court of Mehmed Çelebi, who adopted a conciliatory approach and thus was favored by the Byzantines. On Mehmed's final campaign (1413) against his brother Musa, the Ottoman chronicles mention how Kör Şahmelik served for Mehmed against his former master. When Mehmed ordered the army to cross over to Rumelia, his generals lacked the means to transfer their troops. Şahmelik offered to dispatch an embassy to the ruler of Constantinople to ask for the transportation of the troops across the strait.⁷⁴¹

Another instance that supports the accommodationist view of İbrahim is the particular embassy in the year 1422. Following the death of the grand vizier Bayezid Paşa, Murad II sent İbrahim to Constantinople with a request to transfer the Ottoman troops across the straits and provide support in the Ottoman ruler's struggle against the pretender Mustafa. In the meeting, it was İbrahim, who emphasized all the past troubles derived from the late vizier's policy and thus tried to consolidate his role in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomacy. It can well be understood as a part of İbrahim's conciliatory attitude towards Byzantium.⁷⁴² In such a way of dismissing the previous policy by his predecessor Bayezid Paşa, İbrahim aimed to initiate probably a new phase in the relations with the Byzantine Empire.

⁷⁴¹ The Byzantine Empire played a prominent role as a center for seeking asylum for many Ottomans. Following Süleyman's death and Musa's own proclamation to the Ottoman throne, the dead prince's daughter and son escaped from Musa and took shelter in Constantinople. Previously, Süleyman, after he claimed rulership in Prousa, had sent his sister Fatma Hatun and his brother Kasım as hostages to Manuel. As both Aşıkpaşazade and Neşrî explain, by following such a policy and therefore concluding a treaty, Süleyman aimed to hamper any hostility between his state and the Byzantine Empire. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 80-82; ed. Atsız, bâb 68, 146-147; Neşrî, vol. I, 364.

⁷⁴² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 201-205; trans. Magoulias, 147.

The single mission that was conducted by Çandarlı İbrahim is transmitted by Doukas, who singles out the Ottoman vizier's soft approach towards the Byzantine Empire. Doukas's portrayal of the individual and his humble attitude in front of the emperor may be a sign of the Byzantine author's hatred; yet it must be understood that in this visit, İbrahim proved to behave so tactically in order to be seen as sympathetic to the Byzantine emperor so that his master Murad could well hold the throne securely. Doukas emphatically underlines the inferior position of the Ottomans in this context; but nevertheless, he also underlines treacherous intents of the grand vizier despite the latter's unoffensive countenance.⁷⁴³ As a consequence, the author's mention of this otherwise unknown appearance of İbrahim as an envoy, I think, points to his thorough understanding of the encounter and thus the grand vizier.⁷⁴⁴

There was another factor in the possibility of the Byzantine emperor engaging personal ties with the Ottomans, particularly after 1402. In the vacuum of Ottoman political unity, Byzantium did not lose its position as a major power in the region. The image of the Byzantine authority did not wane both among the Ottoman princes and the other Anatolian begs. Neşrî transmits a story that Kutbeddin İznîkî, who was a sheikh active in Nicaea, was selected by the Turkish leaders and sent to Timur as their envoy. He was entrusted to visit Timur to release Sultan Bayezid from the hands of Timur. As related here, the parties agreed on terms that a ransom of 90,000 florins should be paid. Due to a current lack of cash in Anatolia, he was preparing to go to the Byzantine emperor and ask for money, which could not be collected otherwise. The news of Bayezid's death arrived before İznîkî departed for Byzantium

⁷⁴³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 203.

⁷⁴⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 201-205.

and eventually, he could not make it happen.⁷⁴⁵ Manuel's charisma in the eyes of the Ottoman princes still stood, despite the Byzantine Empire's diminishing strength in international politics and in military affairs. According to Sphrantzes, it was a common belief among the Turks in Asia Minor that Manuel's majestic appearance very much mirrored that of the prophet Muhammed.⁷⁴⁶ This might be useful context to understand the attitude of Ali Paşa or Fazlullah, to whom we will turn in the following pages. This image might have helped the Byzantine emperor to settle himself and his state securely, by playing off different conflicting parties for his own benefit. In the end, his state's presence for some decades indicates that he knew the inner politics of the Turks and he was able to successfully leverage his personal ties for this purpose.

Turning back to Şahmelik's proposal to send an embassy to Manuel, Mehmed's message was carried over to the Byzantine emperor by Fazlullah, the *kadı* of Gebze, in 1413.⁷⁴⁷ No other source except for Aşıkpaşazade's account mentions the name of Fazlullah for this embassy. Aşıkpaşazade explains the selection of this particular man with the justification that he was the acting *kadı* of a neighboring town to Constantinople, just a few miles to the east. In the end, Fazlullah's mission

⁷⁴⁵ Neşrî, vol. I, 358.

⁷⁴⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 11.2, 22.

⁷⁴⁷ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 82-85; ed. Atsız, bâb 69-70. The Ottoman sources designate Fazlullah with his title '*kadı*' as a generic description. For Fazlullah, see PLP 29554. In the Giese edition, Aşıkpaşazade states that Fazlullah came from the Persian province (Acem vilayeti) and he was a judge (hâkim). The chronicler explains how he ascended in bureaucracy by approaching the sultan and establishing a close connection with him: "Padişaha takarrub kesb etmek ile âhır vezir oldu." Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 196-197; ed. Atsız, bâb 156, 232. Kadı Fazlullah was a grandson of Akça-Koca, who was a significant warrior leader of Orhan Gazi. He possessed a tekke (tekke) in Gebze. (See Emecen, "Akçakoca," 224; see also Neşrî, vol. I, 152; Hoca Sadeddin, *Tacü't-Tevarih*, vol. V, 57: "Bilgin bir kadı ve değeri yüksek, seçkin bir kişi idi. Sultan Mehmed döneminde Gebze kadısı idi. Musa Çelebi olayında Çelebi Sultan Mehmed ile Bizans İmparatoru Manuel Komnenos arasındaki bağlaşıklığı sağlayan Gebze kadısı budur." He falsely uses Komnenos instead of Palaiologos. The family name of Komnenos was used by the first Palaiologan emperor, Michael VIII Palaiologos.

was successful. The emperor provided Byzantine vessels, and the Ottomans were content, having crossed over to Rumelia thanks to Şahmelik and Fazlullah.⁷⁴⁸

In 1422, Fazlullah was sent by Murad II, this time to John VIII Palaiologos to negotiate peace.⁷⁴⁹ The Ottoman chronicles mentioned Fazlullah in this context as the official interlocutor of the Ottomans.⁷⁵⁰ Aware of the Serbian ruler Stefan Lazarevic's request that was recently put forward on the return of some territories, the emperor Manuel II asserted his own demands to Murad II and asked for the lands east of Vize. The agreement was reached on the condition that Murad gave back the territories east of Tsorlou (Çorlu). Addressing him as "his eminence (mevlânâ) *kadı*," the emperor John VIII seems to have responded to Fazlullah in person, according to Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle.⁷⁵¹ Fazlullah is also mentioned in other two important Ottoman chronicles, Neşrî and one of the anonymous chronicles. While Aşıkpaşazade relates Fazlullah's embassy with the fact that he was a neighbor to the Byzantine emperor, in the narratives of Neşrî and the Ottoman Anonymous

⁷⁴⁸ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 83-84; ed. Atsız, bâb 70, 147-148: "Sultan Mehmed, Veziri Bayazıd Paşaya eyidür: 'Rum Eline geçmege tedârük edün' der. Kör Şah Melik kim Musadan kaçub İstanbula girdüğü vaktın andan Sultan Mehmede gelmiş idi. Bayazıd Paşa eyidür: 'Sultanum! Kör Şah Melik Begi okuyalum. Görelüm ol ne der.' Okudılar. Geldi. Eyitdiler: 'Rum Eline geçmek isteriz. Tedbir nedür' dediler. Kör Şah Melik eyidür: 'İstanbul tekvürine elçi göndürmek gerek kim andan gayrı yerden geçmege derman yokdur' dedi. Anun için kim İstanbul tekvürü ana i'timad eder idi. Anun için kim Konşiyidi. Fazlullah vardı. Tekvüre söz neyise olındı. Ahd u peyman dahı etdiler. Geldi hündkâra maksud habarım Verdi. İş muradca oldu. Hündkâr dahı devlet ile Bursadan çıkdı. Yüridi, geldi Yurusa çıkdı. Fakîr Geyvede kaldum. Orhan Begün immı oğlu Yahşı Fakınun evinde hasta oldum. Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmanı tâ Yıldırım Hana gelince imam oğlından nakl ederin. Sultan Mehmed kim Yurusa kondı. İstanbul tekvürü gemiler göndürdi. Sultan Mehmed Rum Eline geçürdi." Also see Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, ed. Öztürk, 70.

⁷⁴⁹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 100-101; ed. Atsız, bâb 88, 160. Neşrî, vol. II, 566.

⁷⁵⁰ Michael Pylles was probably serving at the Ottoman court at the time of this embassy. See Doukas (ed. Grecu), 161-163, 229-235; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 143-145.

⁷⁵¹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 100-101; ed. Atsız, bâb 88, 160: "İstanbul tekvürine Gegibüze kadısı Fazlullahı elçi göndürdiler. Anun için kim ol, o tekvüre konşiyidi. Tekvür eyidür: 'Mevlânâ kadı! Vılakoğlına bunca yer verdünüz. Bana dahı Vizeden berüsin verün. Sizün ile barışayım' dedi. Kadı eyidür: 'Çorlıdan had olsun!' İncügezi bile verdiler. Tekvür dahı kabul etdi." The same story is narrated in Neşrî as follows: "Andan İstanbul Tekvuruna Gebze kadısı Fazlullah'ı gönderdiler. Zira Tekvur ile dost idi. İstanbul Tekvuru eyitti: 'Ey mevlânâ kadı, Vulk oğlu'na bunca yer verdiniz. Bana dahi Vize'den berisini verin. Tâki barışalım' dedi. Fazlullah eyitti. Çorlu'dan sınır edip, İnceğiz'i dahi verdiler." Neşrî, vol. II, 566, ll. 9-12.

Chronicle, it is stated that Fazlullah was selected due to his affinity to the Byzantine emperor (Istanbul tekfürü), who trusted the *kadı* because they were friends (Zira Tekvur ile dost idi).⁷⁵² Coinciding with the beginning of Murad II's reign, this incident is portrayed in Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle slightly differently; Aşıkpaşazade's treatment emphasizes the neighborly relations between the Byzantine emperor and Fazlullah rather than underlining their friendship, as the other chronicles do. Aşıkpaşazade's version, as argued by Dimitris Kastritsis, derived from his *gazi* sensibilities.⁷⁵³

Doukas also describes Fazlullah's (Φαδουλάρχ) influence over Murad II's politics as he narrates the historical events leading to the conquest of Smederevo (Semendire) in 1439. Doukas explains the status of Fazlullah in the Ottoman bureaucracy by referring to the equivalent terms in the Byzantine administrative tradition. The Byzantine author presents a somewhat distinctive portrayal of this prominent man, who used to be, in Doukas's words, *megas chartoularios* in the Ottoman court at the beginning of Murad II's reign and later became the *mesazon* (first vizier). According to Doukas, Fazlullah obtained this prominent position thanks to his "cunning, sharpness of mind, soberness of judgement in Murad's counsels and his disdain for Christians." Doukas underlines Fazlullah's bitter antagonism against the Christians and depicts him as a malicious person (ἄνθρωπον κακοποιὸν καὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐχθρὸν ἄσπονδον).⁷⁵⁴ Fazlullah, in his later career, seems to have abandoned his calm attitude towards Byzantium. Halil İnalcık explains the return to

⁷⁵² *Anonim Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, ed. Azamat, 55; Neşrî, vol. II, 566; Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 83-84; ed. Atsız, bâb 70, 147-148.

⁷⁵³ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 190.

⁷⁵⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.4, 261. The translation belongs to Magoulas. See Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 176.

the Ottoman conquest policy by Fazlullah's employment in prominent positions in the Ottoman court.⁷⁵⁵

Before the final assault of Murad II's siege of the Serbian capital in 1440, Fazlullah advised Murad not to hesitate to destroy the enemies of Islam. Doukas claims to present a lengthy quotation from Fazlullah. As Doukas's portrayal of Murad II was consistently positive, he writes that the Ottoman sultan still listened to his vizier's council, even despite the fact that the former "had no wickedness in his heart" and he was "ingenious."⁷⁵⁶ Following the capture of Smederevo by the Ottoman troops, Fazlullah was efficient in convincing Murad II to order the gouging out of the eyes of the two sons of the Serbian ruler, who were then sent to Amasya.⁷⁵⁷ Moreover, when Dracul visited Murad II in Adrianople, it was due to Fazlullah's subtle plans that the latter posed accusations against the Vlachian ruler, so that Murad would put him in prison. Emphasizing the pivotal role of Fazlullah in Murad's political decisions, Doukas connects the cruel act of gouging out the eyes of the despot's sons with Fazlullah's role.⁷⁵⁸

The pace of Ottoman centralization was rather slow during the reigns of Murad I and Bayezid, as it was still in its infancy. The Ottoman state mechanism, institutions, and centralization of its power were in the making during these years. At this stage of Ottoman history, the army was composed mainly of irregular troops supplied by frontier lords (*uc begleri*). Authority was locally based in the Ottoman realm and certain families leading military bodies with considerable military capacity

⁷⁵⁵ İnalcık, *Fatih devri üzerinde tetkikler ve vesikalar*, 1.

⁷⁵⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.4, 261-263. The translation belongs to Magoulas. See Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 176.

⁷⁵⁷ Whether this is a place that most of the 'potentially dangerous' individuals and captives were sent according to the Ottoman chronicles (Bedevi çardağı?) is debatable.

⁷⁵⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.4, 261-263.

held sway over the regional politics. The Çandarlı family members prevailed over any other individuals or families in the Ottoman bureaucracy for the whole period in consideration. In such a context, Çandarlı's sphere of influence seems to have decreased only for the period between 1429 and 1439. The major reason behind that relative lapse in influence would be the efficient figure of the grand vizier Mehmed Nizamüddin Paşa. This period also coincided with the embassies carried by Fazlullah.

Çandarlı Halil, the famous member of the third generation of the family, became the grand vizier in 1429.⁷⁵⁹ Just like his predecessors, he was also treated in negative terms in Ottoman historiography. Presenting a very negative portrait of Çandarlı Halil, Aşıkpaşazade refers to the grand vizier's corruption. When Murad II ordered Fazlullah to find money to be sent to the sacred cities of Islam (i.e. Jerusalem, Mecca, and Madina), he could not fulfill the sultan's command because the state treasury was not sufficient. At this point, Çandarlı Halil was asked if he could provide the needed amount from his own wealth, but Murad, for Aşıkpaşazade, warned him not to use the money that the latter gained by bribery.⁷⁶⁰ Apart from similar stories regarding Halil's corruption, the Ottoman sources do not speak of any of his diplomatic actions during the reign of Mehmed II.

Çandarlı Halil is portrayed by the early Ottoman chronicles as a fervent supporter of the peace faction at the Ottoman court due to his friendly and intimate sentiments towards the Byzantine Empire and thus his advice to Murad II and Mehmed II not to wage war against Byzantium. It has been shown that the

⁷⁵⁹ Çandarlı Halil is mentioned as Ali Basa in Badoer's account. See Kafadar, "A death in Venice", 1575: Anatolian Muslim merchants trading in the Serenissima," 193-194.

⁷⁶⁰ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 195-197; ed. Atsız, bâb 156, 232: "Padişah eyidür: 'Halil! Sakın rişvet filörisin verme!' ... Halil Paşa eyidür: 'Devletlü sultanum! Atamdan miras kalan filöridür...'"

commercial relations and the active participation of merchants both from Byzantium and from the Ottomans in Byzantine-Ottoman commerce had reached a considerable level by the 1430s; so much so that sources point out Venetian attempts to halt this situation, because it was causing disadvantages for the Venetian trade in the region.⁷⁶¹ The advantageous conditions that might have resulted in rendering Byzantium's existence possible and the maintenance of peaceful relations between the Ottomans and the Byzantines accordingly constituted the basis of the commercial interests of individuals who established a certain level of trade connections with the Byzantine Empire.⁷⁶²

To summarize my argument, it is possible that all the negative -sometimes even pejorative- references to the members of the Çandarlı family in Ottoman chronicles can be viewed as apocryphal, because they all serve to create a constructed image of the new state and legitimize the authority of the dynasty of Osman.

Similar to the ways in which members of the Çandarlı family are described, Ottoman sources mention some other individuals who were allegedly engaged in cooperation with the "infidel." The reactionary attitudes of the Ottoman rulers, according to our sources, were to blame these individuals due to their amiable relations with foreign powers. Aşıkpaşazade presents an example at this point: based on the assumptions of Murad II, Turahan Beg was arrested in Tokat at the well-

⁷⁶¹ Necipoğlu, "Ottoman merchants in Constantinople during the first half of the fifteenth century," 164-165.

⁷⁶² Necipoğlu, "Ottoman merchants in Constantinople during the first half of the fifteenth century," 162-163.

known prison called “Bedevi Çardağı,” because the commander was said to have established amity with the ruler of the Serbs.⁷⁶³

For the first half of the fifteenth century, scholars have pointed out the decisive influence of the Ottoman rulers in determining the course of their diplomatic relations with the Byzantines. Elisabeth Malamut has argued that this one-sidedness was due to the political and military superiority of the Ottoman state. Nevra Necipoğlu has likewise observed the commanding status of the Ottoman rulers in the preceeding years, during the last decades of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, Malamut also argues that the selection of the Byzantine ambassadors (such as Demetrios Leontares and Theologos Korax in particular) to the Ottoman court depended on the Ottoman rulers’ favorable view of them. She argues that certain agents were employed multiple times thanks to their good standing with Ottoman power.⁷⁶⁴

Who exactly met with particular Byzantine envoys among the members of the Ottoman court in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth century, and who had the power to influence or even direct the Ottoman foreign affairs with regard to Byzantium? Tracing diplomatic encounters recounted in Byzantine histories and Ottoman chronicles, it may be argued that the people in question played decisive roles in Ottoman diplomacy towards the Byzantine Empire, similar to the situation that Malamut has illuminated concerning the Byzantine diplomats.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶³ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 132-133; ed. Atsız, bâb 118, 184-185; Neşrî, vol. II, 646-648. Also, see Öztürk, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde bazı kamu görevlilerinin hapisle cezalandırılmalarına ilişkin ilk bilgiler (1300-1453),” 899-909.

⁷⁶⁴ Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 79–95; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*, 18-38, 119-183.

⁷⁶⁵ Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 79–95.

Some prominent Ottoman individuals that were active in Ottoman-Byzantine diplomacy contributed to the favorable relations between them and Manuel II, and might have accrued even more advantages for the Byzantine Empire, which in the end was able to protect the status quo throughout the period from the 1390s until the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century. On the other hand, figures like Fazlullah indicate that attitudes towards the “infidel,” following the Ottoman sources’ attribution, could shift over time from conciliation to total antagonism.

Further corroborating the point that Necipoğlu and Malamut have underlined, an interesting letter, found in the Topkapı Palace Archive, presents some peculiarities about Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications. The letter has been interpreted in various publications.⁷⁶⁶ Dated April 1432, this letter of John VIII Palaiologos was addressed to Saruca,⁷⁶⁷ who was the vizier of Murad II, and was carried by a Byzantine envoy named Manuel Stachitzes.⁷⁶⁸ The letter asks the vizier Saruca to carry out some demands. Why did John VIII submit to Saruca Paşa for the continuation of peace terms with the sultan? The Ottoman chronicles explain how Saruca (d. 1454) followed a conciliatory policy with Serbia and thus was removed from office in 1435-1436, but remained in the Ottoman court.⁷⁶⁹ His friendly

⁷⁶⁶ After its first publication by Tahsin Öz, some erroneous parts were corrected in a later article by Franz Dölger and Franz Babinger. The major publications about the letter are as follows: Öz, “Bizans İmparatoru’nun bir namesi,” 219-222; Wittek, “Ein brief des kaisers Johannes VIII. an den Osmanischen Wesir Sariğa Pasha vom jahre 1432,” 323-331; Babinger and Dölger, “Ein auslandsbrief des kaisers Johannes VIII. vom jahre 1447,” 20-28. As it is understood by the titles of these publications, there arose a debate over the date of the letter. Above all this bibliography on the issue, Nicolas A. Oikonomides convincingly argued that it was written in April 1432. Oikonomides, “On the date of John VIII’s letter to Saridja Beğ (April 1432),” 105-109.

⁷⁶⁷ PLP 24937. On Saruca Paşa, see Bostan, “Saruca Paşa,” 169–70. He became the Rumeli Beylerbeyi in 1452-1453.

⁷⁶⁸ On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3513; Malamut, “La figure de l’ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 88.

⁷⁶⁹ Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, ed. Öztürk, 59. It is interesting that Murad II’s suspicion that Byzantium, together with the Western powers, was preparing an attack against him during the Council of Ferrara/Florence in 1438-9 seems to have had its roots in that event. It is argued that the origin of the Ottoman lack of confidence in the Byzantine Empire could have been lying on the Byzantine inclination and submission to the West. The council possibly quickened the conquest of

relations might be an explanation for why John VIII preferred to write to Saruca.

Aware of the offensive policy of Mehmed II, Saruca and Çandarlı Halil were trying to persuade Murad II not to leave the throne to his son after the treaty of Segedin in 1444, following the battle of Varna.⁷⁷⁰ Byzantine authors tend to favor the relatively preferable reign of Murad II as opposed to that of his son and successor Mehmed II, against whom, for example, we see an obvious dislike that can be observed in Doukas's narrative. In contrast to descriptions of his son's reign, the reign of Murad II is praised for the leader's peaceful and calm attitudes.

During the siege of Thessalonike in 1423, Saruca is known to be the defender of Gallipoli. At that time, he was a vizier of Murad II.⁷⁷¹ Fazlullah became the vizier in H. 841 / 1437-1438.⁷⁷² Prior to the abovementioned letter of John VIII, Saruca was an influential figure at the Ottoman court, where he was well engaged in dealings with the West. Previously, he is recorded as the *subaşı* in Gallipoli by 24 July 1427, according to a Venetian document. This piece of evidence refers to Saruca as a representative of the Ottoman state for an agreement with the Signoria, which was represented by the notary Giovanni Bonisio at this contract. It bears a decision on the instructions prepared for the Venetian envoy Benedetto Emo to Murad II, from whom the Venetian Senate expected a ratification of the agreement reached between Saruca (Sariza) and the notary Giovanni Bonisio.⁷⁷³ Saruca's mission aimed to receive some rights for the Turkish merchants, certain tribute from the Venetians in return for peace, and included the exchange of fugitive slaves as well as assigning a

Constantinople at the end. For this argument, see İnalcık, *Fatih devri üzerinde tetkikler ve vesikalar*, 129-130.

⁷⁷⁰ For the interpretation that Saruca was an assistant vizier to Halil Paşa, see Runciman, *The fall of Constantinople 1453*, 58.

⁷⁷¹ Ménage, "The 'annals of Murād II'," 574. See also Bostan, "Saruca Paşa," 169-70.

⁷⁷² Ménage, "The 'annals of Murād II'," 576.

⁷⁷³ For the source itself and the details of the agreement, see Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 2066, 245.

kadı for the affairs of the Turkish merchants.⁷⁷⁴ Moreover, as a representative of the Ottoman court, Saruca was sent abroad at least twice to escort brides to Adrianople. A year later than the aforementioned contact with Venice, he is recorded as a vizier. After an exchange of embassies, in April 1428, Murad II dispatched Saruca to conclude betrothal procedures between the Ottoman ruler and Mara Brankovic, the daughter of the Serbian king George Brankovic, and to escort the bride to Murad's court. In return, Saruca accompanied the bride, "who brought with her much treasure and gold-embroidered garments."⁷⁷⁵ The reason why Saruca was appointed for this particular embassy can be speculated. Since Saruca was most probably a *devshirme* of Greek origin (Σαραζέην παῖδα τὸ γένος Ἑλληνα) as Chalkokondyles identifies him, he was likely acquainted with both the culture and the language of the Serbians.⁷⁷⁶ Taken together with the accusations raised against him claiming his favoritism towards the Serbian state, this speculation seems reasonable. Saruca acted as an Ottoman envoy for a mission a second time to conclude the marriage alliance in 1449, as Doukas recorded, between Mehmed II and the ruler of Dulkadiroglu emirate, whose daughter Sitt Khatun (θυγατέρα τοῦ Τουργατήρ) was the bride-to-be. Saruca brought Sitt Khatun to Edirne. Without giving the name of the bride (unlike

⁷⁷⁴ The document identifies Saruca as the subaşı of Gallipoli. See Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 2066, 245.

⁷⁷⁵ Doukas, trans. Magoulis, Book 30.3, 176. Doukas describes the event as follows: "πέμπει τὸν Σαριτζιάν ἕνα τῶν βεζιρίδων τοῦ" ed. Bekker, 205; "στέλλει τὸν Σαριτζιάν ὡς νυμφαγωγὸν τοῦ ἀγαγεῖν τὴν νύμφην ἐκ τῆς Σερβίας" ed. Bekker, 207; Doukas, trans. Magoulis, Book 30, 175-176; Beydilli, "II. Murad'ın eşi Sırp prensesi Mara Branković (1418-1487)," 387. The marriage took place in 1435. Chalkokondyles mentions that although Saruca was sent as an envoy (ἐπιπέμψας δὲ Σαραζίην τὸν τῶν θυρῶν ἡγεμόνα), it was Halil Paşa who escorted the bride to Murad II's palace. It is possible that Chalkokondyles implies the procedures following the bride was brought to Adrianople. See Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 20-21; trans. Kaldellis, Book 5.31, 401-403.

⁷⁷⁶ Chalokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 110; trans. Kaldellis, Book 7.15, 99-101.

in Ottoman historiography, which includes her name), Doukas describes the great ceremonies that took place for the wedding event.⁷⁷⁷

Do we know anything about the famous envoys of Byzantium to the West such as Manuel Chrysoloras who had engaged or interfered in the relations with the Ottomans?⁷⁷⁸ It seems that there was a division of labor. While on one hand some individuals built up their careers and were thus selected by the Byzantine emperors to conduct diplomatic contacts with Western powers, on the other hand, some individuals appeared solely in the context of embassies going to the Ottoman court. Sometimes the line between these two roles could become blurred because some envoys appear as messengers in both directions. Chrysoloras continued to serve Manuel II after the latter's European voyage.

Given the fact that the paucity and the insufficient nature of the narrative works depicting the events at the end of the fourteenth century has been a prevalent problem for historians, as far as the cases that we have names of representatives of the parties are concerned, primary sources illuminate no identified individuals for that “dark” period besides a few cases in which mainly the emperors themselves were the conductors of diplomatic communications.⁷⁷⁹

The office of *mesazon* gradually became the most significant one in the empire's bureaucracy. Demetrios Kydones describes his duties as a *mesazon* as follows: “being in charge of imperial correspondence and receiving foreigners of all

⁷⁷⁷ “ὅθεν καὶ στείλας ἓνα τῶν αὐτοῦ βεζιρίδων τὸν λεγόμενον Σαριτζιάν ἤγαγεν αὐτὴν ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου πατρὸς μετὰ τιμῆς ὅτι πλείστης καὶ δόξης, φέρουσαν θησαυροὺς πολλοὺς καὶ φερνὴν πολυτάλαντον.” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.2, 279-281. Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 186. See Babinger, “Mehmed's II. Heirat mit Sitt-Chatun (1449),” 217.

⁷⁷⁸ For Manuel Chrysoloras, see Cammelli, *Μανουὴλ Χρυσολωράς*.

⁷⁷⁹ Elizabeth A. Zachariadou marks the deficiency of knowledge in Byzantine historiography. See Zachariadou, “John VII (Alias Andronicus) Palaeologus,” 339.

ranks on behalf of the emperor, including ambassadors.”⁷⁸⁰ The infrequent appearance of *mesazontes* or any other officials of higher ranks could be interpreted as a sign that they could not be dispatched as representatives of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans. Otherwise, contemporary Byzantine historians would have mentioned them. It has been observed that seven different *mesazontes* served as imperial envoys to the West in the last hundred years of the empire.⁷⁸¹

The *mesazontes* possessed a significant position as conductors of diplomatic missions to the West. As opposed to the situation in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts, the picture was not identical in the empire’s relationship with the West. From the last hundred years of the Byzantine Empire, there are some individuals who functioned in embassies where they took part as *mesazontes*. These were addressed to Venice (Alexios Branas, Demetrios Palaiologos (Goudeles)), England or the Papacy (Hilario Doria), Hungary (Manuel Philanthropenos), or France (Nicholas Notaras, Theodore Palaiologos Kantakouzenos).⁷⁸²

Personalities having been already converted to Catholicism and promoting pro-Western policies, such as Demetrios Kydones, were in a way trying to enhance diplomatic communications of the empire with its Western friends.⁷⁸³ In this regard,

⁷⁸⁰ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 146. See also Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. I, no. 50, 42 (duties within the chancery), 47 (his financial duties); Verpeaux, ‘Contribution à l’étude de l’administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων’,” 280; Oikonomides, “La chancellerie impériale de Byzance du 13e au 15e siècle,” 170.

⁷⁸¹ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 146-148. For the discussion of *mesazontes*, see Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 145-151. See Verpeaux, ‘Contribution à l’étude de l’administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων’,” 285-290. Also see Oikonomides, “La chancellerie impériale de Byzance du 13e au 15e siècle,” 168-170.

⁷⁸² Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 364-370.

⁷⁸³ For Kydones’s personality, see Loenertz, “Démétrius Cydonès, I. De la naissance à l’année 1373,” 47-72; Loenertz, “Démétrius Cydonès, II. De 1373 à 1375,” 5-39. See also Kianka, “Byzantine-Papal diplomacy: The role of Demetrius Cydones,” 175-213.

imperial diplomacy was at the hand of the *mesazontes*, who adopted pro-Unionist perspectives. This was not restricted to Kydones. George Goudeles, who became his successor between 1386 and 1391, shared Kydones's views about rapprochement between the Byzantine Empire and the Latin West.⁷⁸⁴ Kydones was influential in the empire's foreign policy for some decades starting from the 1360s. To the West, he was entrusted with the task of an envoy three times; all took place around the year 1369. He joined the imperial retinue in John V's personal diplomatic visit to Rome in that year. In another occasion in 1369-70, Kydones visited Rome together with the emperor, as the latter's main negotiator and personal interpreter.⁷⁸⁵ The *mesazon* carried the task of a main negotiator in this mission.⁷⁸⁶ In a preceding embassy in 1369, Kydones was accompanied by Paul of Smyrna, the titular patriarch of Constantinople.⁷⁸⁷ They went to Venice and the papal court with an aim of announcing the journey of John V to Italy.⁷⁸⁸

The existence of imperial family members, particularly the sons of the Byzantine emperors, can be observed in several official missions as well. Traveled to Buda in 1366, for instance, John V Palaiologos had in his retinue two of his sons, Manuel and Michael, apart from the other members of the diplomatic mission.⁷⁸⁹ His

⁷⁸⁴ Due to his dual identity, both Byzantine and Genoese, he already had close commercial connection with the Genoese territories, from where he brought grain, for example, to the besieged Constantinople. In the 1390s, he thus accumulated great wealth. See Necipoğlu, "Economic conditions in Constantinople during the siege of Bayazid I (1394-1402)," 163-164. For his career as *mesazon*, see Ganchou, "L'ultime testament de Gêorgios Goudélès, homme d'affaires, mésazôn de Jean V et ktêtôr (Constantinople, 4 mars 1421)," 290-294.

⁷⁸⁵ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 147.

⁷⁸⁶ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 140; See Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*.

⁷⁸⁷ Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance à Rome*; Lounghis, *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident, depuis la foundation des états barbares jusqu'aux Croisades (407-1096)*, 307, no. 2.

⁷⁸⁸ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 124.

⁷⁸⁹ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 109.

next employment after three years in 1369 included a larger number of members, including Demetrios Kydones himself who was the *mesazon* and conducting the task of an interpreter at the same time as mentioned earlier.⁷⁹⁰

Sources reveal only rare instances of intermediaries or communications triggered by a third party, as it was at the beginning of the Byzantine diplomatic attempts to convince Mehmed II to withdraw from the siege of Constantinople. The cannons were already smashing the walls of the city, and Chalkokondyles asserts that the first negotiations between Constantine XI and the Ottomans began thanks to an intermediary position of the son of Īsfendiyar, Īsmaīl, who initiated the contacts with the Byzantines and aimed to inform them about the impending disaster upon the city if they would not send an envoy and negotiate for a treaty. Īsmaīl seems to have been eager to serve as an intermediary for negotiating with the sultan. However, this initiative must have required an embassy representing the Byzantine court.

Who was this personality? What function did he play before and during the siege?⁷⁹¹ Chalkokondyles's narrative may explain the issue of Īsmaīl's potential connections with the Byzantines. Another individual, an undistinguished man, accompanied Īsmaīl (Ἐπεμpton δὲ ἄνδρα οὐκ ἐπίσημον).⁷⁹² According to Chalkokondyles, prior to the siege of Constantinople in 1453, when Murad II decided to go against him, Īsmaīl approached the Ottoman sultan with envoys,

⁷⁹⁰ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 110.

⁷⁹¹ See Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 8.13-14, 155-15; for his earlier role, see Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 23; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 5.35, 406. The war council just before the fall of Constantinople was convened by the sultan's order, perhaps on Saturday, May 26. See the comments in Īnalçık, "The policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek population of Istanbul and the Byzantine buildings of the city," 231-249. Philippides (ed. and trans.), *Mehmed II the conqueror and the fall of the Franco-Byzantine Levant to the Ottoman Turks: Some Western views and testimonies*, 173, f.n. 16.

⁷⁹² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 156; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 8.14, 187-189. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3554.

offering pledges to share income derived from the copper mines in Kastamonu. Moreover, the son of İsfendiyar also promised his own son as a hostage to the Ottoman court.⁷⁹³

3.4 Along the borders: Relations between the *tekvurs* and the Ottomans

The Byzantine-Ottoman frontier encountered various forms of diplomatic contact. In these areas, reciprocal relations were occasionally developed based on mutual provisional interests and convivial terms. As the contemporary narratives shedding light on the early Ottoman history, such as Aşıkpaşazade, have revealed, certain individuals seem to have carried prominent roles in establishing these connections between the Ottoman emirate and local administrators (i.e. *tekvurs*) of the Byzantine Empire. Köse Mihal was one such figure. According to the testimony of Aşıkpaşazade, as an envoy of the *tekvur* of Belokome (Bilecik), Köse Mihal was sent as an envoy to Osman. The embassy aimed to return to Osman's gesture of sending the *tekvur* a herd of sheep for the wedding ceremony between him and the daughter of another *tekvur* of a Byzantine settlement, Yar-hisar (or Köprühisar). The *tekvur* of Belokome reciprocated Osman's gifts by presenting him with a great deal of gold and silver items (i.e. *altun ve gümüş avadanlık*) by the hands of Mihal. This constitutes part of a series of Mihal's visits delivering the messages between Osman and the *tekvur*. During his mission, besides announcing the invitation by the *tekvur* to the organization, Mihal exposed the secret plan of the *tekvurs* about Osman. A succeeding embassy was intended to decide on the date of Osman's arrival. When the same envoy brought the news and informed Osman of the place and date

⁷⁹³ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 23; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 5.35, 407.

proposed, the latter offered a change of the place.⁷⁹⁴ His request was accepted by the host and accordingly the event took place at Çakır Pınarı.⁷⁹⁵

Later on, Köse Mihal appears as an Ottoman envoy that he was once sent to the tekfur of Prousa to ask for the surrender of the city to Orhan. The narrative of Aşıkpaşazade for this incident presents a somewhat enigmatic story. Possibly having a Byzantine background, Köse Mihal eventually became a strong candidate in the sphere of regional diplomacy because he was more prone to the culture in contact and in all probability was able to conduct diplomatic communications in Greek. Modern historians raised some doubts on the constructed nature of Köse Mihal's identity. It has been emphasized that the story of Köse Mihal's accomplishments aimed to glorify the past of the family named after him, Mihaloğulları. Colin Imber argues that most of the narrative about Köse Mihal was constructed by Aşıkpaşazade and does not correspond to an actual historical figure. Imber further states that Köse Mihal's portrait could have been formed according to the biases of the ghazis in the European lands to emphasize their leader's importance. Approaching the narratives of the myth behind the historical tradition of the early Ottoman state with a very critical and doubtful eye, Imber tries to reveal the discrepancies in the Ottoman canon and detect apocryphal parts in the early Ottoman literary sources, which derived mainly from an earlier source of the 1420s. Furthermore, he makes similar arguments concerning the first Ottoman ruler. The legendary aspect of Osman embodied some interpolation, of which examples can be found in Aşıkpaşazade's depiction of him as being a nomad rather than a farmer-villager, in contrast to

⁷⁹⁴ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 14-16; ed. Atsız, bâbs 11 and 12, 100-102; Neşrî, vol. I, 96-98.

⁷⁹⁵ Obviously, since such settlements with Turkish names are not mentioned in Byzantine sources, it is hard to define their exact locations. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 16; Neşrî, vol. I, 100.

various non-Ottoman sources such as *Historia Turchesca* and Konstantin Mihailovic's memoirs, whose sources, for Imber, seem more plausible.⁷⁹⁶

On the other hand, Ottoman sources confirm the hostile attitudes and even collaborations of several local Byzantine administrators against Osman. In this context, Osman's military approach can partly be considered offensive because he tried to maintain a certain level of hegemony over some Byzantine towns, some of which he took over by concluding settlements while some others did not resist the Ottoman attacks.⁷⁹⁷

In Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle, there is always a message that emphasizes the corrupt Byzantine administration in Bithynia, where, according to the author, the inhabitants had suffered greatly under the Byzantine control and showed enthusiasm for the "justice" and "wealth" that the Ottomans were said to have brought about.⁷⁹⁸ By making this argument, Aşıkpaşazade tries to explain some of the reasons for the fall of Byzantine towns and countryside to the Ottomans.

On the issue of chronology in the Ottoman narratives, one must note a common deficiency that they present conquests and events as if they took place in a short term in the year 699 A.H./1299-1300. The lack of chronological details in the Ottoman sources, especially for the early fourteenth century, means that historians must rely upon Byzantine sources, which place these events in a longer term and with firm chronology.⁷⁹⁹ However, on the topic of local encounters with the Ottomans, Byzantine sources do not provide sufficient evidence. Despite their

⁷⁹⁶ Imber, "Canon and apocrypha in early Ottoman history," 117-137; Imber, "The legend of the Osman Gazi," 63-75. See also Foss, *The beginnings of the Ottoman Empire*.

⁷⁹⁷ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 23-25; ed. Atsız, bâb 20, 107-108.

⁷⁹⁸ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 43; ed. Atsız, bâb 34, 120.

⁷⁹⁹ Taeschner, "Anatolische Forschungen," 102, f.n. 1; Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman prehistory*, 83.

imperfections, Ottoman sources present ample incidents of Ottomans communicating with local power holders or local representatives of the Byzantine authority. The vacuum of central authority appears to be one of the main reasons for such circumstances. The general concentration of Byzantine local contacts with the Ottoman rulers coincides with the early decades of the Ottoman state.



CHAPTER 4

EMBASSIES

4.1 Introduction

Dealing primarily with the embassies in the broadest sense, regardless of their size or prominence, this chapter aims to synthesize all the evidence to reveal a general picture of Byzantine diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. Embassies were one of the three main methods of diplomacy in Byzantium.⁸⁰⁰ In this chapter, I analyze different procedures observed in the embassies to enumerate their characteristics. This section discusses characteristics of embassies such as the number of personnel employed, their reasons for existence, and problems of security that they encountered. This chapter aims to sift the descriptions of historical narratives to help us reconstruct the following topics: reception of embassies at both courts, diplomatic correspondence, audience, accommodation, duration, expenses, and so on. Language is also investigated in order to better understand its usage and role in diplomatic conversation. Moreover, to comprehend how diplomacy was practiced, the oaths are discussed in connection with their role in diplomatic communications by providing comparable data from both Byzantine and Ottoman sources. Oaths are frequently referred to as the binding component of a diplomatic contract and a tool for legitimization of the deeds of rulers, or used as a sign for breach by the authors. Finally, this chapter emphasizes the use of gifts in diplomacy, the connotations and place of gift-giving in diplomatic reception, as well as gifts' possible meanings in

⁸⁰⁰ Obolensky, "The principles and methods of Byzantine diplomacy," 45-61; Oikonomides, "Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 1204-1453: Means and ends," 73-88; Kazhdan, "The notion of Byzantine diplomacy," 3-21.

order to -if possible- gather information on cultural transactions that occurred as a result of these occasions.

Studying the embassies in the context of political relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state requires simultaneous consideration of rulers on each side and their dispositions for the time of their individual reigns. This approach may provide the necessary details to see the dynamics of ambassadorial diplomacy in both directions and therefore help reconstruct Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications to the greatest extent possible.

The permanent political confrontation between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state seems to have resulted in a high frequency of diplomatic contacts. Yet, in terms of communication between the two polities, documents seem to reveal a slightly contrary situation. In other words, there is the possibility that available references to diplomatic contacts may represent a distorted picture. Presuming that not every contact found its way into the narratives, it could be arguable that the diplomatic communications might have been more than the cases referred to in extant sources. The potential of these sources, nevertheless, has yet to be fully exploited to find answers to our questions.

The contents of the diplomatic meetings and the underlying motivations, the topics that were raised in these meetings, and finally physical components and processes in each diplomatic mission must be investigated in order to produce quantitative data. Providing answers to these queries may lead us to comprehend the *modus operandi* in Byzantine diplomacy and to reveal the overall Byzantine diplomatic tactics with regard to the Ottomans, and vice versa. In the final analysis, it will allow us to contribute to our understanding of Byzantine foreign policy toward the Ottomans.

As a widespread scholarly trend in the field of history of diplomacy, historians tend to find explanations for similar themes such as the structure of embassies, titles, ranks, names and numbers of individuals entrusted, the issues regarding location, route and duration of the mission, reception of embassies or ceremonies in connection with diplomatic occasions. The following section offers an attempt to understand the reception of embassies through some issues that almost uniformly appear in contemporary sources as well as through the lenses of the experiences of their agents.

Normally, an envoy visits a hosting court in order to deliver the message of his master. Then, the response was carried back to the sender in two ways. It was conveyed either by the envoy(s) who delivered the message of the visiting polity and/or by the envoy(s) of the hosting party accompanying the visiting envoy(s), departing on their own right after the initial visit or sometime later. This common process could sometimes be interrupted, since responses could well be discussed and evaluated in a certain duration of time to be sent by another embassy of the hosting party. There were indeed further occasions when this sequence could sometimes be broken.

Envoys visiting the Byzantine court had the chance to contact the emperor in three different forms: occasions for political negotiations that the duty of the embassy required, participation in banquets, and incidental or informal contacts.⁸⁰¹ We will look at each of these occasions in the ensuing parts. When envoys reached their destinations, they were usually welcomed by responsible high officials. Very seldom were the rulers themselves personally receiving the envoys.

⁸⁰¹ Tinnefeld, "Ceremonies for foreign ambassadors at the court of Byzantium and their political background," 202-207.

Similar to every other medieval state, the Byzantine Empire conducted diplomatic communications either in written or oral forms or quite often both. There were also likely many instances of so-called “closed-door diplomacy,” which manifested as private interviews or the passing along of secret information. Yet what historians are left with today is largely written communications, either usually embedded in different genres of literary works or in personal testimonies of envoys themselves, to a lesser extent.

The conditions of receiving envoys and the execution of diplomatic negotiations understandably show uniformity, because if the hosting state would welcome the visiting envoy(s) warmly, the envoys would not suffer from any problems, which eventually affected the course of negotiations positively. Nevertheless, those two factors could differ and thus lead to unexpected consequences depending on the prevailing political atmosphere and historical context that the parties of negotiations engaged in.

Envoys could request a meeting with rulers at any time, however, their request depended on who was asking for it and the reason behind it. Throughout the history of the diplomatic contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state, there were occasions in which rulers on both sides appeared in person in diplomatic settings. These could either take place between rulers, or between rulers and envoys.

The urgent circumstances occasionally played a role in rulers’ excuses or reasons for the postponement of meetings. In 1420-1, once Demetrios Laskaris Leontares was entrusted with an embassy to the Ottoman court, he could not find a way, despite his recurring efforts, to meet with Mehmed I, due to the sickness of the

Ottoman sultan, who made Leontares wait for a couple of days in a lodge. He was never accepted to see the sultan, who eventually died after a few days.⁸⁰²

Except for the fact that the reliability of existing sources of information was a central question, envoys were indeed part of an extensive network of news connecting distant countries by bringing the recent important developments from their own countries. In other words, they functioned as transmitters of latest reports and intelligence. In general, there were also other groups in medieval society who fulfilled that function across regions such as merchants or bishops traveling to various destinations and collecting the latest information. Clavijo mentions that the news of the commencement of the Ottoman civil war following the capture of Bayazid by Timur reached him during Clavijo's journey towards Constantinople. Nevertheless, sovereigns receiving envoys from abroad were possibly more reliant on the information that was carried by these representatives rather than the one conveyed by a traveler.⁸⁰³

Members of an embassy were to collect information about the culture and political information concerning the lands that they traveled through. Furthermore, they could also be accompanied by officials of the receiving side, who provided the necessary equipments and service for their stay before they arrived at the final destination. The envoys were also escorted on their return voyage. This is well-attested, as it was the case in the embassy comprised of the two Byzantine envoys, George Sphrantzes and Markos Palaiologos Iagaris visiting the court of Murad II. Although he was together with Markos at the beginning of the mission, Sphrantzes

⁸⁰² Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.1, 14.

⁸⁰³ Drocourt, "Passing on political information between major powers: The key role of ambassadors between Byzantium and some of its neighbours," 41.

writes that on his way back home he departed without his colleague yet with the accompaniment of a noble Turkish official (ἀπὴρα ἀρχοντόσκληρον).⁸⁰⁴

An envoy visiting a court could be sent back to his country with an envoy of the hosting party. A certain Demetrios Aga (PLP 5260), an envoy of the Genoese *podestà* of New Phocaea Giovanni Adorno, visited Murad II's court. On his return voyage, he was accompanied by an Ottoman envoy, Hatib, who carried the message of the Ottoman ruler together with fifty thousand gold coins, the amount required for the transportation of the Ottoman troops that were to be provided by Adorno over the Gallipoli strait.⁸⁰⁵ This form of conveying a response is also mentioned in the Ottoman chronicles. Aşıkpaşazade uses the phrase “elçinin yanına elçi koymak” (inserting an envoy along with an envoy) speaking about a post-1453 event in which the envoy of the Wallachian ruler visited Istanbul. When he finished his duties, the Wallachian envoy was sent back to his country in accompaniment of an Ottoman envoy.⁸⁰⁶

4.2 Characteristics of embassies

4.2.1 Reasons for embassies

The reasons for embassies varied. If investigated in terms of the motivations lying beneath the composition of embassies, some major themes can be observed as follows: congratulation of a new ruler,⁸⁰⁷ which actually went hand in hand with

⁸⁰⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.5, 66.

⁸⁰⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.8, 209-211. For Aşıkpaşazade's mention of Hatib, see Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 99-100; ed. Atsız, bâb 87, 159-160.

⁸⁰⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 161-162; ed. Atsız, bâb 137, 209.

⁸⁰⁷ In the Ottoman sources, this reason appears with a particular terminology: “tahtı kutlamak/kutlulamak” (to congratulate the enthronement). It can be observed in both ways, that is, a ruler could send envoys to inform the change of ruler in his own country. This was the case when Mehmed I sent envoys to the neighboring leaders around including the emperor in Constantinople after he came to the throne. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 83-84; ed. Atsız, bâb 70, 147-148. In another

presenting condolences if the previous ruler died; renewal of treaties and/or composing new ones; further embassies as follow up of previous ones; delivery of tributes via envoys;⁸⁰⁸ formations of marriage alliances; particular requests upon military advancement, a siege of a fortress, or asking for military or logistic support; solicitations for military help or an attempt to form allies for commercial or political interests; to come to an agreement or make a truce; demanding hostages or envoys; exchanges of prisoners of war; and so on.

To begin with, among the reasons for diplomatic visits was the change of rulers. When Murad ascended to the throne, he delivered the message of his father's death and the beginning of his reign through his envoys. The Byzantine Empire was also approached. Doukas underlines the usual aspect of the phenomenon that the envoys "carried out the custom among new rulers and suzerains and renewed past pledges of peace."⁸⁰⁹ Doukas repeats this information in another place in his narrative by adding the polities that dispatched their representatives to respond to the announcement of the new ruler. Murad was visited by envoys from everywhere, including the despot of Serbia and the voivode of Vlachia (ἔρχονται οὖν ἀποκρισιάριοι παντόθεν προσαγορεύοντες αὐτῷ τὰ τῆς ἡγεμονίας εισόδια) after the new sultan sent *akıncıs* (στέλλει ... ἀκιντζίδας) to Vlachia and Serbia announcing the beginning of his reign (δεικνύων τὴν ἀνάρρησιν αὐτοῦ).⁸¹⁰

As a common practice, embassies were sent to renew peace or treaties. At that point, the validity of treaties comes to the fore. Paul Lemerle writes that the Turkish

case, the Serbian ruler dispatched an envoy with too many gifts to Bayezid upon the latter's enthronement. See Neşrî, vol. I, 330-332.

⁸⁰⁸ It was the case when the beg of Eflak paid his tribute to Mehmed I. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 88-89; ed. Atsız, bâb 75, 151-152.

⁸⁰⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.3, 171: "πίστεις ἀνανεοῦντες εἰρηνικὰς, ὡς ἔθος τοῖς ἀρχηγοῖς καὶ ἡγεμόσι." The translation belongs to Magoulías. See Doukas, trans. Magoulías, 131-132.

⁸¹⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.10, 239.

emirs thought that treaties retained validity as long as the emperor was alive.

Following the emperor's death, they became no longer valid.⁸¹¹ As an example of dissolving a treaty after the death of one party, Krales Stephanos, the ruler of the Triballi, dissolved his treaty with the Byzantine emperor.⁸¹²

4.2.2 Number of individuals entrusted

Embassies consisted of varying numbers of attendants depending on several factors, such as the priority of topics to be discussed or contents that required an embassy, the political attitudes, foreign policy in general, or even financial circumstances at the time of diplomatic missions. There is also a factor in the sources' selection that needs to be kept in mind because in several cases sources refer to the embassies and mention them just in passing without sufficient data. The embassies or envoys are often referred to in either singular or plural. For cases where no information on the size or members of the embassies is given, it is difficult to assume the number of envoys entrusted, because they are simply described as "embassy." Based merely on the available descriptions, on the other hand, as an overall assessment of the number of entrusted diplomats in missions, the embassies generally tend to be composed of more than one individual. Some inconsistencies may occur in several instances, such as when a source refers to a particular embassy composed of a single envoy, while another source claims to be the contrary. In such cases, I tend to include in my assessment the ones with more than a single member.

Sources mostly speak of the envoys; however, it must be noted that each embassy was not exclusively composed of its envoys. Besides the individuals

⁸¹¹ Lemerle, *L'émirat d'Aydin, Byzance et l'Occident*, 148, n. 2.

⁸¹² Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 79.

entrusted with the task of an envoy, there were other people trained in bureaucracy, assisting the former as professionals (e.g. as a secretary), since a great deal of business such as correspondence and the physical and daily requirements of the mission and its members could make the entire diplomatic visit very busy. Other than the bureaucratic cadre, servants might have participated in the embassies to meet logistical needs. Unfortunately, the personnel entrusted with minor tasks other than the envoys are never identified by their names in our sources. Inferior in responsibility, these officials conducted different tasks, such as guarding the members of embassies or working as assistants. As Stavroula Andriopoulou's study covering the period between 1354 and 1453 has shown, more than half of the documented embassies, which we know the names of the envoys, consisted of a single envoy. Most of them were composed of either one envoy or two envoys. She sets the statistical framework in order to better understand and evaluate the overall picture, which raises the question of whether there was a relationship between the size of embassies and the significance attributed to missions. Andriopoulou concludes with the convincing argument that larger embassies embodied envoys with negotiating powers, possibly because of the workload that was required. In addition, the overwhelming number of overall embassies that consisted of more than one individual had ecclesiastical purposes and were directed to the papacy or to the Councils that took place at Constance and Basel.⁸¹³

The content and addressee of diplomatic missions determine the members of embassies. The Byzantine embassies, which were dispatched to the West to negotiate

⁸¹³ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 104-105. Andriopoulou analyzes the size of embassies which led by the emperors. Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 109-113.

over ecclesiastical issues, did not necessarily include individuals from ecclesiastical circles.⁸¹⁴ It has been shown that the prevalence of churchmen in diplomatic missions differed depending on who was reigning. For example, while Manuel II Palaiologos apparently did not entrust any members of the clergy in diplomatic visits to the West, sources refer to a proliferation of ecclesiastical envoys in missions related to the Church Union under other Palaiologan emperors.⁸¹⁵

The Byzantine embassy consisting of three distinguishing individuals for a treaty with the Ottomans, possibly concluded during their stay in Adrianople in February 1424, constitutes a prominent example of multiple individuals entrusted for a single mission. Loukas Notaras was the chief negotiator and the leader of the team. He was given the authority to discuss matters in lieu of the emperor, possibly due to his talent in negotiations, as Sphrantzes pointed out in his account. The other two members of the embassy, Sphrantzes himself and Manuel Melakhrenos were also given certain tasks in the mission. While the author attended the embassy with secretarial duties, Manuel Melakhrenos was there probably to assist the chief negotiator, since he was well-versed in the topic and diplomatic processes in this case.⁸¹⁶

Sphrantzes's mission to Georgia and Trebizond in late 1449 is indicative of just how large an entourage (diplomatic personnel accompanied the envoy(s) in the visit) in an embassy could be. The embassy consisted of Sphrantzes himself and a great and impressive entourage, which included "young nobles, soldiers, celibate

⁸¹⁴ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 105-106, 123.

⁸¹⁵ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 106, 126-128.

⁸¹⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.

priests, singers, physicians, and musicians with their instruments” that the Georgians were ready to hear.⁸¹⁷

In terms of the division of responsibilities, there were distinctions between envoys. As described in the primary sources, there were different categorizations among the members of an embassy. Based on the fact that individuals were appointed with separate tasks, in Byzantine embassies there could be orators, chief envoys, interpreters, officials entrusted with delivering written or oral messages, or members with logistical or guarding functions. This outlook necessitates a certain hierarchy among the members.

Most often, it is not easy to obtain information on the hierarchy of individuals entrusted in a single embassy. Only a few cases were recorded thoroughly enough that we can comprehend the hierarchy clearly. First of all, in order to evaluate an embassy in that manner, it must include more than a single member. The majority of identifiable missions either bear no names and no numbers of envoys, but rather, convey only elusive descriptions or do not allow reconstruction of the hierarchy among the members of an embassy because the duties or ranks of envoys are not provided. As far as the Byzantine envoys are concerned, a total of eight cases with more than one identifiable individual appear in sources, whereas twelve cases include a single name. In comparison to the Byzantine embassies to the Ottoman court, the ones that visited the Western courts boasted more crowded staffs.

The members of embassies, including the entourage of envoys, could reach higher numbers in the following centuries in Europe. For the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the embassies visiting Rome could be composed of twelve

⁸¹⁷ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 30.1, 102. The translation belongs to Philippides. See Sphrantzes, trans. Philippides, 58.

servants on average, and this number occasionally could increase even higher.⁸¹⁸

These large parties could often include the family members of envoys. In the later resident missions, Byzantine ambassadors could be accompanied by their families and household members as well; but as far as the Byzantine and Ottoman ambassadors are concerned, there is not sufficient historical data on this point.

Another dimension that affected the number of individuals entrusted in diplomatic missions appears a basic one. Given the frequent ambassadorial traffic between several courts, the cost for employing diplomats abroad must have restricted the governments at both sides to keep the size of embassies small and their frequency as low as possible. Since permanent diplomats had not yet emerged as a distinct phenomenon, leaders may have reconsidered their requirements and avoided sending out an embassy if possible.

4.2.3 Problems of security

Envoys often faced security concerns. There was always a probability that they could experience serious troubles that could threaten their lives during voyages, from the very beginning until their final arrival in their home country. The problems may be divided into two main categories: threats that caused the envoys to suffer en route, and the threats that they were exposed to at their destinations.

Sources reveal instances of envoys representing different polities and yet travelling together possibly due to security and logistic reasons. Continuous warfare in Anatolia and the Aegean basin could easily make diplomatic journeys a disaster. This might have been the case when the Spanish envoy Clavijo was conducting his

⁸¹⁸ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The rise of the resident ambassador*, 93-94.

diplomatic journey to Timur's court in Samarqand. His thorough descriptions of the events in his long journey illustrate many aspects of a diplomatic mission. On his return journey, he mentions a joined company, which included an envoy from Ayyubid Egypt, envoys from some cities of Western Asia Minor such as Miletos, and some others sent from the Turkish territories as well.⁸¹⁹ These representatives of various parties were travelling in company probably to reduce the possibility of being attacked by pirates.

Some envoys' harrowing experiences have been narrated in the primary sources. One can find illuminating information on this aspect of diplomatic missions. It must have been regarded as a crucial requirement that the envoys carried, apart from the word of their principals to be transmitted orally or in a written form, precious gifts or currency during their journeys. When Gregory Palamas was captured by the Ottoman pirates and brought to Prousa, it became urgent action Kantakouzenos to end his captivity. Thus, sending an embassy to Orhan asking him to release the archbishop Palamas, the emperor entrusted money to the envoys to be presented to the Ottoman ruler.⁸²⁰

The conditions along the route of an embassy directly influenced the fulfillment of the purpose and the safe return. Sometimes, conditions were less adverse. In early 1326, a group of envoys, including historian Gregoras and a son of Theodore Metochites, travelled from Constantinople to the court of the Serbian king Stefan Uroš III Dečanski at Skopje in order to bring Eirene, who was the daughter of Theodore Metochites and the widow of John Palaiologos, upon her husband's death.

⁸¹⁹ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, trans. Le Strange, 301.

⁸²⁰ "...λάθρα σὺν πολλῇ τῇ σπουδῇ πεπομφὼς Ὑρκανῷ τῷ γαμβρῷ καὶ βαρβάρῳ χρήματα πρὸς Βιθυνίαν τὴν ἐκείνου δεξιάν καὶ γνώμην ἱκανῶς ἔχοντα ἐμπιπλᾶν ..." Gregoras, vol. III, 252.

According to the testimony of Gregoras, the embassy “experienced quite a few dangers,” since a rumor of a Scythian (i.e. Mongol) invasion in the region created a secure environment because the inhabitants of the towns on their way took shelter in fortresses, which obviously reduced the possibility of bandit attacks. Gregoras mentions that the members of the embassy stayed at the houses that had been left empty (τοὺς οἴκους ἐρήμους) by the fleeing owners. In their journey, Gregoras and the other envoys in the embassy suffered from harsh conditions created by the trees and branches on their way around the Strymon Valley. The members of the embassy were worn out, and their shoes and clothes were in tatters. In such circumstances, they looked for a suitable place to lodge themselves for the night; yet, in a moonless night that made Gregoras afraid, they came across a group of men. These men appeared around the envoys and described them the way to reach a village nearby, where the latter would be able to spend the night.⁸²¹

Be that as it represents a relatively small problem that could take place on journeys of envoys, a couple of severe examples demonstrate the danger that envoys could encounter in their missions. In the early 1350s, Orhan began to develop a multidimensional policy towards both John VI Kantakouzenos and the Serbian king Stefan Dušan. His aim was possibly to benefit the circumstances by approaching them separately. As Gregoras marks, Orhan intended to trigger a fight between the Byzantines on the one hand and the Serbians and the Genoese on the other. Meanwhile, the tension between the Venetians and the Genoese was rising. The empire of John VI Kantakouzenos found itself right in the middle of this antagonism. Gregoras writes that John VI Kantakouzenos sent envoys to Orhan and demanded

⁸²¹ Gregoras, vol. I, 374-383; Belke, “Roads and travel in Macedonia and Thrace in the middle and late Byzantine period,” 83-84.

him not to give support to the Genoese (1351-1352).⁸²² Orhan seems to have declined his father-in-law's request. For Gregoras, as mentioned above, it was Orhan's policy of taking advantage of tensions between Byzantium and its enemies.⁸²³ Given the current circumstances unfavorable to the Byzantine Empire, Orhan reacted positively to the offer made by Stefan Dušan, who sent an embassy to the Ottoman ruler and asked for the latter's approval of a marriage alliance between him and Orhan. The proposed marriage was between Dušan's daughter and one of Orhan's sons. Upon receiving the embassy with joy, Orhan accepted the proposal and sent the Serbian envoys back with many gifts. Yet the negotiations did not go ahead, as far as the sources can tell. The embassy loaded with plenty of gifts (δῶρων συγχῶν) was ambushed by the son of Nikephoros II Doukas Angelos, John VI's son-in-law, like a "highwayman," as Gregoras calls him. This incident ended in capturing all the members present in the embassy, killing some of the envoys and taking captive the others (τῶν δὲ πρέσβεων οὓς μὲν ἀπέκτεινεν ἐξ ἐφόδου, οὓς δ' ἐζώγησε).⁸²⁴ Gregoras complains about the outcome of this event because it attracted Orhan's anger. Accordingly, intimidating the Byzantine emperor with an assault against Constantinople, the Ottoman ruler tracked down everything the envoys lost in this terrible ambush as well as many more.⁸²⁵ In Autumn 1352, Orhan was later approached once again by John VI Kantakouzenos not to provide support to the Genoese. Renewing his oaths more strongly he gave further promises and sent other envoys to Orhan.⁸²⁶

⁸²² “ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς πέπυας ἡξίου τὸν ἡγεμόνα Βιθυνίας καὶ γαμβρὸν Ὑρκανὸν μὴ βοηθεῖν Γεννοῖταις.” Gregoras, vol. III, 99. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2987.

⁸²³ Gregoras, vol. III, 99.

⁸²⁴ Gregoras, vol. III, 100.

⁸²⁵ Gregoras, vol. III, 99-100, 116-118.

⁸²⁶ Gregoras, vol. III, 151. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2998.

Not only the land routes but also the itineraries requiring seafaring could become unsafe. In his effort to marry his son Michael IX to a noble woman and secure his power against the growing threat coming from the Turks and the Mamluks, the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos sent an embassy, which was entrusted to negotiate a marriage alliance and to find a bride for his son from Cyprus or Lesser Armenia. The first embassy ordered for that purpose included Athanasios, the patriarch of Alexandria. Due to an assault by pirates en route, the mission was not accomplished.⁸²⁷ The difficulty of exchanging embassies through hostile territories brought problems of security in the end.

Another example illustrating the threat of death that envoys faced on their ways to their destinations becomes from Sphrantzes's narrative. He explains the story of a mission to Georgia and Trebizond to arrange a marriage for Constantine XI. Sphrantzes was entrusted to that embassy. The author speaks of communication through some men (μετὰ ἀνθρώπων) who were entrusted to convey messages of Sphrantzes at the foreign court and bring the emperor's responses. In one instance, Sphrantzes connects the interruption in this traffic of messengers to a shipwreck. The boat, wrecked near Amisos (present-day Samsun), was carrying the emperor's messengers, who consequently perished in the shipwreck.⁸²⁸

The travel of envoys could become more tiresome than expected. On the return voyage of the embassy entrusted with the return of Eirene Palaiologos from Skopje, not all the members of the embassy followed the same route. Gregoras, as he talks about in his *Roman History*, was a member of that mission and took an

⁸²⁷ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. III, 229-231; Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, 55-56.

⁸²⁸ “ἐρχόμενοι περὶ τὴν Ἀμισὸν ἐναυάγησαν.” Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 30.2, 104. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3525.

alternative road due to his hurry (ὄσον τάχος) to Constantinople; however, it turned out to be “a bumpy road and arduous journey,” although he was given a Serbian guide who supposedly knew the road.⁸²⁹ Another example would be from Manuel II Palaiologos’s journey to the West. The emperor is said to have experienced tiredness, difficult circumstances, storms, and problems that the emperor had to cope with.⁸³⁰

Sources give information on how and under which conditions diplomatic communications took place. Some reservations regarding the security of the Ottoman rulers triggered a reconsideration of the conventional methods of receiving foreign envoys in the Ottoman court. After narrating the event in which a Serbian soldier killed Sultan Murad I immediately after the battle of Kosovo in 1389, the author of the anonymous Greek Chronicle (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111) relates how this incident affected the change in reception of foreign envoys in the Ottoman state: “After this incident, the Turks adopted a law requiring all envoys about to approach the sultan in order to pay their respects to have their arms held by the sultan’s attendants; only in this position may they kiss his hand.”⁸³¹ If we take that information for granted, the Ottomans seem to have had no restrictions beforehand in accepting the envoys physically appearing in front of their sovereigns. It may also indicate that the members of foreign embassies could present their respects directly to the Ottoman sultan at least until that decisive moment.

In the Byzantine court, on the other hand, security precautions had long been taken to prevent any suspicious individuals or murder attempts against the emperors. Ibn Battuta’s explicit depiction of the security at the Byzantine court indicates the

⁸²⁹ Gregoras, vol. I, 383; Gregoras, *Nicephori Gregorae epistolae*, ed. Leone, vol. II, 115-124; Belke, “Roads and travel in Macedonia and Thrace in the middle and late Byzantine period,” 83-84.

⁸³⁰ Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonike, ed. Balfour, III-2, 45-46.

⁸³¹ Philippides (trans.), *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman sultans 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*, 21.

common practice in the 1330s. According to his descriptions, the visitors were searched to determine whether they carried something dangerous or potentially threatening before they were accepted to the emperor's presence.⁸³² The security measures were always considered important on occasions when emperors were supposed to meet foreign individuals for diplomatic purposes per se. Sphrantzes relates a witnessed story of a foreign letter carrier who happened to be sent in late 1424 by John VIII Palaiologos, who by then was in Hungary, to Manuel II in Constantinople. The historian portrays that man as not being a Greek speaker; he arrived in Constantinople by using the land route. Although he asked several times to see Manuel II to deliver the official letter (μετὰ πιπτακίου ὑφειλτοῦ) informing John's approaching departure for the city, being present there Sphrantzes, who was present at that occasion and was possibly holding a prominent position at the court unknown to us, approached the envoy's request with suspicion and wondered at how such a man could be permitted to get in touch with Manuel, because the emperor was suffering an illness.⁸³³ The solution was brought by presenting this foreign representative of John to Sphrantzes himself, who talked to him and then revealed the content of the message to John's mother and wife. Sphrantzes, as he contends at the end, received some precious gifts from the imperial members both for himself and his wife-to-be, not necessarily for his role in redirecting the messenger, but most probably for the good news he conveyed about the coming of John.⁸³⁴

In 1422, when the Ottomans were smashing the walls of Constantinople, an eyewitness account of John Kananos reveals an interesting story of certain Byzantine

⁸³² Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 504-506.

⁸³³ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12 and 13, 24-28.

⁸³⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 13, 26-28; trans. Philippides, 29-30.

envoys who had been dispatched to the Ottomans earlier. As the source puts it, these envoys were brought in front of the walls chained in iron fetters. The source also mentions that the Ottoman ruler tortured them and put them in prison as a result of the alleged breach of words by the Byzantine emperor.⁸³⁵

As a last instance worth noting in this discussion, Laonikos Chalkokondyles transmits his father's experience as the envoy of the future emperor Constantine XI during the latter's rule in the Peloponnese. He narrates the event vividly. Having been shut in by Murad II during his embassy to the Ottoman ruler, George Chalkokondyles was kept in prison in Serres together with his servants (καθείρξας αὐτόν τε καὶ τοὺς θεράποντας), while Murad set off his march against Peloponnese. Probably alluding to the same story, Laonikos Chalkokondyles gives further details about this embassy. To be freed from the prison, Chalkokondyles's father offered the Ottoman ruler thirty thousand gold pieces. However, that was not enough to change Murad's mind. As Laonikos writes, he left his servants and was able to flee to Constantinople, where he embarked on a ship that would bring him back to the Peloponnese. Yet, he was caught by the ships of Nerio and found himself chained in front of Murad once again.⁸³⁶

In conclusion, travelling across borders for diplomatic purposes could give rise to many difficulties of variable severity. The success of embassies depended on the safe management of these tense situations, which could create troublesome circumstances for the members of these missions - members could even die on their

⁸³⁵ John Kananos, ed. Cuomo, 18. Cf. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22; Philippides, *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman sultans 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*, 47. On this embassy, see also Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 360; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3390; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 84.

⁸³⁶ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 94; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 6.51, 69.

journeys. On the other hand, many embassies and their members accomplished their goals by managing to survive risky journeys and conditions.

4.3 The *modus operandi* in embassies

4.3.1 Diplomatic correspondence

Conveyed by the envoys in their missions addressed mostly to rulers, diplomatic letters in the form of formal messages and instructions constitute the basis of each diplomatic visit.⁸³⁷ However, the extant evidence or references to diplomatic correspondence may lead scholars to incorrect or incomplete conclusions. It is necessary to examine this data as part of a whole, or rather, as one of several different methods for diplomatic contacts. Alexander Beihammer argues that the core of the art of diplomacy was “a matter of personal interaction, confidential talks, and oral communication,” because, as he reminds, the official imperial letters contain biased sentiments and therefore reflect a stereotypical structure.⁸³⁸

Following a preliminary stage in the first decades of the fourteenth century with a limited knowledge of the practical aspect of contacts, in the later part of the century both the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state seemed to have developed much broader correspondence. Observable in historical narratives in Greek and Ottoman Turkish, the references to written correspondence abound. Possibly every conflicting situation necessitated mutual correspondence. In the Ottoman parlance, the phrase “kağıdını yazmak/kağıdını göndermek” (writing one’s paper/sending one’s paper) corresponded to writing a letter in the form of a diplomatic message.⁸³⁹

⁸³⁷ Malamut, “La lettre diplomatique et l’ambassadeur à Byzance sous le règne d’Andronic II,” 148-149.

⁸³⁸ Beihammer, “Epistolography and diplomatics,” 204.

⁸³⁹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 62-64; 65-66; 74-80; ed. Atsız, bâb 57, 60, and 67; 133-134, 136-137, 141-146. For the use of the term “mektub,” see Neşrî, vol. I, 324.

In a state of continuous warfare in the region of Mesothynia in the 1320s, before the capture of Aydos fortress by the Ottomans, the commander of the fortress (i.e. tekvrur) sent a letter to the Ottoman troops besieging the fortress.⁸⁴⁰ Similarly, when Süleyman, the son of Bayezid, decided to organize a campaign against his brother Mehmed at Prousa, he consulted his begs who advised him to write a letter (“biti”) to the Byzantine emperor and send an envoy to Constantinople in order to request the handover of Isa Beg, another son of Bayezid. In response to that letter, the emperor reached an agreement with the Ottoman prince on certain points and handed over Isa Beg, who accompanied the envoy returning back to Süleyman’s presence.⁸⁴¹

Moreover, in his career as a diplomat and an official in the service of the Genoese Gattilusio family at Lesbos, Doukas himself composed letters (γραφὰς ... τὰς αἷς ἐγὼ γέγραφα) addressed to Murad on behalf of his master.⁸⁴²

One further example can be given from the Ottoman-Timurid contacts. When Timur’s envoy visited the court of Bayezid, he handed over his ‘paper’ (i.e. Timur’s letter enveloped) and presented gifts to the Ottoman ruler, who returned the letter and

⁸⁴⁰ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 32-34; ed. Atsız, bâb 25-26, 112-114.

⁸⁴¹ Neşri, vol. II, 431-437: “Vezirler ve beyler eyittiler: ‘Ey şâh-ı cihân, eyi dersiz amma, emir Allahındır, mülk Hakkındır. Her kime dilerse ol verir’ dediler ve dahi eyittiler ki, ‘Ey-Şâh eğerçi ol-kişi yaşta, kiçidir, velî devlette uludur. Her kişi ki anınla mukabil oldu, âhir ül-emr münhezim olup, sındı. Ve görmediniz mi? Timur gibi Han’ı ne veçhile aldayıp, kendüyi ele vermedi. Pes anın tedbiri budur ki, İstanbul tekvruruna mektup yazıp, elçi gönderevüz ki, İsa Bey karındaşınızı bize vere. Anı Sultan tarafına havale edevüz. Ola ki biri gidip, biri kala. Pes düşman bir kalıcak iş âsândır, anı ilden sürüp, gidericek il ve gün hep bizim olur. Yahut bazı ile, boya varırsa dahi, hele padişahlık bizim olup taht bizim olur’ dediler. Emir Süleyman dahi bunu maslahat görüp, İstanbul tekvruruna biti yazıp, adam viribidiler ki, İsa Bey’i bunda göndere, tekvrur mektubun mazmununu bilip, Emîr Süleyman’dan bazı nesne üzerine mukarrer edip, muâhede olunup, İsa Bey’i verdi. İsa Bey dahi elçiyle gelip, hemen tevakkuf etmeyip, Gelibolı’dan geçip tamamet-i Karasi vilâyetini aldı. Andan her nereye teveccüh ettiyse, il vilâyet mecmuu ita’at etmeyip eyittiler: ‘Evvel var kardaşınla, Sultan Mehmed birle bir yana ol. Andan devlet her hanginizin ise biz kamumuz, can ve baş yoluna komuşuz. Şimdi vilâyet gezmeden ne fayda olur. Ol vakit cemi’ memleket senin olur’ dediler. İsa Bey bu sözü be-gayet beğenip hemen ol aradan yürüdü. İl üzerine seyr ederek Beypazarı’na erişti.” See also Kastritsis, *The tales of Sultan Mehmed, son of Bayezid Khan [Ahvâl-i Sultân Mehemmed bin Bâyezîd Hân]*, 84 [OA 97a-97b].

⁸⁴² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.8, 211.

did not compliment the envoy. By yielding his response to the Timurid envoy, Bayezid dismissed him.⁸⁴³

Although no clear indications have proven an uninterrupted use of any single language in diplomatic communications, we may still try to reconstruct which languages were in use. Besides composing letters in the Greek language, the Byzantine chancery had a multi-lingual capacity, meaning its officials could produce a Latin copy of a Greek original letter.⁸⁴⁴ This obviously necessitated the employment of interpreters in the Byzantine chancery.

Letter carriers were entrusted with the delivery of the word of the Byzantine emperors to their Ottoman counterparts. Byzantine sources refer to the act of sending messages often by the verb “to send word (πέμπω λόγον),” which could either be oral or most probably accompanied by a written message, that is a letter. These descriptions are all possibly pointing to letters sent from one side to the other. Such instances in primary sources generally do not include any mention of envoys, but rather simply refer to messages delivered.⁸⁴⁵

Embassies were not necessarily sent to foreign addresses. Historical sources not only describe diplomacy between acting rulers, but sometimes deal with occasions in which pretenders to the sovereigns in both sides applied diplomatic means. This was at least a prevailing tendency in the Byzantine sources, which refer to embassies of that sort and the ones exchanged in internal matters or during civil

⁸⁴³ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 74-80; ed. Atsız, bâb 67, 141-146; Neşrî, vol. I, 344, where the author refers to Bayezid's response as “bir zarblı cevabnâme” (an enveloped response letter).

⁸⁴⁴ MM, vol. III, 119; Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*, 142.

⁸⁴⁵ See, for example, Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 76-77; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.27, 132: “ἡγγέλλετο τῷ Παιαζήτῃ” (the Byzantine emperor sending messages to Bayezid); or ed. Darkó, vol. I, 169-170; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 4.15, 296: “ἔπεμπε λόγους” (Mehmed sending words [to the leading Turks]).

wars with the same terms as they used for common embassies directed towards foreign courts.⁸⁴⁶ However, in order to make a proper analysis it is necessary to distinguish between these two types of embassies in late Byzantine practice, that is between the ones sent to foreign courts and the ones dispatched between parties inside the empire. The same is true for Ottoman historiography. This issue is occasionally relevant to the cases of envoys sent from a sultan for instance to his rival to the throne, as is the case in İsa Beg's envoy with a letter visited Emir Süleyman.⁸⁴⁷ The present thesis prioritizes the ones dispatched towards the foreign courts; yet, it calls out the incidences from among the embassies that can be considered as related to internal affairs of either the Byzantine Empire or the Ottoman state to further explore certain topics and come up with explanations.

In mutual conversations, envoys did not just read or express the written message. The imperial letter dated April 1432 and addressed to Saruca Beg, one of the viziers of Murad II, indicates that the Byzantine emperor assigned a certain Manuel Stachitzes to talk about the issues raised in the letter in a more detailed manner during the visit that the envoy made to the Ottoman vizier.⁸⁴⁸ The document therefore seems to have functioned as a pre-confirmation of the authority of the envoy before he explained the details of the visit. This piece of evidence also proves that correspondence occurred not only directly between the rulers but also between bureaucrats. It also indicates the institutionalization of diplomacy, because practical aspects of diplomatic communications were handled via responsible offices as this very example shows properly.

⁸⁴⁶ Suffice it to give the following examples: Gregoras refers to an embassy of Andronikos III to his grandfather Andronikos II with an expression “πρεσβεύται.” Gregoras, vol. I, Book 9.2, 397.

⁸⁴⁷ Kastritsis, *The tales of Sultan Mehmed, son of Bayezid Khan*, 62 (= *Rûhî Tarihi*, trans. Cengiz and Yücel, 415): “... karındaşı Sulţân’a ilçi gönderüb mektûb yazdı ki...”

⁸⁴⁸ See f.n. 766 above.

Our sources provide many examples of using letters in diplomatic communications. In May 1373, Murad I informed the emperor John V Palaiologos that he blinded his rebellious son, Savcı Çelebi. The Ottoman ruler was expecting from John V to do the same to his own son. The available sources speak about the event as the message was conveyed through letters (στέλλει ... γραφὰς).⁸⁴⁹ No mention of an embassy can be attested in this case. Another example is from the early fifteenth century. Following the battle of Ankara, a letter by Süleyman to Manuel II aimed to have Isa Beg back. Interestingly, this piece of evidence was exclusively conveyed by the Ottoman sources.⁸⁵⁰ Mutual correspondence between the two parties can commonly be observed. In October 1416, Leontarios composed a letter (ἀντέγραψε) responding what Mehmed I asked about the delivery of the pretender Mustafa and his companion Juneid.⁸⁵¹

Apart from the regular embassies, which consisted of envoys entrusted with negotiation over certain topics, there were ordinary messengers whose task did not require the formation of a fully equipped mission in contrast to the former category. The messengers, nevertheless, were expected to possess specific characteristics. Depending on the circumstances present at given moments, messages need to be delivered quickly. We hear sometimes that news of a victory, for instance, was conveyed by a messenger, who was himself trained in running and was able to carry the message to the capital from a provincial center. In cases of need for quick responses to a certain request, if we may say, or circumstances in which immediate

⁸⁴⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 12, 79-80.

⁸⁵⁰ Kastritsis, *The tales of Sultan Mehmed, son of Bayezid Khan*, 61-62 (= “Rûhî Tarihi,” trans. Cengiz and Yücel, 414-415).

⁸⁵¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.4, 157.

actions were required, messages and their deliverers might have needed to be organized and swift.⁸⁵²

4.3.2 Audience in diplomatic meetings

In the Palaiologan tradition, one may speak about an engagement of imperial members to ongoing diplomatic negotiations that took place at the court. As an intentional policy of the emperors to introduce young princes to foreign affairs, this approach, which is commonly called “the mirror of princes,” retained its role in late Byzantium at least in oral and visual form. Several cases from the Palaiologan era present clues to that tradition with an educational purpose to help the acquaintance of the candidate to the throne. For instance, Kantakouzenos asserts in his memoirs that Michael IX, the son of Andronikos II, was called by his father to attend a meeting with the envoys visiting the palace from abroad.⁸⁵³ As Gregoras narrates, Andronikos II Palaiologos began to favor his son, which even made the emperor’s other children jealous. Gregoras continues to describe the event that by giving a place to Michael IX in the palace, Andronikos II aimed to marry him to a princess from the neighboring polities, which therefore could work for the empire’s political interest.⁸⁵⁴ Kantakouzenos, furthermore, underlines the purpose of the emperor, who encouraged Michael IX to be by his side and acted in line with proposing the young prince as a legitimate heir to the throne. Kantakouzenos continues by recounting how the young prince was introduced into state affairs: “Michael was there to listen to negotiations with ambassadors from all over, to discussions with bishops and learned men, and to

⁸⁵² Gregoras, vol. III, 51.

⁸⁵³ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 9-10.

⁸⁵⁴ Gregoras, vol. I, 294-295.

other conversations, all of which gave the appearance that the listener was more intelligent than he actually was.”⁸⁵⁵ Andronikos II’s policy of introducing every dimension of state affair to his son closely shows an important aspect of developing a prince’s consciousness and ability in diplomatic negotiations before he became a sovereign.

Clavijo mentions the audience present in the private chamber of the emperor that consisted of some imperial members. According to his testimony, the wife and three sons of the emperor were present there.⁸⁵⁶ Pero Tafur also makes a parallel description of the place of the imperial members around the emperor during meetings with foreign visitors. This “intimate nature of the reception,” as Ruth Macrides calls it, indicates how the emperor’s family members found a place in the imperial protocol next to the sovereign.⁸⁵⁷ Perhaps it also indicates that the candidates for the Byzantine throne were given some form of educational training, in which they learned how to manage the diplomacy of the empire, reminiscent of a similar practice in earlier centuries.⁸⁵⁸

Encouraging young candidates for the throne in state affairs is a practice well-attested in Ottoman contexts as well. Cyriac of Ancona, who was present in the Ottoman court, recounted that Mehmed II participated in diplomatic negotiations with a Hungarian and a Serbian delegation that was convened by his father Murad II to conclude a treaty in Adrianople.⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁵ The quotations are from Trone. See Kantakouzenos, trans. Trone, 113.

⁸⁵⁶ Macrides, “Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople,” 229.

⁸⁵⁷ Macrides, “Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople,” 230.

⁸⁵⁸ For earlier instances like that of the visit of Olga of Kiev and her reception in Constantinople, see Featherstone, “ΔΙ’ΕΝΔΕΙΞΙΝ. Display in court ceremonial (De cerimoniis II, 15),” 75-112.

⁸⁵⁹ Cyriac of Ancona, *Later travels*, ed. and trans. Bodnar, 35; İnalcık, “Mehmed II,” 395.

Were the contents of embassies revealed to the public? When the envoys arrived in Constantinople, they were met by the public, who asked them some questions, especially about the contents and results of the Council.⁸⁶⁰ In some cases, one may hear practices of public speeches or announcements concerning a recent diplomatic visit to a certain country.

The first meeting of a Byzantine envoy, in which he relates the purpose of the visit in question, was always with an official responsible for receiving the embassy, frequently an Ottoman vizier. According to Ottoman etiquette, a foreign envoy was obliged first to discuss things with the viziers and then to see the sultan.⁸⁶¹ Doukas describes this routine as a custom.⁸⁶² A Byzantine embassy visited Mehmed II in late autumn of 1451 to discuss matters related to the annuity that the Byzantines regularly received from the Ottoman court for the expenses of Orhan, the nephew of Mehmed I. At that time, Mehmed II was in Prousa because he was engaging in a warfare possibly against Karaman. It was the grand vizier Çandarlı Halil Paşa (ὁ Χαλὶλ πάσιας), who received the Byzantine embassy at first and directly talked to the Byzantine envoys. After conversing with them for some time, the vizier transmitted their message to Mehmed, who then responded with rage. However, we are not provided with any information concerning who conveyed the words of Mehmed to the envoys. The reaction was probably first made orally and transmitted via Halil back to the envoys again.⁸⁶³ In the end, as Doukas relates, Mehmed II, in reckoning with the Karaman problem, adopted a softer attitude, approaching the Byzantine

⁸⁶⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 31.9, 269-271; trans. Magoulas, Book 31.9, 181.

⁸⁶¹ See Zachariadou, "The Ottomans, the Greek Orthodox Church and the perils of the Papacy," 23-24, f.n. 5.

⁸⁶² "λέγουσιν οὖν πρῶτον τὰ τῆς πρεσβείας μηνύματα τοῖς μεσάζουσιν." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.2, 293.

⁸⁶³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.1-3, 291-295.

envoys with flattering words and inviting them to his court in Adrianople to discuss the issue.⁸⁶⁴ It seems to have been a customary practice that the viziers at the Ottoman court welcomed a foreign mission coming not only from the Byzantine Empire but also from other neighboring polities. For example, a Wallachian envoy spoke to the vizier Halil (Χαλίλης) in the Ottoman court, who responded to the envoy on behalf of Murad II (φάμενος γνώμη τοῦ βασιλέως λέγειν).⁸⁶⁵

The question of who received the Ottoman envoys at the Byzantine court requires more detailed research; the primary sources reveal limited information on the topic. In the Byzantine court, some indications suggest the elimination of court intermediaries in diplomatic contacts and visits of foreigners. The Byzantine emperors on several occasions talked to the foreign envoys through intermediary individuals or officials in the preceding centuries. The situation seems to have changed by the fourteenth century. As narrated by Ibn Battuta, Andronikos III Palaiologos had a direct conversation with him during the traveler's visit to the Byzantine court. In more modest circumstances devoid of the mechanical devices of earlier centuries, there was only an interpreter in between but no court intermediary.⁸⁶⁶ This development proves changes in imperial protocol in the later centuries of the Byzantine Empire.

Once an envoy was received personally, he usually delivered a speech in which he asserted the purpose of his emissary. This speech began with a salutation,

⁸⁶⁴ “τοὺς δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως πρέσβεις ἀπεκρίνατο ὡς “ἤδη διασυντόμως ἐν Ἀδριανουπόλει μέλλομεν εἶναι, κάκεῖ ἐλθόντες ἅπαντα τὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ τῇ πόλει ἀναγκαῖα ἀναγγεῖλατέ μοι, καὶ ἐτοῖμος ἔχω τοῦ δοῦναι πᾶντὸ ζητούμενον.” σὺν τούτοις δὲ καὶ ἑτέροις μελιχίοις λόγοις κολακεύσας ἀπέλυσεν.” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.3, 295.

⁸⁶⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 134-135; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 7.50-51, 145-147.

⁸⁶⁶ See for comparison Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 200; Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 505-506.

as revealed in some historical narrations. It may also have been accompanied by presenting official letters that reflected the written and longer form of what was outspoken by the envoy. This brings us to the issue of conversations during diplomatic meetings. How did emperors/sultans, high officials, or envoys converse? Speeches or messages in diplomatic contexts deserve a particular mention here. Reminiscent of Herodotean style of narrating historical events, particularly in the texts of Kantakouzenos and Doukas, speeches of envoys or rulers in diplomatic communications occupy a significant place. They are sometimes intermingled with made-up stories or public rumors. Indicative of a prominent aspect of Byzantine-Ottoman contacts, these speeches give an idea about the hierarchical order or the issue of a symbolic father-son relationship between the rulers of both sides.⁸⁶⁷

On the other side of the coin, in various occasions, the Ottoman chronicles portray the feelings (e.g. “angry” or “content”) and attitudes of the Ottoman rulers during the diplomatic visits of the foreign envoys. In the case of a Serbian envoy, visiting Murad I, there were direct communications held between the two. However, the conversation made the Ottoman ruler so angry because the envoy stated that the Serbian forces were far superior to the Ottoman ones. Furthermore, the envoy, in lieu of his master, openly underestimated Murad’s power.⁸⁶⁸

4.3.3 Ways of receiving envoys in foreign courts

Against the background of a detailed survey regarding the questions of envoys’ agency, which is discussed in the “Methodology” section of this thesis, it is time to

⁸⁶⁷ One should look at the messages and hierarchical relations lying between the lines; the terms or epithets used to see if there is a pattern in these. For the letters composed by Doukas to Murad II, see Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.8, 211. For the diplomatic letters that were sometimes left unanswered, (e.g. Murad II did not give response to the Venetian envoys), see Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 29.4, 249.

⁸⁶⁸ See Neşrî, vol. I, 268-270.

reflect on how envoys were welcomed and treated in both courts. At the hosting court, the operations in embassies consisted of different stages as follows: reception, the conduct of negotiations, and finally dismissal. This last stage had been regarded as a conventional method valid in Byzantine diplomatic tradition, as finely revealed itself in one of Theodore II Laskaris's letters, which underlines the reception (εἰσδοχή) and the dismissal (ἀπεκβολή) of envoys.⁸⁶⁹ Doukas, on the other hand, uses the verb “ἀπολύω” (to let go, dismiss) when he narrates Mehmed II's dismissal of the Byzantine envoys, who visited the Ottoman court in late autumn 1451,⁸⁷⁰ or elsewhere when Mehmed I received a group of the most noble *archontes* of Manuel II, “he dismissed them in peace” (ἀπέλυσεν αὐτοὺς ἐν εἰρήνῃ).⁸⁷¹ A dismissal could sometimes be in a dishonorable way (ἀτίμως) as in Doukas's portrayal of Murad's behavior towards the members of the Byzantine embassy that visited him on June 8, 1422. Murad dismissed the envoys (πρέσβεις ἀπέπεμψεν), neither saw nor listened to them, and detained them for some days.⁸⁷²

Before focusing on detailed examples of how greetings took place in diplomatic settings, an encounter between Andronikos III Palaiologos and Orhan provides an informative example, because it may lead us to make observations in such a context. By the Summer of 1333, Orhan besieged Nicomedia, the major Byzantine city in Mesothynia. Upon hearing this news, as Kantakouzenos narrates, Andronikos III Palaiologos rushed to the place and arrived before the city as soon as

⁸⁶⁹ Theodore II Laskaris, *Epistulae*, 58.65-66 cited by Macrides, *George Akropolites the History*, 321-322, f.n. 3.

⁸⁷⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.3, 295: “Σὺν τούτοις δὲ καὶ ἑτέροις μελιχίοις λόγοις κολακεύσας ἀπέλυσεν.”

⁸⁷¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.1, 133. See also in the same page, Doukas describes how Mehmed I later dismissed the envoys from several polities in Europe: “ἀπέλυσε τοὺς πάντας ἐν εἰρήνῃ.” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.2, 133.

⁸⁷² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.2, 231.

possible.⁸⁷³ This encounter ended up with an exchange of embassies. Both rulers approached one another through envoys.⁸⁷⁴ Orhan was the first to send envoys and paid his respect to the emperor (πρῶτα μὲν ἡσπάζετο βασιλέα). This detail might have been a sign of the superiority of the Byzantine emperor over the Ottoman sultan or a common way of presenting greetings that ought to be directed primarily to a hosting leader. At least for this case, the second option seems more plausible, since after listening to Orhan's greetings, Andronikos III returned it in the same way (ὁ δ' ἀντησπάζετο).⁸⁷⁵ Both parties had considerations regarding security. While they tended to refrain from a battle, they still remained firm and showed their readiness for an armed conflict.⁸⁷⁶ This is also the first diplomatic contact between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state that Dölger was able to document in his monumental research.⁸⁷⁷ The exchange of embassies took place in a temperate atmosphere and ended with a conclusion of a treaty between the two parties. In addition, as revealed in a Byzantine short chronicle, an annual tribute of 12,000 hyperpyra was agreed to be paid by the Byzantine emperor to Orhan, which evidently assures that Andronikos III purchased Nicomedia by accepting a heavy tribute.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷³ Dölger offers a later date for the embassy: Autumn 1330. See Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2762. However, a Byzantine short chronicle gives its date as Summer of the year 1333. See, Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, 80, nr. 27. In an earlier part in Kantakouzenos's account, chronologically mislocated in the text, the story of Andronikos III's first visit to Nicomedia, which occurred in Summer 1331 and as a consequence of the emperor's attempt to come to the help of the city that was oppressed by the Turks, is narrated. See Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 459; Fatouros and Krischer (trans.), *Johannes Kantakouzenos. Geschichte*, vol. II, 208, f.n. 171.

⁸⁷⁴ “καὶ λόγων γενομένων περὶ σπονδῶν διὰ τῶν πρέσβων, (οὐ γὰρ αὐτοὶ συνῆλθόν γε ἀλλήλοις)” Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 447. See Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 221.

⁸⁷⁵ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 479-495.

⁸⁷⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 447.

⁸⁷⁷ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2762.

⁸⁷⁸ This suggests that behind the mild approach to the Ottomans, there might have been John VI Kantakouzenos himself, who in his own account does not mention what the short chronicle brought as evidence of “humiliating” conditions for the Byzantines. Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 170.

In order to give a historical evolution of the topic of reception of envoys, we need to look at the earlier practices. In earlier centuries, Byzantine court asserted a certain hierarchy of envoys in the protocol. Foreign envoys held seats according to the ranks of their nationalities. A ninth-century source *Kleitologion* of Philotheus presents a perfect outline of that system of diplomatic precedence. The eastern ‘friends’ were always ranked before those from the West. While the Saracens were seated behind the Byzantine official dignitaries of *patrikioi* and *strategoi*, the Frankish envoys were of lesser status and ranked after the *offikialioi*.⁸⁷⁹ This rigid protocol can also be observable in other later sources such as Constantine VII’s *De Ceremoniis*, a tenth-century book on imperial ceremonies, in which the functions of officials, ceremonial activities, and the issues related to the court protocol during receptions of foreign envoys are well described.⁸⁸⁰ Likewise, this type of a specific ranking system among the states seems to have prevailed in the empire’s diplomatic communications, until its final fall in 1453.

In the Ottoman court, the tradition showed resemblance. A certain hierarchy of foreign representatives is also attestable there. Bringing gifts for the celebration of the wedding between Bayezid and the daughter of the Germiyanid ruler, the foreign representatives of the neighboring polities arrived at the Ottoman court, where they were given seats according to the ranks of their polities in the eyes of the Ottoman state. At that context, it was the Mamluks who was given the ascendancy over the others that were present at the Ottoman court.⁸⁸¹

⁸⁷⁹ From Philotheus, *Kleitologion*, in Bury, *The imperial administrative system in the ninth century*, 155-157.

⁸⁸⁰ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, trans. Moffatt and Tall, *The Book of Ceremonies*, vol. I, 396-410.

⁸⁸¹ Neşrî, vol. I, 204; Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 56-57; ed. Atsız, bâb 50, 129.

How envoys behaved in front of the authorities once they were received officially remains a crucial question to understand the protocol and formalities in diplomatic occasions. First of all, as a sign of submission and as a matter of protocol, envoys needed to be respectful before the hosting rulers. In Byzantine tradition, the reception of foreign embassies followed a certain protocol, which aimed to impress the members of embassies as well as to pinpoint the status of the emperor as it was in the case of *proskynesis*. This particular gesture is commonly described as a physical bowing down or prostration in front of the Byzantine emperor. Symbolic in meaning, the gesture stood for paying respects to the ultimate authority (i.e. the hosting ruler).⁸⁸²

Almost entirely consistent is that gestures and requests at certain moments were intended to create a welcoming ceremony and eventually aimed for diplomatic gains. It is observable in January 1422, when Giovanni Adorno asked to come to terms with Murad II on the former's debt owed on the alum mine. While Adorno was helping and more specifically transporting Murad and his forces to Gallipoli, during the journey in the middle of the straits, the Genoese leader stood up and bent his knee in front of Murad. He then asked for a remission from his debts, which was accepted by the Ottoman ruler.⁸⁸³

Regarding the issue of gestures, one may add a further example. Long before the case mentioned above, similar methods of demonstrating respect during diplomatic occasions existed. Focusing on the affairs of Umur Beg of Aydın, the historian Enverî mentions a high-ranking Catalan envoy who visited Aydınoglu emir and brought two boats loaded with gifts of incomparable size. When the envoy

⁸⁸² McCormick, "Proskynesis," 1738-1739.

⁸⁸³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 27.2, 225; trans. Magoulias, Book 27.2, 158.

arrived in front of Umur Beg, the former put his face on the ground and expressed a wish of long life to the emir. Then he presented the letter (i.e. “biti”) to the host.⁸⁸⁴

This was a common gesture when a visitor happened to be present before a ruler.

There were instances in which parties showed more intimate gestures. When John VI Kantakouzenos received the Serbian governor Liberios, they shook hands. This is a clear indication that a confrontation might have taken place in a welcoming atmosphere.⁸⁸⁵

In formal receptions, both sides express mutual greetings depending on the status of the ruler and the visitor. This formality was followed by exchanging obeisances and expressing amity between the parties via verbal performances. When John VI Kantakouzenos visited the Serbian ruler in the summer of 1342, for instance, a diplomatic encounter of this nature occurred.⁸⁸⁶

The envoys as depicted in historical records seem to have been exposed to experiences ranging from joy or amazement to torture, troubles, and physical as well as psychological burdens. Occasional mistreatments of the entrusted diplomats prove that the fear of the envoys visiting foreign courts had its basis in circumstances of great danger that some of them experienced during diplomatic missions. To begin with the negative treatments first, it is necessary to turn our attention to the experiences of envoys at foreign courts. Political authorities had a mechanism of regular control of embassies and their members in passing. Therefore, members of embassies could sometimes be exposed to spontaneous detainments on their journeys, which were operated by local authorities. The aim was possibly to check

⁸⁸⁴ Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le destān d'Umūr Pacha*, 85, l. 1085-1090.

⁸⁸⁵ Gregoras, vol. II, 638. For more examples of showing respect by certain ways of gestures, see Beihammer, “Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354),” 475-476.

⁸⁸⁶ Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, 79-80.

the documents and confirm the identities of envoys as well as the information concerning the visit in question. Clavijo writes that he was detained at the Genoese-held Chios, where he nevertheless did not have any trouble. It seems to have been a regular control since he explains that he had to wait for a ship. He had no obstacles apart from this delay.⁸⁸⁷

Moreover, during their embassy to the Ottoman court in June 1422, Lachanas Palaiologos and Markos Iagaris were refused to be present in front of Murad II. Exposed to such an unexpected reaction, their speeches were not even heard; and ultimately they were disregarded and taken into custody. It was only after a couple of days that they were released and were permitted to go back to Constantinople with a message relaying Murad's decision to besiege the city.⁸⁸⁸ On the possible reasons for their detainments, one can only speculate. It is possible that the Ottoman ruler was finalizing his preparations for the siege and did not want his enemy to be alerted to their plans.

As the aforementioned examples clearly suggest, envoys were obviously not always shown fair treatment during their visits. At the time of the siege of Konya, Murad I did not accept the envoy of the Karamanoğlu, who requested peace. Neşrî mentions that the envoy was expelled.⁸⁸⁹ Later, the daughter of Murad I, who was married to the emir of Karamanoğlu, interfered upon the latter's request. She came and transmitted her husband's request of peace to her father, who eventually forgave the envoy.

⁸⁸⁷ Clavijo, trans. Le Strange, 48-49. For the evaluation of security of the embassies, see Chapter 4.2.3. under "Problems of security."

⁸⁸⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 28.2, 231: "περιορίσας αὐτοὺς ἐν ὀλίγαις ἡμέραις."

⁸⁸⁹ "Kabul itmediler. İlçisini kovdılar." Neşrî, vol. I, 233.

As a common practice observed in both courts, embassies were initially received by an official or a group of officials depending on the rank of the individuals visiting and the content of the sojourn, as we may call the solemnity. These factors were also operative and decisive in the degree of a ceremony to be followed. Rossier, in his treatise on the conduct of diplomacy in Europe in the 1430s, marks these points and underlines the diplomatic precedence.⁸⁹⁰ More relevant to our topic, in an embassy well-described in several Ottoman chronicles yet primarily by Aşıkpaşazade, we may trace this pattern. When an unnamed Byzantine envoy, conveying a message asking for a peace treaty in 1396-7, arrived at a certain Güzelcehisar north in the Bosphorus, it was the vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa who accepted him first. Then, the envoy was able to inform the vizier about Manuel II's offers. Ali Paşa listened to the envoy and only by then did he himself transmitted the message to Bayezid. Our source does not mention any confrontation of the envoy with the Ottoman sultan.⁸⁹¹

Likewise, when Paul Asanes, another Byzantine envoy, visited the Ottoman court sometime in September-November 1437 before John VIII Palaiologos departed for Ferrara, he was met by the viziers who voiced Murad's doubts and let the envoy know them (εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ βεζήριδες). The embassy aimed to inform Murad II about the emperor's trip to the council to be held in Ferrara.⁸⁹² Another example is

⁸⁹⁰ Mattingly, *Renaissance diplomacy*, 34-35: "The rank of the ambassadors and the solemnity of the embassy are the joint criteria for determining the degree of ceremony with which a particular mission is to be treated, the solemnity of the embassy being judged in turn by the importance of its sender and the importance he attached to the mission, as Rosier elsewhere makes clear, so that princes are urged to emphasize really important missions by choosing persons of high social position as their chiefs." Archbishop of Toulouse, who wrote a treatise on being an ambassador in 1435-6: Bernard du Rosier.

⁸⁹¹ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137.

⁸⁹² Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 182, ll. 8-19. The French translation by Laurent is as follows: "Hélas! Que ne juis-je même effleurer le récit tragique des maux qui en foule ont fondu sur nous, car la main et la langue sont paralysées tant par la grandeur du malheur que par la folie et le déshonneur de la nation. C'est en effet sur ce mode-là qu'il eût été plus convenable d'en parler, puisque non seulement les conseils de la majorité des chrétiens et de nos amis, mais encore ceux des infidèles concordaient.

observable once Murad II became the Ottoman ruler, the surrounding political actors congratulated him by sending embassies. One of them was the embassy of “Vılakoğlu,” (i.e. the Serbian Kingdom; the Turkish term literally means the son of the Serbian king) Durad Brankovic who was the despot of Serbia, ordering his envoy to make a request about the return of once lost territories of the Serbians hither Sofia. The envoy came to Adrianople and expressed this request to the *paşas*, to whom he directly communicated.⁸⁹³

In some missions, sources reveal instances of deceased envoys. For example, Patriarch Kallistos I, during his diplomatic journey to Serbia in September or later summer of the year 1363, his destiny did not allow him to return to Constantinople and he died in Serres. His embassy sought fulfillment in ending the problems between the Byzantines and the Serbians on the one hand and aimed to receive military aid for the Byzantine warfare against the Turks on the other. A Byzantine short chronicle mentions other leading churchmen who accompanied the patriarch in

En effet, alors que Paul Asanès se trouvait en mission auprès de l'Émir, ses vizirs lui dirent: 'Qu'est-ce qui pousse l'empereur à se rendre chez les Latins? S'il y a quelque nécessité, qu'il en fasse part et notre maître y remédierait! Il trouvera auprès de notre maître un meilleur remède que chez les Latins et plus profitable sera à l'empereur l'amitié de l'Émir que celle des Latins. Qu'il renonce donc à partir chez les Latins et il obtiendra ce qu'il pourrait demander à notre maître.' Mais il arriva ce qui devait arriver et les avis de tous furent tenus pour rien. On renonça donc aux conceils des envoyés du concile et à leurs navires qu'on renvoya et sur lesquels partit aussi fr. Jean. Quant aux nôtres, ils se préparèrent à faire voile sur les galères du pape.” Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 183. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3475; Malamut, “La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantine auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle,” 88.

⁸⁹³ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 100-102; ed. Atsız, bâb 88, 160: “Vılakoğluna Niş Doğanın göndürdiler. Vılakoğlu dahı bir elçi göndürdi. ‘Azânâme yazdı atasıyıçün. Ve kendüye pedîşahlık kutluladı. Ve elçiye dahı haylı ta‘zîm etdi. Ve kendü elçisine dedi kim: ‘Sofyadan berüsin dile. Bana versünler. Ve hem dahı anun hâsılından ziyâde göndüreyin’ dedi. Elçi geldi. Bu sözi söyledi paşalara. Paşalar dahı eyitdiler: ‘Hele kabul etdük’ dediler. Vılakoğlu dahı mübalağa armağanlar göndürdi. Ve hem eyitdi: ‘Kızımı dahı vereyin.’ Vılakoğluyilen ahd etdiler. İstanbul tekvürine Gegibüze kadısı Fazlullahı elçi göndürdiler. Anun içün kim ol, o tekvüre konşıyidi. Tekvür eyidür: ‘Mevlânâ kadı! Vılakoğluna bunca yer verdünüz. Bana dahı Vizeden berüsin verün. Sizün ile barışayım’ dedi. Kadı eyidür: ‘Çorlıdan had olsun!’ İncügezi bile verdiler. Tekvür dahı kabul etdi.” See also Neşri, vol. II, 566. The topic of the responsible individuals in reception of foreign envoys is treated extensively in Chapter 4.3.2. “Audience in diplomatic meetings.”

his embassy also perished, possibly due to a sort of infection despite rumors appearing that they were poisoned somehow at the Serbian court.⁸⁹⁴

Envoys could sometimes be humiliated and sent back to their countries. Gregoras presents a case in which Kantakouzenos's messengers were behaved badly by the Byzantines in Constantinople, who did not even listen to his messages and "led his messengers (τοὺς ἀγγέλους) shaved bald in a mock parade across the market and shut them tied up in prisons."⁸⁹⁵ Kantakouzenos's envoys were placed under guard, deprived of their possessions, which were accompanied by other similar treatments, when they visited the empress Anna of Savoy in Constantinople before the coronation of John V Palaiologos in the capital city.⁸⁹⁶

Unpleasant treatment has always been a possibility for an envoy visiting a foreign court. Similar occasions had been experienced in earlier centuries in other contexts. In 1188, in order to establish an alliance with the Turkish sultan in Asia Minor, Frederick Barbarossa sent an envoy, Gottfried von Wiesenbach, a German nobleman. Then he sent another embassy, this time more formal, which included a certain Tokili (?) as the head of the mission and Gottfried himself. This second embassy aimed to bring the news to Barbarossa while he was on his march, yet the envoys were detained in Constantinople for several weeks, and robbed of the gifts that they were carrying.⁸⁹⁷

As can be seen in this example, placing ambassadors in a disgraceful situation could become common practice if things did not go well between parties. Likewise,

⁸⁹⁴ Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, Chr. 7/16, 66, where the patriarch is identified as ἀποκρισιάρχιος. Also see Charanis, "An Important Short Chronicle of the Fourteenth Century," 351-352; Failler, "La déposition du patriarche Calliste Ier," 5-163.

⁸⁹⁵ Gregoras, vol. II, 12.14, 620.

⁸⁹⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 144. See also Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 60.

⁸⁹⁷ More on the motivations and conclusions of the contemporary events, see Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 112.

Bayezid behaved the envoys of Timur dishonorably when an embassy visited the Ottoman court. He ordered them to shave the envoys' beards and thus put them in a humiliating position.⁸⁹⁸

In such a context, a certain level of bravery seems to have been required for the individuals entrusted with the task of negotiating issues of politics. It was during the Byzantine civil strife in 1321 that Andronikos II Palaiologos sent a bishop named Theoleptos of Philadelphia and Kallikrenites, the *prokathemenos* of the bed chamber, as envoys to his grandson Andronikos III to Adrianople. When they arrived there, a group of soldiers came around the envoys. Both of the envoys were tortured by the soldiers. Kantakouzenos describes the fear of Kallikrenites, who found himself at the foot of Andronikos III begging him for his security. However, if we believe Kantakouzenos, the bishop Theoleptos was calm, fearless, and brave -so dedicated to his mission that he was willing to lose his life for it.⁸⁹⁹

Envoys did not, of course, always receive negative treatments during their missions. Plenty of cases illustrate how both the Byzantine and the Ottoman envoys were welcomed and hosted in a warm and hospitable atmosphere. Our primary sources reveal some instances of friendly and welcoming receptions of envoys in both courts. In late 1344 or early 1345, when Orhan received an embassy from Anna of Savoy, who was offering a great amount of gold and some further advantages in return for military assistance in her fight against Kantakouzenos, Orhan listened to the envoys with great enthusiasm. The Ottoman ruler had been waiting for this news

⁸⁹⁸ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 15.4, 87-89.

⁸⁹⁹ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 100-103; trans. Trone, 208-209.

for a long time; therefore, the embassy made him feel exulting and rejoicing as Doukas defines.⁹⁰⁰

In winter 1345-1346, in addition, Kantakouzenos treated Orhan's envoys in a civilized and gentle way (προσηνῶς τε καὶ ἡμέρως τοῖς πρέσβεσι χρηματίσας καὶ δῶρα παρασχόμενος).⁹⁰¹ One must bear in mind that it was Kantakouzenos describing himself as a good host in that example. This depiction of the author, however, seems to include no exaggeration because Kantakouzenos sought an alliance with Orhan; therefore, his treatment of the latter's envoys could have taken place just as he describes it.

In contexts of mutual conversation, rulers sometimes behaved cordially, or even familiarly. A case in point may be provided from the year 1387, when Manuel II, the co-emperor since 1372, visited Murad's court at Prousa upon John V's order to do that. As both Chalkokondyles and the author of *Chronicon Barberini* conform, the meeting took place in a pleasant environment. Murad kindly received the young candidate for the Byzantine throne. Chalkokondyles explains that Murad spoke to Manuel directly, smiled at him, and spoke with him, who received forgiveness from the Ottoman ruler. On the other hand, *Chronicon Barberini* gives an interesting detail about the gestures of both individuals. Once Manuel appeared before Murad, he respectfully greeted the sultan. After a kind reception Manuel engaged in conversation with Murad, whom he begged forgiveness. In return, Murad forgave him and demanded the surrender of the city of Thessalonike. According to the

⁹⁰⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 8.2, 57; trans. Magoulias, Book 8, 71: "ταῦτα ἐνωτισθεὶς ὁ Ὁρχάν καὶ ἡδέως ἀκούσας (ἐδίψει γὰρ τὴν τοιαύτην πρὸ πολλοῦ γεῦσιν) καὶ θαρσαλέως πηδήσας καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς ἡδονῆς τὸ μετὰ χαρᾶς προσειπὼν πέμπει τοὺς πρέσβεις ἀγαλλομένους καὶ χαίροντας (...)." See also Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 498.

⁹⁰¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 585-586.

source, Manuel obeyed that request, upon which Murad kissed him on the forehead and complimented the young prince.⁹⁰²

Furthermore, in 1413, Mehmed I warmly welcomed Manuel II's distinguishing envoys (ἀποκρισιάρχους στείλας εὐγενεστέρους τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτοῦ) which were sent for a request from Mehmed the lands that the latter promised to surrender. As Doukas gives the details about this very contact, Mehmed received the envoys courteously (ὁ δὲ Μαχουμέτ δεξιῶς αὐτοὺς ἰδὼν) and showered gifts on them and showed generosity towards these guests, who at the end departed in peace.⁹⁰³

Mehmed's calm and friendly policy was not restricted to Byzantium. He showed similar kindness towards his other neighbors, such as the envoys visiting him from the courts of Serbia, Bulgaria, the duchy of Ioannina, and so on. As Doukas narrates, Mehmed invited the incoming representatives to his table and the meeting took place in a very warm atmosphere.⁹⁰⁴ In another instance, Mehmed is said to have accepted the envoys from the Serbian ruler George Brankovic in a courteously manner and allowed them to go back to their master in peace.⁹⁰⁵ On the other hand, in his second embassy to the Ottoman court in Adrianople in Spring 1421, Demetrios Laskaris Leontares experienced a friendly and honorably welcome that was shown by Murad, who told him about not feeling healthy and promised him to dine and talk once he feels better.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 42-43; trans. Kaldellis, Book 1.49-50, 73-77; Philippides, *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman sultans 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*, 19-20.

⁹⁰³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 133.

⁹⁰⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, 133.

⁹⁰⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.11, 289: “Φιλοφρόνως οὖν δεξιωσάμενος τοὺς ἀποκρισιάρχους”; trans. Magoulas, Book 33.11, 191.

⁹⁰⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.4, 16.

In overall, the reception of foreign envoys in both Byzantine and Ottoman courts either took place in a warm environment or turned into a disaster depending on the political contexts. At times, the Byzantine emperors hosted the Ottoman representatives friendly. These occasions coincided with the period of peace such that happened in 1333 when the embassy was exchanged between Orhan and Andronikos III or another one in more than a decade later between Orhan and John VI Kantakouzenos. Therefore, how envoys were received in foreign courts went hand in hand with the corresponding political relations at a moment in question.

4.3.4 Accommodation of envoys and meeting places

There is limited knowledge of the accommodation of embassies at both courts. As a common observation, one can observe strict regulations performed on diplomatic visits. During their stay at foreign courts, envoys were closely inspected by appointed staff responsible for envoys' movement inside the country that he paid a visit to. They were not only welcomed and led through a show of magnificence of the city, but also, in a way, by being confined to limited spaces, they were prevented from the possibility of direct contact with someone outside.⁹⁰⁷

As far as the Venetian diplomatic contacts with the Byzantine Empire are concerned, we may say a few words about the residences of foreign diplomats in Constantinople. The relations between these two polities were initiated in the ninth century and accelerated especially when a treaty was signed by Alexios I Komnenos in 1082. Although each mission addressed to Constantinople might have been

⁹⁰⁷ For a tenth-century instances from the diplomatic communications between Byzantine Empire and the Muslim world, see Durak, "Diplomacy as performance: Power politics and resistance between the Byzantine and the Early Medieval Islamic courts," 161.

composed of its own envoy(s), there was a resident Venetian representative in the city possibly in the Venetian quarter.

Yet, representatives of foreign polities, because they were official visitors, seem to have been given a lodge by the imperial authority within the imperial court complex in Constantinople. There were certain quarters or mansions reserved for envoys. Ibn Battuta's description enhances our knowledge of lodging services for visitors at the Byzantine court. The Moroccan traveler notes that before he and his companion were received by the emperor on the fourth day of their visit, they had stayed in a certain place "reserved for the visitors," where together with his companions he was warmly hosted with showering gifts of various kinds.⁹⁰⁸

Diplomacy was conducted and concentrated predominantly in capitals. The Byzantine capital was always Constantinople, whereas the Ottomans made Prousa (Bursa) their capital upon its capture in 1326. Following the capture of Adrianople (Edirne) by the Ottomans on a still debated date but possibly sometime in the 1360s, the capital was moved there. The embassies discussed in this study either departed from or arrived at one of these cities unless it is otherwise stated.⁹⁰⁹ There were exceptions. An ambassadorial mission could be sent to a ruler who was by that time out of the capital city. Therefore, embassies could visit the corresponding parties in sites like Skoutari, Arkla, Koutoulos, and Nicomedia (See Figure 2). In one example,

⁹⁰⁸ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 504-505.

⁹⁰⁹ For a debate on the shift of the Ottoman capital, see Wittek, "De la Défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople," 1-34; Wittek, *The rise of the Ottoman Empire*, 48-51. See also Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 239, f.n. 163; Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "La conquête d'Andrinople par les Turcs: la pénétration turque en Thrace et la valeur des chroniques ottomans," 439-461; Zachariadou, "The conquest of Adrianople by the Turks," 211-217, where the author attracts attention to a document that indicates that the Ottomans already captured the city by 1366.

Demetrios Kydones is attested as an imperial envoy, whose purpose of visit is unknown to us, visiting the Ottoman prince Süleyman in 1381 in Kotyaeion.⁹¹⁰



Figure 2. The places of diplomatic contacts mentioned in the historical sources

There are instances in which envoys departing from the foreign courts did not find the Byzantine emperor at his seat. Gregoras narrates an embassy from Eirene of Trebizond, the daughter of Andronikos III, aiming to receive help in the queen's troublesome position after her husband's (Basil) death. When the envoys arrived in Constantinople in 1340, they did not know that the emperor had recently moved to Thessalonike.⁹¹¹

To understand how and where an envoy or a foreigner was received in the Ottoman court, it may be helpful to draw attention to Gregory Palamas's captivity at

⁹¹⁰ Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 218, 98. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3169.

⁹¹¹ Gregoras, vol. I, 550-551.

the hands of the Ottomans.⁹¹² The archbishop was compelled to stay in the country of the Ottomans for a year in 1354. During his detainment, he entered into discussions with Muslim theologians. After Palamas and his companions were captured by the Ottomans and brought to Prousa, they stayed there briefly. Resuming their journey under the guard of the Ottomans, they continued to march towards other towns. In his description of his captivity, Gregory Palamas recounts that they were “led to a neighboring town, inhabited by Christian Romans for a long time, in which there was also a house for the imperial ambassadors.”⁹¹³ Was that “house for the imperial ambassadors” a regular lodge for foreign representatives visiting the Ottoman court? This cannot be determined with certainty. The place as Palamas depicted was located at some distance from the Ottoman capital. However, as one might argue, envoys should have been in close proximity to the Ottoman court to reveal the messages they carried over from their masters. The distance to the capital would also cause logistical problems. Yet, it might have demonstrated that the Ottoman rulers were still not fully resident by 1354 in the capital city but moving between Prousa and the highlands of the region as their tradition required. Such a lifestyle is also confirmed in the Ottoman chronicles. If that was the case, then, it would be meaningful to have a lodge for the imperial envoys/foreign visitors somewhere in such a town that is mentioned by Gregory Palamas. On the other hand, regarding the fact that the Ottoman state was a mobile polity and did not have fully-grown sedentary court culture yet, there is a possibility that the lodge in question may not have been necessarily a connection with a palatial complex. The place of the early Ottoman

⁹¹² See, Nicol, *The reluctant emperor: A biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine emperor and monk, c. 1295-1383*, 176; Philippides-Braat, “La captivité de Palamas chez les Turcs,” 109-122; Meyendorff, *Introduction à l'étude de Grégoire Palamas*, 154-162.

⁹¹³ Arnakis, “Gregory Palamas among the Turks and documents of his captivity as historical sources,” 107.

palace in Prousa has been debated. The Ottoman palatial there complex might have been inherited the old Byzantine governmental buildings within the walled city. It could also been the case that it was situated not in the city but outside of it. Therefore, what Palamas describes as accommodation place for foreign representatives might have been located somewhere in that place or perhaps adjacent to the palatial building.⁹¹⁴

Other references to the venues of diplomatic occasions that could have been used later on may further illuminate the issue. The place for accepting foreign envoys was a colonnaded hall in the Ottoman palace in Adrianople.⁹¹⁵ The way the foreigners were accepted by the Ottoman ruler is described by some foreign visitors to the Ottoman court. Among them, Bertrandon de la Brocquière, who as a representative from the duke of Burgundy visited the Ottoman court in Edirne in the year 1432, thought that it was all happening at a very slow pace. He depicts the things and business at the court, the dresses of the sultan and details of the space at length. According to him, there were quite many procedures of courtly practice during official receptions of foreigners by the Ottoman sultan.⁹¹⁶ More importantly, the envoy gives further information on the venue that all the reception ceremonies took place. Accordingly, the Milanese envoy whom Brocquière accompanied was

⁹¹⁴ For a discussion on the architectural framework of the early Ottoman palace in Prousa, see Çağaptay, "Bursa Bey Sarayı: Erken Osmanlı dönemi Sarayı üzerine mekânsal ve kültürlerarası bir inceleme," 97-98.

⁹¹⁵ See Theodore Spandounes, *On the origins of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Nicol, 113, 130.

⁹¹⁶ Bertrandon de la Brocquière, *The travels*, trans. Thomas Wright, 350-351: "At length he appeared. His dress was, as usual, a crimson satin robe, over which he had, by way of the mantle, another green-figured satin, lined with sable ... He walked across an angle of the court to a gallery, where a seat had been prepared for him. It was a kind of couch covered with velvet, and four or five steps to it. He seated himself on it, like to our tailors when they are going to work ..." Another piece from Bertrandon is as follows: "A silken napkin was attached to the prince, and a round piece of thin leather was placed before him ... then some dressed meat was brought to him in two gilded dishes. When he was served, his officers went and took the tin dishes I have spoken of and distributed them to the persons in the hall, one dish among four ... but before all were served it was necessary to take away, for the prince had not been inclined to eat."

accepted by Murad II under a colonnade in the outer administrative court which was close to the residential building of the Ottoman ruler. As Gülru Necipoğlu points out, this depiction of a reception in the court at Adrianople is similar to what an illustrated copy of Ahmedî's *İskendername* depicts. In that manuscript, represented as cross-legged under the colonnade, Bayezid I is represented as accepting the foreign envoys. Around the ruler, viziers and other officials are standing in such a way that aligns with the written evidence; the illustrations are therefore an instance of the written and visual evidence corroborating one another.⁹¹⁷

4.3.5 Rulers conducting negotiations

As early as the late 1320s, a Byzantine emperor could appear in person at a diplomatic meeting. When the first period of civil strife in the Palaiologan period ended in 1328, the emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos paid a visit to Asia Minor by landing on the peninsula of Kyzikos. His plan was ostensibly to visit the place for the first time and present his reverence to a sacred icon of the mother of God in a church in Hyrtakion; yet, the actual reason behind was to seek a peace agreement (συμβάσεις πείση χωρήσαι) with the ruler of Karasi, Temirchan (Ταμνηρχάνης), who had attacked some Byzantine settlements around the Hellespont.⁹¹⁸ Upon the emperor's calling off the Karasi ruler, a meeting took place in the city of Pegai. Kantakouzenos describes the event, as the Byzantine emperor had a superior position that Temirchan could be identified as subservient (δουλείας συνεγένετο τῷ βασιλεῖ)

⁹¹⁷ Bertrandon de la Brocquière, *Le voyage d'outremer de Bertrandon de la Brocquière (1432)*, ed. Schefer, 187-196; Necipoğlu, *Architecture, ceremonial, and power: The Topkapı Palace in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries*, 17-18. The illustrated Ahmedî's manuscript is situated at the Biblioteca Marciana, Cod. Nani XL (=57), fol. 240v, 241r.

⁹¹⁸ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 339.

in front of Andronikos III.⁹¹⁹ The meeting is quite revealing of the ways how the Byzantine emperor was respected and paid homage in a diplomatic circumstance. Kantakouzenos depicted the ruler of Karasi, who came to the presence of the emperor with his men somewhere between the camp of the Karasi ruler and the city of Pegai, in a subordinate position. He dismounted his horse, approached the emperor close and kissed his foot, while the others remained a distance from the emperor and touched the ground with their heads as a way of showing their respects to him. Kantakouzenos continues to describe the meeting by saying that Temirchan, who then re-mounted his horse, had a private conversation with the emperor.⁹²⁰ The next day, Temirchan came back again, possibly after he negotiated over the peace terms with his entourage, or because the drafts of the treaty were prepared in the meantime and they were made ready to be confirmed and ratified.⁹²¹ Andronikos III rewarded the Karasi ruler with gifts, which were worthy of himself.⁹²² By securing the territories in the region, the emperor returned to Constantinople, where the Bulgarian ruler invited him to conclude a peace treaty, whose negotiations, as understood from Kantakouzenos's writings, were cut short due to the war in the east. Here again, we see the Byzantine emperor engaged in face-to-face communication with a foreign ruler. The meeting with the Bulgarian leader, as was the case in the previous example, had occurred somewhere but not in a capital.⁹²³

⁹¹⁹ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 340. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2727.

⁹²⁰ “ὡς γὰρ ἐγγὺς ἐγένετο ὅσον ὄραν τε τὸν βασιλέα καὶ ὀρᾶσθαι παρ’ αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς τε καὶ ἄλλοι Πέρσαι τῶν ἵππων καταβάντες καὶ προελθόντες ἐπὶ μικρὸν, οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι πάντες ἄπωθεν τὸν βασιλέα προσεκύνουν, τὰς κεφαλὰς ἐρείσαντες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν· αὐτὸς ...” Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 340.

⁹²¹ There is no evidence that may prove that the emirate of Karasi had a fully developed state apparatus.

⁹²² “δωροῖς τε ἀμειψαμένου βασιλέως ἀξίως ἔαυτοῦ” Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 340.

⁹²³ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 340-341.

Based on the lack of historical evidence, it is not easy to assume busy contacts between Byzantium and the Ottoman state in the early period of their encounter. The silence of the primary sources breaks from the late 1320s onwards. In August 1333, when Andronikos III Palaiologos invited Orhan to conclude a peace treaty (σπονδαί εἰρηνικαί), the emperor traveled to the Eastern frontier personally and signed the treaty there.⁹²⁴ The chronology of the peace treaty with Orhan and the voyage of the emperor following his departure from Nicomedia was recorded by a short chronicle.⁹²⁵ Most significantly, what this unique piece of evidence bears is the tribute, which was 12,000 gold pieces per year, agreed by the Byzantine emperor to Orhan. This was the second time Andronikos III came for the aid of Nicomedia, as the first one was in the summer of 1331.⁹²⁶ This is an extraordinary case illustrating the personal travel of the Byzantine emperor to a place where his opponent was waiting. Its importance leans, on the one hand, from the fact that circumstances requiring mutual communication took place not in the city of Constantinople, but at a certain distance from it. On the other hand, this example is unique in the sense that the rulers did not personally meet but ordered their envoys to do the formalities of the treaty. Similar cases will appear in several other instances in which rulers convened at a place distant from Constantinople and possibly via envoys. In winter 1357-8, both John VI Kantakouzenos and Orhan met at Arkla (i.e. modern Kız Kulesi), off the shore of Chalcedon on a small island, to discuss matters related to Orhan's kidnapped son at the hands of the Phocaean pirates and the Ottoman ruler's

⁹²⁴ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 446-448; Loenertz, "Chronique brève, part II," 40, 52-54; Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, no. 8/27, II, 243-244. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2762 and 2763.

⁹²⁵ See Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken*, vol. I, no. 8/27, 243-244.

⁹²⁶ See Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 459f. Cf. Laurent, "La chronique anonyme du cod. Mosquensis gr. 426 et la pénétration turque en Bithynie au début du XIV^e siècle," 211. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. IV, no. 2762 and 2763, where the chronology is problematic.

proposal for a marriage alliance with the Byzantine court in return for an expected Byzantine help for rescuing Orhan's son. Moreover, on a much later date, in the winter of 1419-1420, an Ottoman embassy headed by Mehmed I himself was welcomed in Koutoulos, a suburb of Constantinople, by Demetrios Laskaris Leontares, Isaakios Asanes and Manuel Kantakouzenos who met the Ottoman ruler and accompanied him until they together arrived at the place, actually next to the emperor's boat. Both rulers then conversed while staying on their own boats.⁹²⁷

There were instances of sovereigns or imperial members personally visiting the court of the hosting party. In the summer of 1387, upon his father John V's advice, Manuel II as co-emperor, went personally to Murad's court "to beg forgiveness for anything that he had perforce plotted to do against his [Murad I's] interests" following the surrender of Thessalonike, which was besieged by the troops led by Hayreddin.⁹²⁸ In this way, Manuel tried to restore his empire's relationship with the Ottomans. Manuel's visit to Murad is worth considering in the sense that it provides evidence of a mutual conversation between these two individuals in a warm setting. After interrogating him for some time, Murad smiled at the young prince and directly spoke to him, possibly through an interpreter, to whom no source makes a reference. As Chalkokondyles narrates, Manuel received forgiveness from the Ottoman sultan, who sent him back to Constantinople. For the author, Murad instructed John V Palaiologos to take his son (ἐκέλευε τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ δέχεσθαι) back into the city. This request was possibly delivered to the emperor in Constantinople by an Ottoman messenger or an envoy, who might have accompanied

⁹²⁷ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 351-354.

⁹²⁸ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 42; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, 75.

Manuel back into his father's court or via a letter addressing the emperor that might have been commended to Manuel.⁹²⁹

4.3.6 Duration

The duration of embassies is an essential aspect of understanding the *modus operandi* in diplomatic visits. The overall picture of detectable embassies, despite scant references, demonstrates that the diplomatic contacts varied in terms of duration. We are rarely informed about the length of the diplomatic missions. Depending on a few instances, therefore, we may only infer a limited understanding of the issue. There was a distinction between the duration of embassies and the duration of the actual meetings. While the overall mission might have taken place over a period of days, weeks, and even years, the actual contacts often did not last more than a couple of days.

Generally speaking, members of an embassy would stay at the receiving court as long as the targeted mission required. In this sense, there were no limitations on the duration of diplomatic missions. A case in point is a meeting of both the Byzantine and Ottoman delegations that came together on a small island off the shore of Skoutari, called Arkla. This incident coincided with Orhan's subsequent attempts to ransom his son at the hands of the Phocaeen pirates. In the winter of 1357-1358, negotiations over a peace treaty went along the lines of Orhan's specific offer to John V Palaiologos, a marriage alliance between his son and the emperor's daughter in return for a promised help to receive the Ottoman prince. Here Gregoras, our single source for this embassy, speaks about the duration of the meeting. The delegations

⁹²⁹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 42-43.

spent three days in the meeting place (ἡμέρας ἀνηλωκόσιν ἐνταῦθα τρεῖς) expressing mutual benevolence to each other (οἷας πρὸς ἀλλήλους τάς τε δεξιώσεις καὶ φιλοφροσύνας πεποίηται).⁹³⁰ Furthermore, Kantakouzenos mentions a dispatch of an embassy sent by Andronikos III to his grandfather the emperor. The author gives details about the duration. Although it was designed to last eight days for the whole visit, the embassy's mission exceeded, and even after twelve days, the envoys could not return to their masters.⁹³¹

A treaty of great importance in the course of Byzantine relations with the Ottomans can illuminate the issue of duration in diplomatic meetings. In 1403, a multilateral agreement was reached among the leading powers of the region. The parties of this decisive treaty were the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman state, Venice, Genoa, the Hospitallers of Rhodes, and the Duke of Naxos. As we learn from the decision of the Venetian Senate concerning the reimbursement of the expenses of the Venetian envoys, the negotiations lasted for three and a half months.⁹³²

Another important reference to the issue of duration is from the historical account of Doukas. In his narrative of the embassy led by Çandarlı İbrahim to Manuel II's court in the winter of 1421-1422, the author argues that the Ottoman envoy stayed "many days" trying to find an opportunity to reach an accommodation (ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς ἐνδιατρίβων τοῦ λαβεῖν τέλος τῶν ὧν ἐξήτει συμφωνιῶν). He continues on to relate a story of a man who burst in and interfered with the topic.⁹³³

Moreover, there are other references related to the topic of duration such as the one in Sphrantzes's narrative. The author transmits information on about an

⁹³⁰ Gregoras, vol. III, 504.

⁹³¹ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 134.

⁹³² Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403," 87. On this treaty, see also Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3201.

⁹³³ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 203.

embassy that he partook in to Georgia. He departed from Constantinople on October 14, 1449. As the only source for that mission to my knowledge, Sphrantzes relates the aim of his mission as a search for a suitable marriage arrangement for the emperor John VIII Palaiologos, who requested him to prepare a report on the advantages and disadvantages of the options. It seems like Sphrantzes occasionally delivered his research's outcome via messengers, who at times carried letters. Due to the traffic of messengers and a shipwreck that was carrying one of the emperor's messengers that caused a gap in communication, Sphrantzes had to spend almost two years in Georgia.⁹³⁴

On the other hand, in some cases, discussions and preparations on drafts of a certain treaty could last over months as we learn from the embassies' visits back and forth delivering their authorities' comments and critiques on its terms. When the envoys of Alexander, the ruler of the Bulgarians, visited the Byzantine court in 1341, Anna of Savoy entrusted Kantakouzenos to receive the embassy. Responding to the request by the envoys Kantakouzenos responded that it was not possible to hand back a supplicant (Sismanos) who was the son of Alexander and had taken refuge in Constantinople. The *megas domestikos* went further and threatened the envoys with the troops provided by his close friend Umur of Aydin, if they would insist on their request. His words seem to have served his purpose, as he informs us that after Kantakouzenos's speech to the envoys of Alexander and upon receiving their ruler's confirmation, their attitude changed. They eventually demanded more time to evaluate the new circumstances.⁹³⁵ They were expected to provide an official response whether they would deliver confirmation for peace and the treaties or a

⁹³⁴ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 30.2, 104.

⁹³⁵ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 53-58.

declaration of war. In response to this, they demanded an extension to the deadline so that they could go back to their country, receive Alexander's order, and return to the Byzantine court. To do that, they asked for a thirty-day extension. As indicated, this piece of evidence reveals significant points about both the duration of diplomatic contact and the traffic of envoys between courts seeking confirmation and answers from their masters.⁹³⁶

Another instance showing the long days that a visiting party spent in Constantinople would be the diplomatic visit of Michael, the ruler of Bulgaria, which took place in 1327.⁹³⁷ Together with his wife, Michael made a trip to Didymoteichon, where they received a brilliant and warm welcome for many days (ἐπὶ συχναῖς ταῖς ἡμέραις).⁹³⁸

Perhaps the longest diplomatic journey in the history of Byzantium, Manuel II's voyage to various Western courts sometime between 1394 and 9 June 1403 constitutes an exception. The longevity of the trip depended partly, on the one hand, on the distance of the destinations to the capital and the number of individuals engaged in the imperial team, and on the other hand, on the circumstances in which Constantinople was blockaded by Bayezid's troops.⁹³⁹ If we consider the huge team that accompanied Manuel on his Western journey, it makes sense that they would prefer to remain on the move, rather than to return home and organize each visit separately, which would have also been more costly.

⁹³⁶ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 57-58.

⁹³⁷ Gregoras, trans. van Dieten, Books 8-11, 192-194, f.n. 192.

⁹³⁸ Gregoras, vol. I, 391.

⁹³⁹ For an extensive overview and interpretation of Manuel II's Western journey, see Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425): A Byzantine emperor in a time of tumult*, 213-258.

4.3.7 Expenses

The expense of maintaining or receiving an embassy constitutes another dimension of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts. Gregoras relates how much money was spent on the process of receiving embassies. The information he gives on the budget of the Byzantine government reveals the crucial place of hosting foreign embassies, which came from everywhere to the Byzantine court. Writing about the first half of the fourteenth century, Gregoras acknowledges four different fields for expenditure that needed to be met from the imperial treasure. He explains that the major share belonged to the costs of maintaining military equipment and troops. The rest of the treasure, he asserts, should be spent in three other fields, one of which was the expenses incurred by the embassies.⁹⁴⁰ This piece of information proves that receiving embassies from abroad had a certain part in the overall budget of the empire. For that period, Gregoras ascribed a serious financial crisis that manifested itself in the form of a lack of money and valuables in the imperial treasury.⁹⁴¹ In connection with this state of the financial downturn of the empire, Gregoras draws a vivid picture of the imperial treasury towards the late 1340s. Frequently repeating the poverty of the Byzantine state in his account, by the time of the coronation of John VI Kantakouzenos in 1347, the historian Gregoras underlines that “it was nothing but air and dust, even the atoms of Epicurus no longer existed in the imperial treasury.”⁹⁴² Two civil wars following one another, the loss of agriculturally productive hinterland, and the continuous payments of mercenaries were three main

⁹⁴⁰ “τά δ’ ὑπόλοιπα χρήματα ἀναλίσκεσθαι πρὸς δαπάνας τῶν ὁθενδήποτε προσιόντων ἄλλοτε ἄλλων πρέσβεων καὶ ...” Gregoras, vol. I, Book 8.6, 318.

⁹⁴¹ Gregoras, vol. I, Book 8.10, 351.

⁹⁴² Gregoras, vol. II, 790, 810-811. For Gregoras, Byzantium was aware of her weakness, which was a consequence of the ignorance of earlier rulers and their failure to keep the state’s economic finances intact and the welfare of the public stable. Gregoras, vol. II, 843.

factors that contributed to this predicament. Gregoras's dramatic description of the economic difficulties possibly affected the diplomatic atmosphere that the Byzantine Empire engaged in with its neighbors, because the expenses of embassies were counted among major items in the late Byzantine budget. Furthermore, Gregoras talks about the poor conditions and absence of precious items in ceremonies.⁹⁴³ Despite any direct evidence for a probable decrease in the size of embassies or the value of presents, we may guess that the scale was not as vast as it was in the past. The brilliant study by Stavroula Andriopoulou, who carefully detailed all outgoing embassies from Byzantium to the West between 1354 and 1453 has shown that the overwhelming majority of the embassies were composed of one, two, or at most three envoys.⁹⁴⁴ There were indeed exceptions to the diplomatic missions that were held personally by the emperors with their retinues. The number of people involved in such missions could rise to even fifty, without knowing how many of the team were actual envoys. Such an extreme team cannot be observed in Byzantine communications with the Ottomans. More than half of the recorded embassies do not tell anything about the numbers of personnel employed. Nevertheless, many embassies involved more than one representative. Constantinople was suffering from a devastating plague in 1347, so therefore we might expect a decrease at least both in ambassadorial visits and in envoys employed around that time, which could also be the result of the fact that the empire was facing a financial crisis.⁹⁴⁵

Diplomatic contacts thus required a variety of expenses that could constitute burdens on the state treasury. Even small-scale missions could necessitate

⁹⁴³ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 203.

⁹⁴⁴ Andriopoulou, *Diplomatic communication between Byzantium and the West under the late Palaiologoi (1354-1453)*.

⁹⁴⁵ The impacts of the plague were no longer an obstacle in the following years, because we know that an embassy was sent to the Serbian king in 1348. Gregoras, vol. I, 834.

unexpected expense items. As in the case of the diplomatic journey of Manuel II to the court of Murad I probably in the summer of 1387 or late 1387 or early 1388, the Byzantine prince used a trireme to cross over to Troy, where he “hired horses” (μισθωσάμενον ἵππους) to go to the Ottoman capital of Prousa.⁹⁴⁶ Not knowing anything about what that action costed Manuel, we might guess that it was a certain amount, an important indicator showing how diversified the kinds of expenses were for a diplomatic journey. The expenses could reach considerable levels on certain occasions, at least on large-scale expeditions. Manuel II’s visit to England required quite a budget since it embodied several courtiers accompanying the emperor as well as many more servants to serve the officials in charge. In some parts, his journey’s expenses were covered by the English King Henry IV, just like his visits to France or Genoa, whose expenses were also covered by each country’s political authority.⁹⁴⁷ A similar situation occurred when the Venetian Senate took a decision on January 9, 1424, for the expenses of John VIII were recorded at an amount of 8 ducats per day.⁹⁴⁸

Despite the high expenses of recruiting an embassy, nevertheless, we may also note here a further piece of evidence showing how a polity could be inflicted with unbearable expenses if it needed to continue warfare instead of finding ways to negotiate. In a Venetian document dated 17 August 1428, a certain Giacomo Dandolo the eldest was designated as an envoy to the Ottoman ruler Murad II to end the war between Venice and the Ottomans for possibly similar considerations.⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴⁶ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 48; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1.55, 85.

⁹⁴⁷ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 223-224; Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 100; Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425): A Byzantine emperor in a time of tumult*, 213-258.

⁹⁴⁸ Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 101. See Malamut, “De 1299 à 1451 au coeur des ambassades byzantines,” 113-116.

⁹⁴⁹ Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 2105, 252 & no. 2111, 253-254.

How and when did an envoy receive payment from his own master? An answer to this question is difficult to provide, due partly to the lack of information in primary sources. No indications are preserved in historical evidence, as far as the Byzantine-Ottoman connections are concerned. There is not enough evidence to distinguish the amount that was given for covering usual expenses of an embassy from the amount of the wages that were paid to them in return for an ambassadorial service.⁹⁵⁰ However, one can argue that an amount for the expenses of the embassy could be given *a priori* or after the mission. Venetian archival documents illuminate various aspects of ambassadorial diplomacy. One of these documents, a decision of the Venetian Senate, describes the issue in detail. The Venetian representatives in the negotiations over the treaty of 1403, Pietro Zeno and Marco Grimani, spent money on their routine expenditures including the notaries who drew up the necessary writings and their servants to conduct common services during the mission. It was only following the mission that their expenses were reimbursed by the Venetian Senate.⁹⁵¹ In 1397, Nicholaos Notaras during his employment as an ambassador in France received 1.000 coins as remuneration for his mission. Another example is from 1409 when Alexios Branas was paid 400 florins.⁹⁵²

A Venetian document further provides essential details regarding the budget-wise aspect of a diplomatic journey. Dated 24 July 1427, this evidence bears references to the salary of an embassy. A Venetian ambassador, Benedetto Emo, was dispatched to Murad II to ask the Ottoman sultan to ratify the agreement concluded between the notary Giovanni Bonisio and the subasi of Gallipoli, Sariza (i.e. Saruca

⁹⁵⁰ Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or manager: Power and political ideology in Byzantium before 1453*, 89-90.

⁹⁵¹ Dennis, "The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403," 72-88.

⁹⁵² Malamut, "De 1299 à 1451 au coeur des ambassades byzantines," 115.

Paşa). The salary for the embassy, as the document indicates, was fixed at 400 ducats.⁹⁵³

As observed from the instances selected above, there are quite a few indications highlighting the issue of expenses in Byzantine or Ottoman contexts. What has just been presented aims to give an idea about the financial aspect of embassies driven from other neighboring polities or from other contexts. However, one thing that should be noted is that in the late centuries of Byzantium, the empire could reserve a limited amount of money or exploit the opportunities in an efficient and economical manner. That situation, as can be observed in the gifts that were presented during diplomatic contacts, had a direct impact on the structures and composition of embassies visiting the Ottoman court.

4.3.8 Ways of exhibiting Byzantine or Ottoman pre-eminence via ceremonies

The official procedures and ceremonies followed at any diplomatic visit may reveal the many methods for demonstrating one's preeminence. In his pioneering article on the Byzantine ceremonies that were held on occasions of the visits of foreign embassies, Franz Tinnefeld identifies six different elements of the ceremonial tradition in Byzantium. Primarily based on the tenth-century literary material, the author was able to discuss the arrival of embassies, the chiefly responsible official(s) entrusted to contact envoys, boarding and lodging facilities, means of transportation, venues of receptions, and finally instances of personal contact with emperors.⁹⁵⁴ In this part of the thesis, an interpretation of the data provided for Byzantine-Ottoman

⁹⁵³ Thiriet, *Régestes*, vol. II, no. 2066, 245.

⁹⁵⁴ Tinnefeld, "Ceremonies for foreign ambassadors at the court of Byzantium and their political background," 193-213.

contacts will be investigated in terms of the elements that Tinnefeld has put forward and some additional ones as embedded in the sources of the period.

Not much is known about the ceremonial aspects of Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications. For the late Byzantine period, a few sources, mainly descriptions of foreign visitors to Byzantium such as Clavijo, Ibn Battuta, or Pero Tafur and occasionally mentions of some Byzantine authors that put some light on the practices at both courts, bear indications of a strict and developed system. As for Byzantium's earlier centuries, the court ceremonies that were organized on the visits of foreign envoys are much better documented.

Pseudo-Kodinos's treatise, a prominent source on court ceremonies and offices in the mid-fourteenth century, elucidates the ceremonial practices of the period in a quite descriptive manner, but it hardly bears evidence for diplomatic occasions. It is a general feature that one can observe throughout Pseudo-Kodinos's text that the number of ceremonies within the Byzantine court decreased under the Palaiologoi especially compared to the tenth century *Book of Ceremonies*, which is ascribed to the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos. However, as Ruth Macrides has pointed out, the text of Pseudo-Kodinos lacks some ceremonies including the ones connected to foreign visitors. It does not mean that they disappeared altogether from the Byzantine court, but one must think that the Byzantine author of the text did not prefer mentioning them, since he touches on some aspects of these ceremonies elsewhere in his account.⁹⁵⁵ A question can be

⁹⁵⁵ Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 230 and 232. On Pseudo-Kodinos's omission of reception of ambassadors at the Byzantine court, Ruth Macrides makes the following interpretation: "Indeed, that there is more to fourteenth-century ceremonial and the space in which it was conducted than the Treatise shows is indicated by Pseudo-Kodinos's mention only in passing of the twice daily receptions of title-holders before the emperor, and his omission of many ceremonies which, there can be no doubt, did take place in his time: imperial births, baptisms, weddings, funerals and receptions of ambassadors. He does not give an

asked whether that could mean a diminishing role of the ceremonial spaces or practices in the later centuries in Constantinople. From one point of view, the spaces certainly became restricted, and ceremonies must have been taking place in a few areas within the fortified palace complex, which had by then become confined as the surviving documents point to by far more frequent use of the Blachernai Palace as opposed to the Great Palace by the Hippodrome.⁹⁵⁶ The decreasing number of ceremonial spaces and the high quantity of ceremonies is a contrasting feature compared to the late antique Byzantine court.⁹⁵⁷ Pseudo-Kodinos does not refer to any diplomatic ceremonies nothing about receiving envoys at all, yet, there is a description of the circumstances during a reception of the Genoese podestà.⁹⁵⁸ The unknown author or compiler of the source depicted the gestures of the podestà during his visit to the emperor at court.⁹⁵⁹ Accordingly, similar to what the title holders from the Byzantine court followed, the podestà also appears in front of the emperor together with his companions and kisses the emperor's right foot, then his right hand, and finally his right cheek respectively. This gesture indicates that a strict protocol and a tradition were in application during occasions of foreign visitors at the Byzantine court by the middle of the fourteenth century.

account of any of the above directly, yet he describes aspects of some of these ceremonies, giving us reason to believe that the ceremonies did take place." Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 232.

⁹⁵⁶ There are a few cases that one can attest in historical sources showing the Great Palace as a venue for ceremonies. For that, see Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. III, 163.9-14 (1289: the Justinianeion); vol. III, 221.18-21 (1294: the Manuelites), vol. IV, 401.7-12 (1303: the peripatos outside the Chrysotriklinos), cited in Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 227, f.n. 49.

⁹⁵⁷ Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 225-226.

⁹⁵⁸ Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 230, 233.

⁹⁵⁹ Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des offices: Introduction, texte et traduction*, ed. Verpeaux, 208-209; Macrides, et al (eds.), *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan court: Offices and ceremonies*, 152. See also Macrides, "Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople," 224. Pseudo-Kodinos underlines that the Venetians do not come to the presence of the emperor to congratulate his new reign, or for any other circumstances, nor do they follow the same treatment with what is described here. See Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 234.22-235.13.

At the opposite end, in the Ottoman court, the ceremonial must have been conducted differently. As the state transformed into a sophisticated form with all its bureaucracy and hierarchical organization together with a developed court, the ceremonies must have been introduced gradually, especially when the reigns of Murad II and Mehmed II are considered. By the mid-fifteenth century at least, the receptions of envoys took place in the presence of the ruler and his viziers as it was the case in an instance described by Doukas. He was sent as an ambassador of the Genoese ruler of Lesbos, Domenico Gattilusio, to Adrianople in 1455. The author mentions that when he was accepted to the presence of the Ottoman ruler, he made obeisance to Mehmed II at first by kissing his hand according to the tradition. At this context, as understood from the narrative, Mehmed II was having a dinner. Doukas had to sit before the ruler and wait until the latter finished. After that he was able to pay his respects again, and departed. It was on the following day when Doukas was able to find an opportunity to be accepted by the viziers and thus was able to conduct the requirements and orders.⁹⁶⁰

Another story narrated by Doukas confirms the role of the kissing the hand of the ruler ceremony in diplomatic encounters at the Ottoman court. When Francesco Drapperio, “one of the magistrates of Galata,” came before Mehmed II, he kissed the sultan’s hand (ἀσπασάμενος τὴν χεῖρα τοῦ τυράννου) and received a discharge of debt in writing before he departed.⁹⁶¹ A further example from Doukas would be the author’s own encounter with the sultan and his viziers during their presence in Philippopolis. The author tells his readers that he kissed Mehmed II’s hands and

⁹⁶⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 44.1, 411-413.

⁹⁶¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 43.14, 411.

departed his presence.⁹⁶² The ceremonial practice of kissing hands is also observable in the Byzantine and Papal communication. A single surviving copy of a *gazavatname*, which describes the events that took place in 1443 and 1444, is an important source for the military operations of Murad II. This unique source, possibly written following the death of the Ottoman ruler, mentions the meeting of John VIII Palaiologos and the Pope. It also gives information on the practice of kissing hands. Accordingly, the Byzantine emperor, following his veneration by putting his face on the ground and removing his hat, kissed the Pope's hand.⁹⁶³ Sylvester Syropoulos, an eyewitness who was present there accompanying the emperor, claims to the contrary. For him, while the officials and the bishops kissed the pope's hand, the emperor did not.⁹⁶⁴

As was the case in all instances we recount here, the reception in the Ottoman court has two phases. At first, the foreign representative appears before the sultan and makes obeisance. In the next day, as the second phase, he communicates with the viziers and delivers the message he was entrusted with. Clearly, Ottoman ceremonial practices and the norms in the tradition of receiving foreign envoys developed over time. Compared to the earlier periods of the Ottoman court, the mid-fifteenth-century witnesses a much more elaborate hierarchy and order of operations in the diplomatic sphere.

While diplomatic negotiations remained confidential, courts followed certain rituals and displayed unique shows that aimed to amaze visitors with the splendor of the host country. In the courtly ceremonies held in the tenth-century Constantinople,

⁹⁶² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 44.2, 413.

⁹⁶³ *Gazavât- Sultân Murâd b. Mehmed Hân*, trans. İnalcık and Oğuz, 3.

⁹⁶⁴ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, IV, 236. For the English translation of the relevant passages, see Kondyli, et al. (eds), *Sylvester Syropoulos on politics and culture in the fifteenth-century Mediterranean*, Appendix, 221, 226. See also in that publication Price, "Precedence and Papal primacy," 34.

sources mention bright lights illuminating the space, beautiful perfumes, organs being played, terrifying automata, and other sumptuous displays that would create a sense of admiration in the eyes of envoys. As for the Palaiologan period, the extant sources informing about the venues of receptions have much in common. First of all, they often refer to the seats of the emperors and the placement of individuals present in the diplomatic meetings including how the envoys were located in these gatherings.

Speaking about the practice in the first half of the fourteenth century, Gregoras informs us about where and how the emperors stood when they received envoys. According to his description, the emperors stood on a basement slightly elevated from the ground in the imperial *triklinos*. The idea was that the emperor should stay above everyone else in the spot. The only exception was his family members, including his wife, sons, brothers, and sisters, who could also stand together with him on this high platform.⁹⁶⁵ That placement of individuals in a ceremonial setting is corroborated by another source, Ibn Battuta's traveler account which was contemporaneous with Gregoras. As described in the source, when Ibn Battuta appeared in front of the emperor, he saw the sovereign on his throne, the emperor's wife before him, and at the foot of the emperor there were the emperor's children including Bayalun Khatun.⁹⁶⁶ Ibn Battuta continues to count the people around the emperor by depicting a total of fourteen armed men protecting the sovereign.⁹⁶⁷ These descriptions, displaying the wonders or superior features or the

⁹⁶⁵ Gregoras, vol. I, Book 11.11, 566-567: "δῆλον γάρ ἐστι τοῖς ἅπασιν, ὥς αἱ τοῦ ἐπιπέδου ἐκ διαμέτρου ἀκρότητες τῶν βασιλικῶν τρικλινῶν ... , νῦν δὲ τοῖς ἐξ ἐθνῶν πρέσβεσιν."

⁹⁶⁶ Apart from Orhan's wife, Ibn Battuta also names one of the wives of Sultan Muhammed Özbek as Bayalun Khatun, who married the Byzantine emperor. Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 488.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibn Battuta gives details of his appearance in front of the emperor. The traveler writes that following a salutation he needed a sign -perhaps a node- from the emperor in order to be able to sit down. Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 504-506.

magnanimity of the Byzantine civilization, occupied a pivotal place in the account of Ibn Battuta and shed important light on the diplomatic receptions in late Byzantine Constantinople.

Compared to the earlier centuries of the Byzantine Empire, in the Palaiologan context, there are not many sources bearing descriptions of diplomatic meetings and their physical atmosphere. The reception of foreign visitors and envoys at the Byzantine court continued to follow certain rules in the fifteenth century. Upon their arrival at Pera, Clavijo and his companions were able to move to Constantinople, where they were provided with horses and officers who were responsible for accompanying them to the palace.⁹⁶⁸ Clavijo depicts an elaborate picture of a physical setting in which the emperor accepted his guests at his private chamber, possibly the *kellion* that is described by Pseudo-Kodinos, as “on a raised dais, carpeted with small rugs.”⁹⁶⁹ Similar to the descriptions of Clavijo, another Spanish traveler, Pero Tafur, left us detailed descriptions of the contemporary courtly practices in Byzantium. Tafur visited Constantinople twice in November 1437 and early 1438. In his descriptions of the imperial reception that he experienced at the Byzantine court, the author signifies the place of the emperor’s seat in a hall, which was all above others on a sort of a platform and was covered with a lion’s skin.⁹⁷⁰

There were other visitors to the Byzantine court in Constantinople that offer a vivid picture of how it looked in the fourteenth century. As a contemporary from that century, the Arab traveler Ibn Battuta wrote on his trips to Crimea, Constantinople,

⁹⁶⁸ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, trans. Le Strange, 61.

⁹⁶⁹ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, trans. Le Strange, 61. See Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Macrides, et al., 116.

⁹⁷⁰ Pero Tafur, *Travels and adventures 1435-1439*, ed. and trans. Letts. What Tafur describes as the palace in Constantinople might not have been Blachernae. Macrides, “Ceremonies and the City: The court in fourteenth-century Constantinople,” 230. Majeska also thinks that the Great Palace retained its place in Byzantine imperial life. See Majeska, *Russian travellers*, 244.

and the lands under Turkish control in the 1330s. His account, in spite of critiques about its veracity and chronology, is quite important on various topics as far as our matter is concerned, especially on the relations between Byzantium and the Crimean Tatars and Byzantine-Islamic encounters. He mentions a princess named Bayalun, the third Khatun of Sultan Muhammed Uzbek Khan, who was the daughter of “the Emperor of Constantinople the Great” (i.e. Andronikos III Palaiologos).⁹⁷¹ Ibn Battuta journeyed with her to Constantinople. His description of how he was treated and allowed to be present in front of the emperor illuminates certain aspects of the reception of ‘foreigners’ at the Byzantine court. Only after a certain process of preparations was he able to see the emperor. A Jewish interpreter, as we are told, who was working for the emperor, encouraged him not to be afraid and taught him how he should make a salutation to the emperor. The treatment of the interpreter to the emperor and the positions of the people around the emperor are thoroughly described by Ibn Battuta, who very well received by the emperor in the palace. The emperor asked him about the Holy Lands, and some regions like Anatolia, and then appointed a Greek man for him for his trips within the city to see its marvelous sights, including a monastery.⁹⁷²

In Byzantine tradition, the reception of foreign embassies followed a certain protocol, which aimed to impress the members of embassies as well as to pinpoint the status of the emperor.⁹⁷³ Ibn Battuta describes a lively picture of the reception of foreigners in Byzantine Constantinople. When he came before the first gate of the palace in Constantinople, he and his companions were not allowed to enter because

⁹⁷¹ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. I, 149.

⁹⁷² Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 504-506; 511. What follows in the text of Ibn Battuta is his invaluable description of Constantinople’s topography.

⁹⁷³ The *proskynesis* was one of the signs that highlights the utmost sovereignty of the ruler.

the guards at the gate said that the visitors did not have permission. While they were staying at the gate waiting to go in, Bayalun Khatun interfered and informed the emperor about the visitors, to whom a house next to the residence of the khatun was given. The emperor later issued an order that would preserve the visitors from any unpleasant circumstances that they could be exposed to in the city.⁹⁷⁴

Compared to his portrayal of the ceremonies held in the Byzantine court in Constantinople, Ibn Battuta's description of his experience in the Ottoman Bursa and Nicaea occupies a lesser place in his account. While he draws a general physical outlook of the Ottoman cities, he does not mention any royal ceremony that took place in Orhan's presence. He underlines the generous character of both Orhan, who provided the traveler a lot of money, and his wife Bayalun Khatun, who approached Ibn Battuta honorably and hospitably by sending him gifts.⁹⁷⁵

Marriage alliances required obligatory preparation for ceremonies to be held in courts. The marriage between Orhan and Theodora Kantakouzene, the daughter of John VI Kantakouzenos, is indicative of the types and details of ceremonies. Almost a year before John's coronation in the spring of 1347, the summer of 1346 witnessed a series of entertainments and astonishing celebrations that took place at Skoutari and lasted for some days.⁹⁷⁶

Narratives from the Byzantine authors attest to the cultural symbolism, which may apparently be observed through the processions on diplomatic occasions. Sources describe various dimensions of diplomatic encounters such as the way the greetings took place, the way the conversations were held, gestures and elements of

⁹⁷⁴ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 504-506.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 451-454. For the hospitality as a common feature observed by Ibn Battuta, see Pancaroğlu, "Devotion, hospitality and architecture in Medieval Anatolia," 48-81.

⁹⁷⁶ See Kantakouzenos, vol. III, Book 4.4, 28. See also Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460*, no. 29, 134-135.

fashion or language, requirements during an ambassadorial visit at one's court, the presents, etc. Among them, it is worth noting that fashion held a prominent role. Here, it would be useful to set a background by presenting a particular example before the Palaiologan age. Theodore II Laskaris, according to Pachymeres, was educated by his father in a fashion that the latter showed his anger if needed. Pachymeres narrates an occasion, which illustrates the major role of clothing in diplomatic occasions. His father reproached Theodore II due to the latter's neglectful attitude and clothing, because as the emperor thought, they were not appropriate for the Romans. At the occasion as described by Pachymeres, during a hunt Theodore was dressed in gold which was exclusively reserved for particular moments. The emperor reminded his son of the role of silk and gold and underlined the prominent place of these two components in the imperial clothing. As Pachymeres reported from emperor John III Vatatzes's words, which indicates the prominence of the subject: "We must display their [the Romans'] riches through the splendor of our clothing on the arrival of embassies sent by foreigners."⁹⁷⁷ Moreover, Gregoras, who has a part discussing the changing habits/customs on clothing, also criticizes the way the children of their friends began to look like foreigners by adopting either Latin or Persian clothing styles.⁹⁷⁸ Elsewhere Gregoras again puts an emphasis on the break of the tradition of Byzantine dressing customs, suffering from the strange-looking and foreign headgear that became common among the Byzantines in every segment of the society.⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷⁷ Cited in Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 272.

⁹⁷⁸ Gregoras, vol. III, 555-556.

⁹⁷⁹ Gregoras, vol. III, 566-568.

On the garments worn during the diplomatic occasions, evidence is scarce. Departing from the evidence explained above, a few more instances dispersed in several accounts could confirm that the parties showed ultimate attention to clothing in times of diplomatic ceremonies. Doukas narrates his personal experience during the diplomatic visit of Domenico Gattilusio, the lord of Lesbos, in 1455 to Mehmed II, who was by then sojourning in Philippopolis. The author also accompanied Domenico, whose visit aimed to reach an agreement with the Ottoman ruler on the annual tribute that the former was requested to pay. The guests were all dressed properly. While Domenico had a gold-embroidered robe (ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν χρυσοῦφαντον στολὴν), his retinue including Doukas himself were dressed in silken clothes (σηρικὰ).⁹⁸⁰ This way of dressing up in such costly and ceremonial garments might have always been the fashion for each diplomatic contact between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state.

Displaying splendor to foreign envoys via clothing is related to other forms of display, that is showing off wonders and superior features or the magnanimity of the Byzantine civilization. In the diplomatic receptions at the Byzantine court, foreign envoys were exposed to various forms of this visual display.

During the fierce struggle between Musa and Mehmed, Manuel II Palaiologos sided with the latter due to the treaty signed in 1413. Following the agreement and with the help of the vessels provided by the Byzantine emperor, Mehmed could cross the straits, possibly from Yoros or Skoutari as the Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles suggest and reach before Constantinople. Mehmed was there to fight a battle with Musa, and his logistical needs seem to have been met by the Byzantine emperor. The

⁹⁸⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 44.2, 415.

Ahval, furthermore, mentions the Byzantine troops that participated in the battle at Mehmed's side.⁹⁸¹ During Mehmed's stay outside of Constantinople for a few days before the battle of Çamurlu, he was given feasts by the emperor Manuel, who reserved him an honorable fine place.⁹⁸² John W. Barker interprets this treaty merely as a truce.⁹⁸³ The strong intention of defeating each other always occupied the minds of Manuel II and Mehmed I. Furthermore, Neşrî makes other references to the existence of feasts that were organized by Mehmed I to host the supporting political powers, which assisted in his struggle to gain superiority over the Ottoman throne.⁹⁸⁴

4.4 Language in diplomatic communications

The place of language in diplomatic communications between the Byzantine emperors and the Ottoman rulers may be investigated by looking at two aspects of the language both in correspondence and in conversation. This sub-chapter aims to present the examples of language used in diplomatic communications that were conveyed through historical narratives. Due to the scarcity of diplomatic reports and letters, such an attempt must rely on these narratives. If the Turkish sovereigns in

⁹⁸¹ Kastritsis, *The sons of Bayezid: Empire building and representation in the Ottoman civil war of 1402-1413*, 188-9.

⁹⁸² Kastritsis, *The tales of Sultan Mehmed, son of Bayezid Khan*, 83-84 (= "Rûhî Târîhi," ed. Cengiz and Yücel, 431). Explaining the Byzantine-Ottoman diplomacy and support before the battle of Çamurlu, Neşrî writes as follows: "Andan [Bursa] kalkıp, Yalak-Ova'ya varıp, anda cebe gördü. Bu kadar askerleri görüp, sevinip, şükr-ı Hake dip, derya kenarına yetişip, İstanbul tekvuruna haber gönderdi. Çün Tekvur Sultan'ın geldiğini işitti, be-gaayet şâdgâm oldu. Fi'l-hâl gemiler ihzar edip, askeri öte yakaya geçirdiler. Tekvur kendisi dahi Sultan'a istikbal edip, kemâl-ı 'izzet ve ikram ve ihtiram birle alıp, gelip, Sultan'ı bir hoş mevzi'-ı şerifte kondurdu. Andan envâ'-ı ziyafât edip, Musa Çelebi elinden ciğeri hûn olup, Rumeli ve Eflâk çerisiyle üzerimize gelip, İstanbul'un kapılarını yaptırıp, halkı taşra çıkarmağa komayıp, envâ'-ı te'addisinden be-gaayet şikâyet etti. Sultan dahi Tekvur'a eyitti ki: 'İşte ben-dahi anın üzerine giderem. Sen-de benimle bile olmak gereksin' dedi. Andan Tekvur eyitti: 'Ey Sultan-ı âlem, Ben şimdi gayet pîr oldum. Mecâlim yoktur. Amma yoldaş koşayım' deyip, kefereden hayli kişi yoldaş koşup, muavenete bile gönderdi." Neşrî, vol. II, 505-507. Neşrî, vol. II, 491: "... Sultan Mehmed İstanbul önünde birkaç gün konup oturdu. Tekvur dahi eyi ziyafetler etti."

⁹⁸³ Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 288-289.

⁹⁸⁴ Neşrî, vol. II, 510.

Anatolia utilized Greek as diplomatic language and made their messages/letters written in Greek while communicating the Byzantine Empire, what was the function of individuals such as Theologos Korax in the Byzantine court with abilities in Turkish language?⁹⁸⁵ This may explain why officials like Korax might have been employed in meetings as interpreters and perhaps sometimes as negotiators.

We know that interpreters in various languages existed at both courts. Employed in the Ottoman court, Michael Philes was a scribe whose expertise was in both Greek and Arabic letters. Likewise, Theologos Korax, despite his enigmatic background except that he is said to have been from Philadelphia, served in the Byzantine court as an authorized and favored interpreter.⁹⁸⁶

Language, and thus interpreters constituted a central role in the success of a foreign mission. In his *Apologia*, where the author informs the reader about his life and personal thoughts, Demetrios Kydones asserts that his main motivation behind learning Latin had its root in the mediocrity of the court interpreters in Constantinople with regard to the Latin language. Therefore, he learned it personally in order to carry out the dealings and diplomatic procedures with Western state parties.⁹⁸⁷ Given the possibility that this kind of circumstance might have occasionally prevailed, one needs to question the competence of language skills of officials in court services. Kydones, in the aforementioned example, talks about the incapacity of the Latin translators, which cannot by all means be generalized for

⁹⁸⁵ Delilbaşı, “Türk Sultan ve Beylerine ait Yunanca belgeler hakkında bazı bilgiler,” 73.

⁹⁸⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.7, 161 and Book 28.5, 235.

⁹⁸⁷ Kydones, “Apologie della propria fede: I. Ai Greci Ortodossi,” ed. Mercati, *Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV*, 360-361; cf. Kianka, “The apology of Demetrius Cydones: A fourteenth-century autobiographical source,” 60; also see Mergiali, *L’enseignement et lettrés pendant l’époque des Paléologues (1261-1453)*, 125. Also, Kydones, *Correspondance*, ed. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 333, 266-268.

other languages. At this point, the question of what languages were used in Byzantine diplomacy comes to the fore.

Narrating the circumstances before the Ottoman assault against Thessalonike in 1430, John Anagnostis describes that Murad II sent Christian envoys to call the inhabitants to surrender. He also mentions that the Ottoman ruler shot arrows with letters, which were possibly in Greek language, attached to them and sent into the city.⁹⁸⁸ This way of announcing the pending circumstances to the besieged public is also mentioned by Symeon, the Archbishop of Thessalonike. The archbishop points out the letters sent by the Turks, during the great assault in March 1426, thrown into the city walls by arrows stating and threatening that if the Thessalonians are not surrendered with their own would leave everybody including wife and children to perish.⁹⁸⁹ Likewise, in the same year, as another example showing Greek letters addressed to Byzantine communities in various urban centers such as Ioannina, the inhabitants of the city received Greek letters (“names”) sent by Murad II and Sinan Paşa, who was then the beylerbegi of Rumelia.⁹⁹⁰

A couple of evidence may indicate the use of the Greek language in diplomatic communications between Byzantine and Ottoman courts. There is a document bearing the tughra of Bayezid I addresses a Byzantine emperor, despite its illegible content. It was written in Greek with a salutation and reads “ὁρισμὸς τοῦ

⁹⁸⁸ “The Diegesis of John Anagnostes,” trans. Melville-Jones, *Venice and Thessalonica 1423-1430. The Greek accounts*, 159; Delilbaşı, *Johannis Anagnostis, “Selânik (Thessaloniki) ’in son zaptı hakkında bir tarih*,” 29. Delilbaşı, in the Appendix of her study, reprinted the publication of the text by Tsaras, “Οἱ δυο ἑμμετρες μονωδίες για την τελευταία ἄλωση της Θεσσαλονίκης,” 64-99, ch. 9 reads as follows: “... γράμματα τοῖς βέλεσι πεπομφῶς ἐντὸς πλεῖστα, τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὅρκοις καὶ ταῦτα συνδούμενα καὶ τὰ αὐτὰ διαγγέλλοντα.” “[he] also sent large numbers of messages into the city by means of his arrows, with some promises attached to them, and making the same proclamations.” English translation by Melville-Jones, “The Diegesis of John Anagnostes” in *Venice and Thessalonica 1423-1430. The Greek accounts*, 159.

⁹⁸⁹ Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonike, ed. Balfour, IV, 46-49.

⁹⁹⁰ These letters were inviting the inhabitants to surrender to the Ottomans. See Delilbaşı, “Selanik ve Yanya’da Osmanlı egemenliğinin kurulması,” 75-106.

μεγάλου αὐθέντου καὶ μεγάλου ἀμνηρᾶ τοῦ Παγιαζίου μπέη εἰς τὸν ἐκλαμπρότατον [a decree of the great efendi and great emir of Bayezid Beg to the brightest]...”, which means that it was addressed to one of the contemporary Palaiologan emperors, John V, John VII or Manuel II.⁹⁹¹ Another document preserved in the Greek College in Rome is undated but bears apparent indications that it was sent by Mehmed I to the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos. Despite the fact that one does not know if it was originally written in Greek because the existing document could be a translation, the genuine document might have been composed in Greek.⁹⁹²

On the other hand, we have few sources that discuss the original language(s) in which the treaty of 1403 was drawn up. The only surviving and perhaps preliminary copy of a series of treaties from 1403, the text of the peace treaty signed around January or February reveals the conditions agreed by the parties. The text begins with an explanation that it was a copy of the treaty, which was composed in Turkish. It prompts further questions about whether it was the only language of the agreement or one of the languages that the text of the treaty was written in, because at the time of the conclusion of the treaty the original copy of the treaty might have existed in more than one language. It may be argued that this example may reflect that the translation into Latin was done from a copy written in Turkish and as if it came from Süleyman’s mouth.⁹⁹³ There might have been a Greek version of the text because otherwise the contents were not known by the parties. The other possibility is that it was originally drawn up in Turkish and as if the words are Süleyman’s since

⁹⁹¹ The document is kept in Mount Athos, in the Monastery of St. Paul today. Wittek, “Notes sur la tughra Ottomane,” 271.

⁹⁹² Lampros, “Τὸ ἐν Ῥώμῃ Ἑλληνικὸν Γυμνάσιον (Collegio greco) καὶ οἱ ἐν τῷ ἀρχεῖῳ αὐτοῦ ἑλληνικοὶ κώδικες,” 11. See Delilbaşı, “Türk Sultan ve Beylerine ait Yunanca belgeler hakkında bazı bilgiler,” 78, 80, 84.

⁹⁹³ Dennis, “The Byzantine-Turkish treaty of 1403,” 77-82.

the main axis of the treaty is the concessions that he gave to the parties of the agreement.

4.5 Oaths: Obeying oaths or “eating them like cabbages”⁹⁹⁴

At this part of the thesis, I would like to ponder on the concept of oath as a binding element for the legitimacy of agreements. Oaths and oath-taking were inevitable components of a diplomatic guarantee.⁹⁹⁵ The issue of the function of oaths in persuading individuals constitutes a huge topic to be treated in a separate study. For that matter, I will try to investigate the place of oaths in diplomatic contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state within a wider context of the history of the relations without much historicizing the concept.

The influence and binding power of an oath depended on its innate nature as a sort of expression in a religious sense. In other words, an oath necessitates or brings a certain level of allegiance to the individuals who swore it. The dependence on an oath contained religious elements that actually made its power stronger. As confirmation of a statement on a diplomatic occasion, be it a compact or a diplomatic correspondence, by taking oaths parties ensured that the terms reached should not be broken. In other words, oaths brought credibility to the promises made.

In the context of late Byzantium, the prominent role of oaths in the formation of bonds of relations or as assurance was accelerated after the thirteenth century,

⁹⁹⁴ The expression of “eating oaths like cabbages” belongs to Sphrantzes. The author uses it to explain the persons who breached their faith. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 39.1, 152: “φάγη τοὺς ὅρκους ὡς λάχανα.”

⁹⁹⁵ Kantakouzenos, trans. McLaughlin, “Commentary,” 293-294. For a very important study of the envoys, oaths, etc., see Penna, *The Byzantine imperial acts to Venice, Pisa and Genoa, 10th-12th centuries. A comparative legal study*.

possibly as a result of the Latins, who took over Constantinople and remained there until 1261.⁹⁹⁶

Swearing oaths was an indispensable part of a treaty that was bilingually prepared and signed.⁹⁹⁷ The term generally shows itself in Greek as ὅρκος (pl. ὅρκοι or ὅρκια, the latter sometimes as an accusative) and is often used with an expression of giving an oath to or exchanging oaths with someone (δίδει ὅρκους αὐτῷ).⁹⁹⁸ In early 1413, when Mehmed I crossed over to Constantinople and negotiated over the expected Byzantine support towards him, both interlocutors swore oaths (ὅρκια ποιησάμενοι) “on terms that seemed advantageous to them.”⁹⁹⁹ In another case, concerning the 1413 treaty between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state, one can observe the representatives of both sides met at Adrianople to conclude a solemn treaty bound by mutual oaths (συνθήκας ἐνόρκους ποιήσας).¹⁰⁰⁰

The oaths were not necessarily given orally. Guaranteeing the content of negotiations and the application of decisions, oaths needed to be received in a written form, too. Following an embassy sent by Manuel II Palaiologos aiming to persuade Mehmed I to compensate the expenses of the pretender Mustafa and his companion Juneid, the envoys entrusted in this mission seem to have brought solemn pledges

⁹⁹⁶ For the impact that began from the late eleventh century onwards, see the study by Pryor, “The oaths of the leaders of the First Crusade to Emperor Alexius I Comnenus: fealty, homage – πίστις, δουλεία,” 111-141. On the role of the oaths and their particular usage in late Byzantine contexts, see for more Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 329; Rochette, “Empereurs et serment sous les Paléologues,” 160; Shawcross, “In the name of the true emperors: Politics of resistance after the Palaiologan usurpation,” 203-227.

⁹⁹⁷ Beihammer, “Epistolography and diplomatics,” 209.

⁹⁹⁸ For an example, see Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.3, 83.

⁹⁹⁹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, Book 4, 168; the translation is by Kaldellis, Book 4.13, 295. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3332.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.1, 133. As a further example, see how Mehmed and Manuel swore oaths in Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 4.45, 337; ed. Darkó, vol. I, 191: “καὶ ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὅρκια τε ἐποιήσαντο.” On Bayezid I’s promise to hand over the Peloponnesos to John, Manuel’s nephew, see Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.4, 85: “καὶ ὁ Παγιαζήτ ἀντὶ τῆς Πόλεως ὑπέσχετο δώσειν τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἐνόρκως καὶ εἰς τὸ ἐξῆς ἔχειν εἰρηναίαν κατάστασιν.” – “For the City, Bayezid promised on oath to deliver to John the Peloponnesos and henceforth to maintain a state of peace.” Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 86).

(λαβὼν ὄρκους) confirming that Mustafa “would not be released during the lifetime of Mehmed.”¹⁰⁰¹ Approving Manuel’s request concerning the expenses, Mehmed was also expected to give a solemn compact to the envoys present, who retreated after they received it as a written confirmation (λαβόντες οὖν σύμφωνα ἐγγράφως καὶ ὄρκους οἱ πρέσβεις ἀπήεσαν).¹⁰⁰² Chalkokondyles also mentions this treaty of Autumn 1416 that brought tranquility to the turbulent relations between the two polities which had its roots in Mehmed I’s siege of Thessalonike.¹⁰⁰³ Utilizing a generic term for treaties by calling it ὄρκια, the author also means that it was a sort of swearing oath on the topics compromised (ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὄρκια τε ἐποίησαντο).¹⁰⁰⁴

On the other hand, breaching an oath or perjury could well make relations come to an end or at least require reconsideration. In occasions of diplomatic contacts, oaths were regarded as the single most binding criterion providing a guarantee of fealty. Showing an extensive variety of types, oaths occupy a significant place in the narrative sources. Political sovereigns lent a certain credibility to promises and agreements by swearing oaths. In the late Middle Ages and early modern period, we see evidence for different oath-taking practices across societies. The oath formula thus depended on the cultural and religious traditions of each society. In Christianity, for instance, gestures with religious elements could be observed, such as the laying of one’s hand on the Bible during the process of oath-

¹⁰⁰¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 159. The translation is by Magoulas. See Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 125.

¹⁰⁰² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 161.

¹⁰⁰³ On these embassies, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3363 and 3364.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 191; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 4.45, 336.

taking.¹⁰⁰⁵ It is commonplace to mark each polity's oaths in a traditional and distinct way.

Oaths were regarded as indicators of pledge or confidence. Following the battle of Pelagonia, Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos allied with William, the Prince of Achaia, who had been put into prison. Pachymeres depicted a scene in which both parties negotiated an agreement by mutually taking oaths. After releasing William from the prison, Michael received him at the baptismal font, a sign of a superior position of the Byzantine emperor over his guest, and they mutually swore "execrable oaths" (τοὺς ὄρκους φρικτούς). Pachymeres goes on to describe the oath-taking ceremony as follows:

After that, they bound each other reciprocally by execrable oaths, each holding a lighted candle in his hand. They pronounced against each other (in case the oaths were broken) the most horrible curses and then at once extinguished their candles according to the custom of the Italians in their excommunications (συνέθεντό τε μετὰ ταῦτα τοὺς ὄρκους φρικτούς, ὡς λέγουσί τινες, ὥστε καὶ φρύκτωρα ἀνάψαντας ἅμα τοῖς λεχθεῖσιν εἰς ὄρκους καὶ ἀρὰς τὰς παλαμναιοτάτας σβῆναι ποιῆσαι, ὃ δὴ καὶ εἰς ἀσφαλὲς τοῖς Ἰταλοῖς τῶν παρ' ἐκείνοις ἀφορισμῶν τελεῖται).¹⁰⁰⁶

It must be noted that such customs were rather of Western origin.¹⁰⁰⁷

Regarding the sources under consideration in the present thesis, detailed accounts of an oath-taking ceremony are extremely rare. A few narrative sources shed light on how an oath was performed. At this point, Doukas offers a full picture of the method of swearing an oath by an Ottoman ruler. While the author narrates the

¹⁰⁰⁵ For the cross as a sign of authentication in private documents, see Dölger, *Aus den schatzkammern des heiligen berges*, vol. I, 283-6. See also for the certificate: Voordeckers, "A propos de la renonciation au trône d'Andronic II Paléologue en 1330," 185-188.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. I, 123.

¹⁰⁰⁷ In his research, Savvas Kyriakidis investigates how oaths were used in activities of subversion and duplicity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of Byzantium. Kyriakidis, "The use of oaths in the conspiracies and revolts against Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328)," 269-284.

embassy of Constantine XI Palaiologos and the inhabitants of Constantinople¹⁰⁰⁸ consisting of anonymous envoys (πρέσβεις) to Mehmed II, as a common treatment following a change of ruler, the Serbians also dispatched their envoys (ἀποκρισιαρίους) for the same purpose by asking for oaths to be sworn to renew and secure (ἀνανεῶσαι καὶ ἀσφαλίσασθαι) the treaties.¹⁰⁰⁹ The aim of the embassy, thus, was to deliver condolences to Mehmed for his father's death and to congratulate him upon his enthronement, as Doukas calls it the dying [Byzantine Empire] saluting the death [the Ottomans].¹⁰¹⁰ He describes how Mehmed welcomed the embassy and successfully concluded new treaties (γράφει νέας διαθήκας) –and possibly renewed old ones- by reserving certain revenues for the Byzantines. Mehmed conveyed via the envoys his fine promises (τῶν καλῶν ὑποσχέσεων) of friendly relations between his state and the Byzantines, and not to disturb at any rate the city of Constantinople and its environs, the promises that he would obey throughout his life. He swore on the name of the god of his namesake “false prophet,” the books, angels, and archangels of that god.¹⁰¹¹ As Doukas adds, Mehmed gave also a promise to pursue his father's (Murad II) goodwill and temper which was shown to both the penultimate emperor and the reigning emperor himself. In that part of his narrative, Doukas mentions a series of foreign embassies visiting Mehmed, the “truly flesh-

¹⁰⁰⁸ Here, it is interesting to indicate the Constantinopolitans as a sending party together with the emperor.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.11, 289: “φιλοφρόνως οὖν δεξιωσάμενος τοὺς ἀποκρισιαρίους καὶ ἐνωμότους συνθήκας δοὺς καὶ λαβὼν ἀπέλυσεν ἐν εἰρήνῃ.”

¹⁰¹⁰ “ἔστειλαν πρέσβεις χάριν παραμυθίας καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τὴν καθεδρίαν προσαγορεύσοντες” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.12, 289.

¹⁰¹¹ “ὁμνύει θεὸν τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου καὶ τὸν συνώνυμον αὐτοῦ προφήτην καὶ τὰς μιὰς αὐτοῦ βίβλους καὶ ἀγγέλους καὶ ἀρχαγγέλους” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.12, 289.

bearing demon” as he calls him, in which Mehmed gave trustworthy pledges (λαβόντες τὰ πιστὰ κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν).¹⁰¹²

Oaths were used as a basic tool to convince people in their broadest sense. They were sometimes sworn towards the public or inhabitants of a certain settlement. As narrated by Nestor-Iskandar, when Mehmed II and his troops set foot in Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman conqueror made an attempt to stop the bloody circumstances in the city and gave the leading individuals of the city firm pledges. Accordingly, Mehmed swore an oath for ceasing the fire in the city, which was announced throughout the streets and other corners of Constantinople. He also added to be merciless if the situation proves to be the contrary.¹⁰¹³

There is a lengthy passage in Doukas’s narrative, which reveals Manuel II’s response to Mehmed I’s letter that the latter wrote the emperor regarding the issue of the pretender Mustafa and Juneid, who took shelter in Thessalonike and demanded the return of these “fugitives.” In this letter, Manuel underlines the symbolic father-son relationship between him and Mehmed. One passage illustrates how much significance was attributed to the oaths that they both had taken. The passage is worth quoting in full here. Manuel II is said to have made the following speech to Mehmed I:

You know full well that I have promised to be a father to you, and that you have promised to be a son to me. If we both keep our promises then, lo, we shall have feared God and kept His commandments! If we, on the other hand, break them, then, lo, the father will be a traitor to his son and the son will be called his father’s murderer! For myself, I will keep the oaths. You, however, do not wish to abide by them. Let God who avenges the wronged be the righteous judge. As for the fugitives, I am unable to issue the

¹⁰¹² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.12, 289-291. For the English translation of the passage regarding Constantine XI’s embassy and other related topics, see Doukas, trans. Magoulas, 190-191.

¹⁰¹³ Nestor-Iskander, *The tale of Constantinople (of its origins and capture by the Turks in the year 1453)*, trans. Hanak and Philippides, 89-91.

order to surrender them into your hands. Such a deed befits not an emperor but a tyrant. Were our roles reversed and I were the one pursuing my brother, and were he, as he fled, to seek refuge under your wings, you too, at my demand, would not hand him over to me to be killed. And if you did perchance surrender him, you would be guilty of committing an inhuman act by becoming both traitor and murderer. Be certain of this: never shall such a despicable deed be perpetrated by me. However, as I have committed myself to perform the duty of father to you, I swear to you by the one God who is praised in the Trinity by us Christians, that neither the fugitive Mustafa nor his companion Juneid will ever be discharged from prison until your life and sovereignty have come to an end in this world. After your death we will let matters take their course. If you are unwilling, do as you like.¹⁰¹⁴

As this lengthy quotation shows, Manuel gave promises that he would keep an eye on the “fugitives” and would not let them disturb Mehmed. Here, one can observe the fact that Manuel tended to dwell on sworn oaths, not only the ones sworn by the interlocutor but also the ones sworn by himself.

In early 1412, Manuel II, when he invited Mehmed to Skoutari to be transported to Constantinople with his troops to fight against his brother Musa, gave his solemn pledge (πίστεις δούς) making his promises bound. Possibly strengthening his promise, Manuel’s pledge might have led the Ottoman ruler to accept the emperor’s proposal. Mehmed thus traveled across Constantinople.¹⁰¹⁵

It seems that sometimes a need for renewing oaths arose in cases for which oaths were already taken. The reason for that would either derive from an intention to make a promise more convincing; or an oath was deemed necessary due simply to changing circumstances. When a Serbian embassy loaded with costly gifts from a visit to Orhan’s court was laid an ambush in the Byzantine territories, John VI Kantakouzenos through an embassy in autumn 1352 had to appease the Ottoman

¹⁰¹⁴ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 157-159; trans. Magoulias, 124.

¹⁰¹⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 25.3, 203; Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3331.

ruler by performing new oaths, stronger than the previous ones (ὄρκους καινότερους αὐθις παρέσχε τῶν πρὶν ἰσχυροτέρους).¹⁰¹⁶

Also caused by the changing political circumstances, a need could appear for the elimination of existing treaties and oaths. Constantine XI Palaiologos, faced by an impending Ottoman assault in late 1452, decided to approach Mehmed II albeit his former contacts by raising the possibility that if the Ottoman sultan wants to implant peace, he would be ready to accept it. On the other hand, through his envoys to Mehmed II, the emperor underlined his readiness for a possible battle.

Interestingly, as Doukas transmits, Constantine XI, who remarked that Mehmed did not obey the oaths (ὄρκους) and waged war against the Byzantines, made it apparent to Mehmed that the latter now had to take his oaths and treaties back because they would no longer be applicable under current conditions.¹⁰¹⁷

It is a frequent phenomenon treated in the narrative sources that the Byzantine emperors reminded or referred to former or existing treaties and oaths that were sworn or concluded on a particular matter. Therefore, the oaths of former rulers were certainly expected to be binding also for successors. The emperor John VI Kantakouzenos sent envoys to the Serbian ruler in order to remind him of the oath and the treaties and to accuse him of deviating from them.¹⁰¹⁸ In troublesome conditions on the eve of the final Ottoman assault against the city of Constantinople, as Kritoboulos narrates, Constantine XI Palaiologos ordered his associates who went to visit Mehmed II to reach a compromise by referring to the treaties and agreements.

¹⁰¹⁶ Gregoras, vol. III, 151. Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2998. In this situation, Kantakouzenos in a way tried to counterbalance the recent rapprochements between the Ottomans and the Genoese.

¹⁰¹⁷ Doukas narrates the words of Constantine XI as follows: “Πλὴν κατὰ τὸ παρὸν λαβέ σου τὰς συνθήκας καὶ τοὺς ὄρκους.” Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.11, 305.

¹⁰¹⁸ “πρέσβεις πρὸς τὸν Τριβαλλὸν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀπεστέλλει, τοὺς ὄρκους καὶ τὰς συνθήκας ἀναμνήσκοντας καὶ τὴν ἐκεῖθεν ἐλέγχοντας παρέκβασιν.” See Gregoras, vol. II, 16.7, 834. – at the beginning of spring 1348. The embassy was sent to Stefan Dušan.

What the Byzantine envoys reminded Mehmed of was the earlier treaties concluded and remained valid in the times of the father or grandfather of the Ottoman ruler as well as during his own reign. These envoys demanded from him not to break the treaties (λύειν τὰς σπονδὰς) for petty reasons.¹⁰¹⁹

Another example would be the breaking of a solemn pledge which was given by Murad II to George Brankovic, the ruler of Serbia. When one of Murad II's nobles who later became his vizier, Fazlullah, encouraged the Ottoman ruler to take the new fortress of Smederovo, Murad was convinced and sent his envoys (πέμπει οὖν ἀποκρισιarioύς) to demand the surrender of the fortress. George Brankovic reminded the envoys of Murad's solemn pledge that the Ottoman ruler had previously given. Yet at any rate Murad did not change his mind and consequently attacked the fortress.¹⁰²⁰ Doukas transmits Fazlullah's words to the Ottoman ruler, who "heeded the words of Satan," although Murad was "ingenuous" and "having no evil in his heart."¹⁰²¹

We may here digress for a moment and briefly touch upon the issue of decision-taking processes, concerning how to respond in a diplomatic contact, in order to obtain a complete understanding of the dynamics in diplomatic relations. One useful example of how the request of a certain embassy was evaluated before delivering an official reply to it emerges from the aftermath of the emperor Andronikos III's death in 1341. John VI Kantakouzenos describes an action taken when an embassy arrived from Alexander, the ruler of the Bulgarians, demanding back his son Sismanos who took refuge in Byzantium. The envoys delivered news of

¹⁰¹⁹ Kritoboulos, ed. Reinsch, 20; trans. Riggs, 17.

¹⁰²⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.4, 261: "ὁ δὲ ἀνταπέστειλεν αὐτῷ λόγους ἀναμινήσκων τοὺς ὅρκους καὶ τὴν συγγένειαν."

¹⁰²¹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.4, 261; trans. Magoulas, 177.

the oaths of Andronikos III, which were given by him previously regarding the alliance between the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarian state. This request had to be discussed in the senate and offered to the empress Anna of Savoy for her consideration. Underlining his central advisory role in state affairs, Kantakouzenos writes that he also attended the meeting and was asked his opinion on the return of the refugee.¹⁰²² This particular example clearly indicates how former oaths could function as tools in diplomatic performances.

The senate's role as a consulting body in Byzantium can further be exemplified in a unique case. A Genoese embassy visited Constantinople for a request for peace in 1348. In the absence of John VI Kantakouzenos, the embassy was met by the Empress Eirene herself as Gregoras narrates. Informing the emperor about the embassy and waiting for his decision, the empress's resolution, in the meantime, was to convene the popular assembly and the Senate (ἐκκλησίαν συνέλεξεν) in Constantinople.¹⁰²³ The peace request was not accepted, and war ultimately broke out. Given that the function of the senate in late Byzantium has not extensively been studied, this piece of information pinpoints the process of decision-making in response to an embassy.¹⁰²⁴ Such a method is not observable in every diplomatic process. This is the only case in which a popular assembly or *boulai* was gathered for a specific purpose related to foreign relations.

¹⁰²² Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 19-20. As Kantakouzenos informs, although the deadline for Alexander's response already passed, he was approached by another Byzantine embassy. The persistent attitude of the Byzantines made Alexander step back and agree to renew the previous treaty. Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 69.

¹⁰²³ According to Gregoras's testimony, the gathering must have taken place on August 12, 1348. See Gregoras, vol. II, 845-846. See also Tsirpanlis, "Byzantine parliaments and representative assemblies from 1081 to 1351," 473.

¹⁰²⁴ For an overview on the topic, see Kyritses, "The imperial council and the tradition of consultative decision-making in Byzantium (eleventh to fourteenth centuries)," 57-70.

In Manuel II's absence (1399-1403) his nephew John VII took hold of the government in Constantinople. The treaty of 1403 took place in such a circumstance that the Byzantine side was represented by the regent nephew. Yet the negotiator was not considered appropriate, due to the fact that negotiations should be renewed upon Manuel's return. For that reason, Süleyman attempted to reach Manuel during his stay in Venice and aimed to discuss the treaty. His efforts did not yield success, and thus, it was John VII who eventually signed the treaty.

Turning to our topic of oaths, we can investigate more examples. The clash between Murad II and Mustafa, the pretender to the throne, became so harsh that the latter entered to Adrianople and claimed for the Ottoman throne. Mustafa and his companion Juneid now began to claim permanent sovereignty upon the fortress of Gallipoli. Manuel II Palaiologos thereupon dispatched his trusted general, Demetrios Laskaris Leontares, to discuss matters about the current situation with the pretender at Gallipoli. In his speech to Mustafa, as transmitted by the historian Doukas, Demetrios Laskaris Leontares referred to the previous Ottoman rulers as oath-breakers, as they had all transgressed their oaths (παραβάντες τοὺς ὅρκους). As for Leontares, there was one exception, Mehmed I, who obeyed what he had promised so that he "was happily rewarded with a peaceful end and the joys of sovereignty."¹⁰²⁵ Eventually Mustafa and Juneid broke their solemn oaths and made Leontarios return empty-handed without achieving the fortress of Gallipoli.

Was an oath sufficient all by itself to persuade the interlocutor? Giving an oath in most cases opened the gates for agreement. Doukas relays an instance in which Dracul, whose sons were hostages in Adrianople, arrived before Murad II in the

¹⁰²⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 24.12, 199. The translation belongs to Magoulías. See Doukas, trans. Magoulías, 145.

Ottoman capital to offer his obeisance. Murad allowed Dracul to return to Wallachia only after the latter gave his solemn oath (δοῦς ὄρκους καὶ λαβών) that he would be a faithful servant.¹⁰²⁶ Moreover, Manuel II Palaiologos mentions a case in which his brother Theodore, the despot of the Morea, put faith in a foreign nation (i.e. the Albanians) just by relying on their oaths. In the Funeral Oration Manuel wrote on the occasion of Theodore's death, the author notes the following:

[The Albanians] sent a magnificent embassy to the man [Theodore] they had come to, in order to find out what his intention towards them was and they wished to receive his consent to their entry that they might settle and obey his wishes. And he received their ambassadors gladly and through these ambassadors he then summoned their leaders to his presence. When they came, he welcomed them most kindly and having given them a taste of the sweetness of his nature he won them over to his side. He did not take any hostages, he did not demand guarantees, but simply contended himself with their oaths, although most of his entourage were apprehensive of their numbers and suspected that the different customs of their life might lead to trouble.¹⁰²⁷

Theodore did not expect much apart from the fact that he was pleased by the oaths of the envoys. According to Manuel, this reflects his brother's trustful character.¹⁰²⁸

Manuel II explains how oaths were binding by explaining the essential role of his oath made to Mehmed I, which should not be broken at any time as the author reveals. In 1419-1420, the Byzantine emperor is said to have contended that he would not break his oath even if it would reach a state of the enslavement of Christianity and Constantinople. According to Sphrantzes, Manuel continues to describe the contrary situation as follows:

I will not violate the oath [τὸν ὄρκον] I made to him (i.e. Mehmed I), even if it can be proved that he is actively pursuing the conquest of our City and our enslavement. If, however, Mehmed chooses to

¹⁰²⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 30.5, 263; trans. Magoulas, 177.

¹⁰²⁷ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 120.

¹⁰²⁸ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 121.

disregard his oaths, the outcome will be in God's hands, who has greater power than Mehmed.¹⁰²⁹

A change in the rulership might bring about new circumstances in which the holders of the oaths would no longer be responsible for them. Since the binding promises were exchanged also in written form as mentioned above, parties could ask for the return of the documents that were previously signed and shared. A case in point is Mehmed II's acceptance of an envoy of Janos Hunyadi, the regent of the Hungarian throne, who demanded that the Ottoman ruler conclude a three-year treaty of amity. After a year and a half, the regent declared via a message to Mehmed II that since he was no longer related to the Hungarian throne, it became beyond his responsibility to keep his promises. According to Doukas, Hunyadi proposed the following statement to Mehmed at the end: "Take back the documents which you gave me and return those which I gave you, and do as you like with the king of Hungary."¹⁰³⁰

Violation of oath was deemed a punishable offense. In order to conclude a treaty with the Ottomans, the Wallachians sent a messenger (ὁ ἄγγελος) to the Ottoman court, knowing that they would be punished if they violated their oath, as Chalkokondyles narrates.¹⁰³¹

For that reason, in narrative sources, cursing sometimes appears as an indispensable element of oath-taking processes. It could be attested in cases where agents try to underline the binding aspect of treaties. At the beginning of his reign, Mehmed I was approached by rulers across the region, including Manuel II

¹⁰²⁹ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.1, 14; trans. Philippides, 24-25.

¹⁰³⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 38.13, 343; trans. Magoulias, 216-217. Interestingly, as Doukas narrates, the ambassador of Janos Hunyadi advised sultan Mehmed II on how to use the cannon to destroy the walls of Constantinople in the final Ottoman siege.

¹⁰³¹ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 134-135; trans. Kaldellis, Book 7.50-51, 145-147.

Palaiologos. Addressing the envoys (πρέσβεις) of Serbia, Vlachia, Bulgaria, and the rulers of Ioannina, Lakedaimonia and Achaia, Mehmed adopted a friendly affect and behavior. However, if someone broke his oath and would not accord the terms of an agreement, thus undermining the peace, he is said to have remarked as follows: “may the God of peace be against him.”¹⁰³²

The binding power of an oath was so strongly held that occasionally parties required a public announcement of an exemption from previous oaths, if a current circumstance required actions contrary to them. An interesting example took place during the embassy sent from Rome to the Hungarians, who made a treaty with Murad II and took oaths accordingly. However, as the envoy of the pontiff, Cardinal Giuliano encouraged the Hungarians to engage in the war against the Ottomans by delivering the message of the pope that the treaty was made invalid by the latter’s blessings.¹⁰³³

The concept of oath carried a strong binding to its terms. To illustrate this, one needs to refer historical evidence which points to cases that were resonated with certain importance. Manuel II’s Funeral Oration presents ample cases at that point. Describing his brother Theodore who got out of prison, Manuel II Palaiologos explains how his brother was released after a treaty confirmed by an oath (μετὰ συνθηκῶν τινῶν βεβαιουμένων ὄρκους).¹⁰³⁴ Then, as the author continues to narrate, Theodore was under stress that was generated by the fact that “it would not be possible for him [Theodore] ... to ignore his oath.”¹⁰³⁵

¹⁰³² Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.2, 133; trans. Magoulas, Book 20.2, 111.

¹⁰³³ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 97; trans. Kaldellis, Book 6.55, 75.

¹⁰³⁴ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 105.

¹⁰³⁵ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 107.

Oaths were considered a prerequisite or a process that should be followed to guarantee confidence, and their absence might be surprising for the observers. In order to examine that phenomenon closely, one needs to look at Manuel II Palaiologos's writings. Several times in his Funeral Oration on his brother Theodore, the despot of the Morea, Manuel speaks of the good deeds and actions of the Hospitallers despite there was no oaths given to do so. While he explains how the security of the Peloponnese was maintained via selling off the city of Corinth in 1397, Manuel refers to the Hospitallers' "reputation of not breaking their oaths" (φήμης οὔσης περὶ αὐτῶν μὴ παραβαίνειν τοὺς ὅρκους) and gives the reasons why he opted for them in order to ward off the Ottomans.¹⁰³⁶ In the end, the Hospitallers, as told by Manuel, were quite efficient in keeping Corinth against the Ottoman forces, despite the fact that they did not swear an oath on this.¹⁰³⁷ Manuel's encomiastic descriptions for the Hospitallers might have mainly derived from his efforts to justify the sale of Corinth.¹⁰³⁸ Similarly, in another place, the author presents the Hospitallers as naturally famed for their trustworthiness by using the description as follows: "People naturally believed them, even though they had not taken an oath."¹⁰³⁹ Nevertheless, one can observe the Hospitallers swearing oaths in the Funeral Oration. Based on the treaty concluded between the Despot Theodore and the Hospitallers, the latter was able to possess some cities, once they swore the required oaths (ὁμωμοκότες τὰ δέοντα) and reserved a certain amount of money, which was a condition for the treaty.¹⁰⁴⁰ Breaching of one's faith was a token of

¹⁰³⁶ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 167-169.

¹⁰³⁷ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 173: "οὐδὲ ὁμωμόκεσαν ὑπὲρ τούτου."

¹⁰³⁸ Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350-1425): A Byzantine emperor in a time of tumult*, 206, 274, 315.

¹⁰³⁹ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 174. The translation belongs to Chrysostomides.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 183. The translation belongs to Chrysostomides.

corruption. Manuel II Palaiologos emphasized the action of taking an oath and the responsibility of keeping it by comparing these men (i.e. the Hospitallers) with a peasant who, by taking an oath, would abide by a lifelong oath and try to adhere strictly to it (οὗς κἂν ἀνὴρ ἀγροΐκος ὁμωμοκῶς ἢ δέσθη τε διὰ παντὸς καὶ διετήρησεν ἀκριβῶς).¹⁰⁴¹

4.6 Gifts

The term “gift” has been a frequent topic of discussion in recent scholarship. As demonstrated by Marcel Mauss, gift-giving requires reciprocity and thus necessitates a counter-gift in traditional societies. In his “*Essai sur le don*,” Mauss explains the phases of gift economies as to give, to accept, and to return the gift.¹⁰⁴²

On the role and practice of gift exchanges in later centuries of the Byzantine Empire, there are various studies approaching the topic in Byzantine-Western contexts.¹⁰⁴³ However, gift exchanges in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic relations have not been discussed in its entirety.¹⁰⁴⁴ This sub-chapter aims to bring together all the evidence of gift exchanges in diplomatic contexts to understand the function of the phenomenon in diplomatic communications between the two polities. Since a few

¹⁰⁴¹ Manuel Palaiologos, *Funeral oration*, 125-127.

¹⁰⁴² Mauss, “*Essai sur le don: Forme et raison d’échange dans les sociétés archaïques*,” 30-186, which is translated into English by Halls (trans.), *The gift. The form and reason for exchange in Archaic societies*.

¹⁰⁴³ The following bibliography can be illuminative: Hilsdale, “The social life of the Byzantine gift: The royal crown of Hungary re-invented,” 602-631; Klein, “Eastern objects and Western desires: Relics and reliquaries between Byzantium and the West,” 283-314.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Having said that gift exchange between the Ottomans and other polities has been a topic for various studies: Muhanna, “The sultan’s new clothes: Ottoman-Mamluk gift exchange in the fifteenth century,” 192; Redford, “Byzantium and the Islamic world, 1261–1557,” 394–95. On elephants as gifts at various instances, see Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate: Gifts and material culture in the Medieval Islamic world*, 39–87, 140; Yüksel-Muslu, *The Ottomans and the Mamluks: Imperial diplomacy and warfare in the Islamic world*, 40; and Reindl-Kiel, “Dogs, elephants, lions, a ram and a rhino on diplomatic mission,” 279–81. Also, see Faroqhi, “Exotic animals at the sultan’s court,” 87–101.

well-documented occasions bear witness to gift exchanges between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans, the sub-chapter will examine different contexts to explain the functions of gifts in late Byzantine and early Ottoman diplomacy.

As defined by Anthony Cutler, gifts usually furnish invaluable aspects and indications for understanding their function in any diplomatic communication as “instruments of governmental policy.”¹⁰⁴⁵ When we seek this issue in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications, one may realize that there is not a rich list with descriptions of gifts. Compared to the other contexts in Byzantine diplomatic history, in our topic, a relatively small percentage of cases bear references to the use of gifts as tools in diplomacy. Out of 136 individual confrontations in both directions, 31 of them contain gifts of some nature (See Table 2). The references in our sources consist substantially of anonymous titles without revealing the contents. Among these, there is a near equilibrium between the numbers of individual cases in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Moreover, if analyzed according to the periods, gift exchanges show a significant concentration in the fourteenth century, and more specifically, in the 1340s and 1350s.

At the outset, a definition of the terminology is required. The Greek equivalent of the term “gift” is *dōron* (δῶρον; plr. δῶρα), which quite often appears in plural form in the historical evidence. On the other hand, there are various terms that find their way into the Ottoman sources that are used for gift. In both Neşrî’s and Aşıkpaşazade’s chronicles, the terms are consciously used to refer to the hierarchical relations between the sender and the receiver of gifts. While the term *pişkeş* (پیشکش), a derivation from a Persian word, is preferred to mean a certain gift

¹⁰⁴⁵ Cutler, “Significant gifts: Patterns of exchange in late Antiquity, Byzantine and early Islamic diplomacy,” 79-101.

of a party which is considered to be inferior to the Ottoman sultan, the terms like *belek*, *tuhfe*, and *armağan* are used to refer to the gifts that are addressed to political authorities which are regarded equal or superior as it was the case, for example, in Neşrî's reference to Timur's gifts (i.e. *tuhfe ve armağan*) to Bayezid and the Mamluk sultan's gifts (*belek*) to Murad I.¹⁰⁴⁶ Therefore, the term *pişkeş* is used for the gifts of the Byzantines in the Ottoman chronicles. The reverse situation, that is the gifts from the Ottomans to the Byzantines, is not identified with a certain term in these sources.¹⁰⁴⁷

Contrary to the gift exchanges between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans, which were indeed less documented, gifts are extensively mentioned in Byzantine communication with the West during the Palaiologan period. This was evident even if the empire went through a political decline, despite cultural advancement. We can identify some of the objects given as gifts during the Byzantine diplomatic visits to the West. Sources present many diplomatic encounters in which artworks including manuscripts, relics, and silk garments became increasingly preferred as gifts for foreign courts. Manuel II Palaiologos was trying to imply the ecumenical position of Byzantium in his selection of an illuminated manuscript of the Works of Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite as a gift to the Monastery of St. Dennis in Paris. This precious gift was handed over by the envoy Manuel Chrysoloras to the monks at the French Abbey at St. Dennis. However, that

¹⁰⁴⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 81, ed. Atsız, bâb 68, 146-147; Neşrî, vol. I, 216, 344.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Some examples for the preference of the term *pişkeş* are as follows: Neşrî, vol. I, 70, 166, 192, 204; vol. II, 606, 622; Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 44; ed. Atsız, bâb 35 or ed. Âli Bey, 52; ed. Atsız, bâb 43. See also Altan Yılmaz, *Râşî olmak ya da kul olmanın gereğini yerine getirmek: XVI. yüzyıl (1574-1595) Osmanlı dünyasında pişkeş arzı*, 8-11.

proliferation of manuscripts and relics was evident only for the Byzantine contacts with the Western polities, including the Papacy.¹⁰⁴⁸

Table 2. Gifts in Byzantine-Ottoman Diplomatic Communications (excluding the ones exchanged in the borderland)

No.	Date	Sender	Receiver	Content
1	Summer 1307 (?)	Andronikos II	Osman	Magnificent acts of ostentation (i.e. gifts)
2	August 1333	Andronikos III	Orhan	Andronikos III gave silver drinking cups, imperial saddlecloth, woollen and silken woven robes. Orhan gave horses, hunting dogs, rugs, leopard skins.
3	1345 (?)	The regency government in Constantinople	Orhan	A lot of money
4	Late 1344 or Early 1345	Anna of Savoy	Orhan	Large amount of gold
5	Winter 1345-1346	John VI	Orhan	Unknown
6	Winter 1345-1346	Orhan	John VI	Unknown
7	Spring 1347	John VI	Citizens who helped John VI	Unknown
8	Autumn 1352	John VI	Süleyman	Unknown
9	1354	Süleyman	John VI or John V	Money
10	Spring 1354	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan	Money
11	Late Autumn – Early Winter 1354	Orhan	John VI Kantakouzenos	Unknown
12	1354-1355	John VI	Orhan	Money
13	Spring 1356 or Winter 1357-1358	Orhan	John V Palaiologos	Orhan brought many sheep and cattle, household items and all kinds of things like that. The return gifts of the Byzantines are unknown.
14	Summer 1376 or Winter 1376-1377 or Early 1377	Andronikos IV	Murad I	Tribute
15	1379 (?)	John V and Manuel II	Murad I	Tribute of 30.000 gold coins
16	1387-1388	Murad I	Manuel II	Unknown
17	1391 or Autumn 1396 or 1397	Manuel II	Bayezid I	Gifts/bribes (?) of hundred fish full of gold and silver
18	1413	Mehmed I	Manuel II	Unknown
19	Early 1416	Mehmed I	Manuel II	Unknown
20	October 1420	Manuel II	Mehmed I	Unknown
21	1421 (?)	Murad II	Manuel II	Hostages of twelve sons of leading men, 200.000 gold pieces, and extensive territories around Gallipoli
22	Winter 1421-1422	Murad II	Manuel II	Magnanimous gifts
23	Ca. September 1422	Manuel II	Murad II	Large amount of money
24	20-22 February 1424	John VIII	Murad II	Annual tribute
25	1424 (?)	John VIII	Murad II	Unknown
26	Early 1440	John VIII	Governor of Gallipoli	Silver vase
27	Early 1443	John VIII	Murad II	Unknown
28	After 10 October 1444	John VIII	Murad II	Unknown
29	6 December 1448	Constantine XI	Murad II	Unknown
30	March 1449	Constantine XI	Murad II	Unknown
31	Before 26 March 1452	Constantine XI	Mehmed II	Unknown

¹⁰⁴⁸ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 236-248.

The tradition of lavish diplomatic gifts implying Byzantium's prominent role in world hierarchy and its prosperity resumed, although the state suffered from a heavy financial crisis. The increasing need for a military and economic backing, first against the threat from Charles of Anjou, then, against the Ottomans, resulted in the emphasis of the union issue in Byzantine-Western relations.¹⁰⁴⁹ Such a circumstance caused the state serious troubles in finding resource and work force. In late autumn or early winter of 1354, Kantakouzenos received a group of Ottoman envoys, who sought for a settlement on the issue of surrendering the Thracian cities that the Ottomans occupied. Granting much gratitude for their good will, the emperor dismissed the envoys by lavishing gifts on (δωροῖς φιλοτίμως) them.¹⁰⁵⁰

Byzantine emperors did not hesitate to use holy relics in this context as a part of their diplomatic purposes. We have to think about the relationship between relic diplomacy and the current financial difficulties.¹⁰⁵¹ The great expense of diplomatic gifts, as they carried high values in previous centuries, probably became unaffordable by this period. The contents of gifts, in that context, could well be evaluated based on the scarcity of precious items as gifts. This may explain why at that stage of the empire relics became the major gift items in diplomatic contexts. Sources mention the tunic of Christ, for instance, which was cut into pieces and used as a diplomatic gift in Manuel II's visits to Paris and London. However, this relic diplomacy did not give an impetus to the success of the Byzantine diplomatic efforts to get financial and military aid from the European rulers. Now, Constantinople was no longer

¹⁰⁴⁹ Anna of Savoy adopted a policy that required military support not only against the threat coming from the Turks but also because she needed military reinforcement against John VI Kantakouzenos. Therefore, she expressed favorable sentiments for the union of the Churches.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Kantakouzenos, vol. III, 284.

¹⁰⁵¹ For the financial incapacity of Manuel II, see Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.2, 293-295; trans. Magoulas, 192-193.

regarded as a *locus sanctus* by Westerners since the relics began to be put on sale out of an economic necessity, rather than distributed as a symbol of imperial favor.¹⁰⁵²

The place and meaning of Christian relics played a prominent part in Byzantine diplomatic contacts with the polities of the Christian world, despite the fact that several studies have shown relics as being used as gifts already lost their mystique status and reliability during the Palaiologan era, as they were “distributed throughout the world like water,” as once Manuel Chrysoloras had put it.¹⁰⁵³ Sophia Mergiali-Sahas puts forward three reasons for the Byzantine emperors’s use of relics as diplomatic gifts to Western rulers: “1) traditional gift-giving etiquette for diplomatic engagement; 2) relics as symbols of political authority and the survival of Constantinople; 3) the ‘inexplicable and invincible’ western fascination with relics across strata of society.”¹⁰⁵⁴ Furthermore, according to Cecily J. Hilsdale, Manuel II’s policy of searching for military and financial support against the Ottomans and the role of relics as gifts occupied a crucial place in late Palaiologan diplomacy. She makes the following interpretation:

The emperor sought to garner support for his faltering empire in the form of a crusade. As material signs of Christ’s presence, relics signal a unity of eastern and western powers in contrast to the Ottoman presence. With Byzantium as a mediator and a buffer between the European and Islamic lands, the relic was the ideal reminder of a shared sacred past and was sign of a common political enemy.¹⁰⁵⁵

¹⁰⁵² For the use of relics in diplomatic affairs, see Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*; Klein, “Eastern objects and Western desires. Relics and reliquaries between Byzantium and the West,” 283-314.

¹⁰⁵³ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 227-236; the quotation belongs to Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 230. See also Klein, “Eastern objects and Western desires: Relics and reliquaries between Byzantium and the West,” 314.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Mergiali-Sahas, “An ultimate wealth for inauspicious times: Holy relics in the rescue of Manuel II Palaeologus’ reign,” 272; Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 229.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 229.

No source has pointed to a transfer of relics as gifts to an Ottoman ruler. All in all, the Byzantine Empire, just like it had with the Western courts in its final centuries, was constructing friendship ties with the Ottomans via gifts but not through relics for obvious reasons.¹⁰⁵⁶

The first question that comes to one's mind is to what extent is Marcel Mauss's theory applicable to our topic. As put forward by Mauss, the agonistic nature of gift-giving is another essential part in gift-exchanges. There could be several indications in gift-giving that reflect a particular meaning hidden behind the action. In other words, depending on whether it was a conditional or unconditional one, a gift could be a sign for an implicated meaning/purpose. In this context, it could be a reflection of a competition. In our context, there is no general pattern that uniformly shows such a competition of "greatness" of gifts in gift exchanges between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans. Nevertheless, the magnanimity of gifts mentioned in a few contexts make us conclude that there could be some sort of a rivalling that each party presented or reciprocated gifts by considering their value and splendor. An example can be helpful to visualize that point. In search of a solution to retrieve his son Halil from the hands of the Phocaeen pirates, Orhan requested a help from John V Palaiologos. The Ottoman ruler promised a marriage alliance between his son and the emperor's daughter in return for that. In winter 1357-8, the meeting of these two rulers met in Arkla, where mutual benevolence was shown by both parties.¹⁰⁵⁷

¹⁰⁵⁶ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 238.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Gregoras, vol. III, 509: "δῶρα φέροντες παντοδαπά, πρόβατα καὶ βόας καὶ ἔπιπλα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἄττα πάμπολλά τε καὶ πολυειδή. ὀλίγαις δ' ὕστερον ἡμέραις οἱ προπέμψαντες ἐπανῆκον Βυζάντιοι μεθ' ὧν προσῆκεν ἐκεῖθεν χαρίτων καὶ δώρων." For the details of this occasion, see the following pages in this sub-chapter.

The gifts could sometimes be a rewarding element in diplomatic contacts. When an embassy visited the Ottoman court, and if it was received on good terms, Ottoman rulers could return it with gifts probably as an epitome of mutual satisfaction as a result of the fulfillment of the mission. On December 6, 1448, when George Sphrantzes was dispatched to the Ottoman court as a Byzantine ambassador to inform the accession of Constantine XI, Murad II sent Sphrantzes back with honor and gifts.¹⁰⁵⁸

Taken together, three major aspects of gift exchange can be investigated in our context: the nature/content of the gift; the meaning of the gift; and the presentation of the gift. Let us begin with the nature or content of the gift. In the context of wedding ceremonies, one can observe the primary sources revealing many instances of gifts presented to hosting parties. The invited guests could attend a ceremony in person or could entrust envoys to deliver their gifts to hosts. The gifts in these occasions are no doubt revealed in many aspects of gift-giving in Byzantine and Ottoman traditions. What was available in Anatolia may have played a determinant role in the contents of gifts. Indicating the limited sources and materials, the major Ottoman chronicles, both Neşrî and Aşıkpaşazade, express an extraordinary piece of evidence on the paucity of certain materials in the fourteenth century Anatolia. As revealed in these accounts, it appears to be a decisive factor in the selection of gifts for particular occasions such as a marriage ceremony. When a certain İshak Fakih, an envoy from the Germiyanid ruler, arrived at Murad I's court for the marriage ceremony of Bayezid I, the son of Murad, and the daughter of the Germiyanid ruler, all the invited

¹⁰⁵⁸ "ἀπῆλθον ἐγὼ ἀποκριστὰριος εἰς τὸν ἀμνηρᾶν ... καὶ μετὰ τιμῆς καὶ δώρων καμὲ ἀπέπεμψε." Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 29.3, 100. For this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3519; Malamut, "La figure de l'ambassadeur byzantin auprès des Ottomans dans la première moitié du XVe siècle," 89.

guests presented their gifts. The Germiyanid envoy also attended the invitation carrying gifts from his master. What he actually brought as gifts did not include gold or silver since, as the chroniclers were in accord, they were short in supply at that time. The esteemed and prevailing item was a certain type of white fabric (“ak ‘alemlı bez”) made in Tonoğlu (Denizli). Therefore, the envoy brought a great quantity of this highly valid fabric as gifts, in addition to conveying fine horses and some unidentified presents.¹⁰⁵⁹

In the fourteenth century, Italian wool was dominating the international market. The frequency of the appearance of the Italian woolen garments mentioned in contemporary sources also marked the influence of that item in the fabric trade of Constantinople.¹⁰⁶⁰ These were also favorable gift items of the age. Kantakouzenos opted to give Italian woolen garments to the envoys who visited him.¹⁰⁶¹ Gregoras, moreover, describes these Italian products as reputable properties.¹⁰⁶² A further example indicates the crucial place of fabrics in gift exchanges in the fourteenth century. In 1351, the Genoese envoys Andalo de Mari and Tommaso di Magnorri visited Orhan’s court in Prousa. Apart from silver bullion, these representatives brought furs and silks to the Ottoman sultan.¹⁰⁶³ Textile and furs were among the commodities extensively chosen as gift items not only in the fourteenth century, but

¹⁰⁵⁹ “İshak Fakih dahi Sultan Murad Gazi’ye gelüb iyü atlar, piş-keşler getürdi. Ol zamanda Anatoli’da altun gümüş az olurdu. Mu’teber olan Tonuzlı’da ‘alemlı ak bezler olurdu. Bir kimseye hil’at giyürseler, ol bezden sırtak tekele diküb, Ala-Şehr’ün Kızıl ıvıladınsınan zincef idüb anı giyürürlerdi. İshak Fakih ol Tonuzlı’nun bezlerinden dahi mübalağa piş-keş getürmişdi. Andan eytdi: ‘kızımızu Sultanum, oğlu Bayezid’e revâ görürse karavuşluğa alı-virsün ve bir kac hisar dahi cihazına tuta bile virelüm. Kütahya’yı ve Simav’ı ve Eğri-göz’ı ve Tavşanlı’yı’ didi. Murad Han Gazi dahi Kabul idüb, kavlı ü kararı muhkem berkitdiler.” Neşri, vol. I, 205; see also Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 56-57; ed. Atsız, bâb 50, 129.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Matschke, *Fortschritt und reaktion in Byzanz im 14. jahrhundert*, 97-98.

¹⁰⁶¹ Gregoras, vol. II, 600: “χλαίνας Ἰταλικὰς ἐξ ἐρίου.”

¹⁰⁶² “ἐπιπλά φημι,” Gregoras, vol. II, 600.

¹⁰⁶³ Balard, “A propos de la Bataille du Bosphore. L’expédition génoise de Paganino Doria à Constantinople,” 457. See also Lowry, “Impropriety and impiety among the early Ottoman sultans (1351-1451),” 29-38.

they preserved their status for that regard even during the fifteenth century. An example in point would be given from the diplomatic communications between the Ottomans and the Mamluks, who were both eager to present each other silk, woolen and velvet fabrics originated from a wide range of countries, among which the sources at once speak of a group of various fabrics including but not limited to three *taqūzāt* of European product sent by Mehmed I to his Mamluk counterpart, al-Mu‘ayyad Shaykh on February 1415.¹⁰⁶⁴

By the fourteenth century, Byzantine silks lost their place both in the market and as commodities once used as precious gifts presented to foreign courts. Yet, the Byzantine emperors still utilized silken commodities as gift materials. Representative of silken gifts, Kantakouzenos’s historical account provides certain instances in which that ageless commodity retained its significance in the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁶⁵

The following instance tends to illustrate the status that began to change in favor of the Ottoman cloth production, which appears to be a definite contender against the Italian manufactures. In 1429, when Constantine XI, who was then the despot of the Morea decided to take back Patras, the preliminary contact between the city and Constantine happened to be a visit of a delegation from Patras, which included an official, an interpreter, and the canon Markos. The aim of the delegation, as Sphrantzes claims, was to discover the identity and purpose of Constantine’s delegation at the gates of the city. At the end, Sphrantzes was taken prisoner and was then requested to write a letter to Constantine for a truce. Constantine accepted the proposals put forward by the lords of the city. Accordingly, the despot received the

¹⁰⁶⁴ Muhanna, “The sultan’s new clothes: Ottoman – Mamluk gift exchange in the fifteenth century,” 191.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 447.

place called Seravelle. The city did not surrender at that moment, and instead requested that Constantine wait for the return of the metropolitan before announcing their final word. After Sphrantzes's release according to the truce, Constantine gave him many gifts as tokens of his effort to conclude the truce and his captivity in the castle's dungeons. His presents included "an expensive double green tunic lined with fine green linen from Lucca, a red cap decorated with gold, silken lining from Thessalonica, a heavy, gold-colored caftan from Brusa, a green coat, and a finely worked sword."¹⁰⁶⁶ Notably, the gifts' origins were emphasized here, which demonstrates the growing role of the Ottoman products as well as the variety of the clothing.

The organization of the wedding ceremony of Bayezid I is further indicative of exceeding types and contents of gifts at the beginning of the fourteenth century among the Turkish frontier society. The begs of the surrounding Turkish territories as well as the sancak begs were all invited to the meeting and brought their presents. The invited guests either appeared in person or sent their gifts through envoys. The list of the gifts that were brought as narrated by the Ottoman chronicles gives the impression that the wedding turned out to be a competition for these begs, who presented a variety of precious objects including fine horses, camels as well as varied extraordinary items (*iyi atlar, katarla develer ve türlü türlü fevkalade şeyler*), or as Neşrî identified, "wonderful and strange" gifts (*âcâyib ve garâyib tuhfeler*). Finally, the gifts of Evrenos, who were also invited to the ceremony, were far costlier with

¹⁰⁶⁶ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 19.4, 56; trans. Philippides, 41. Apart from Sphrantzes's imprisonment in Patras, the author was in Constantinople during the Ottoman's final siege and he was taken prisoner and was ransomed later. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 35.11, 134 on Sphrantzes's personal experience that he was taken prisoner and was ransomed on September 1, 1453.

silver mugs, great ewers and golden trays full of florins. All these gifts, in the end, were distributed by Murad to the begs and envoys present at the wedding.¹⁰⁶⁷

Mentioning gift items by illustrious descriptions prevailed in many cases, although the contents are not indicated. Sphrantzes mentions that during his mission to Georgia and Trebizond to find a suitable wife for the emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos, he was sent with remarkable graces (μετὰ χαρίτων ἀξιολόγων) and many and beautiful preparations (παρασκευῆς ὅτι πολλῆς καὶ καλῆς) but does not particularly name them.¹⁰⁶⁸

The contents of luxurious presents could not shift the focus away from the real outcome of the diplomatic contacts. As a common phenomenon in the late Middle Ages and early modern period, animals for riding, hunting, and racing purposes retained their place as highly notable gifts. It was also observable in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic gift-giving that several animals were presented on the occasions of ambassadorial visits between the two courts. On the other hand, however, gifting exotic animals did not play a remarkable role as it once had in earlier centuries of Byzantine diplomatic contacts.

Gifts were sometimes given in return for an action conducted by the receiver for the benefit of the giver. An example would be Andronikos II's gifts prepared in compensation for Kharbanda's military support for the former's struggle with the Turks. When the Byzantine emperor was notified about the impending Ilkhanid army comprised of forty thousand warriors, in order to reciprocate the favor by Kharbanda, Andronikos II embarked on preparing his gifts, not specified in the source, and

¹⁰⁶⁷ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 57-58; ed. Atsız, bâb 51, 130; Neşrî, vol. I, 204-206. This can be read as the tendency of the Ottoman chroniclers to identify the Ottoman rulers by emphasizing their generosity.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 30.1, 102.

envoys (δῶρα καὶ πρέσβεις πρὸς ἐκείνους ἐξητοιμάζετο), who were going to carry them over to the recipient.¹⁰⁶⁹

Gift-giving occupied an important place in the politics of the frontier regions. The Ottoman chronicle tradition stereotypically reflects upon the gifting towards the Ottoman rulers by the local power holders. When Orhan attacked the settlements across Bithynia, particularly against a certain place called “Kılemastorya,” the holder of the fortress there, a woman, dispatched her brother towards Orhan with many gifts (mübâlaga pîşkeşler).¹⁰⁷⁰ A similar situation is observable when Murad I’s warriors approached Hisini (Silivri?) fortress, the tekfur there presented gifts (piş-keşler çekti) to the Ottoman ruler, who distributed them to his ghazis.¹⁰⁷¹

The local exchange of gifts frequently took place along the border areas between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Emirate and can further be exemplified in the following cases. In return for the guardianship provided by the tekfur of Belokome (i.e. Bilecik) for Osman’s tribe, whose members were entrusting their stuff in the fortress when they went to the summer pastures to the highlands of the region, the Ottomans brought to the local Byzantines the nomadic productions namely butter, cheeses in animal skin, cream, fine carpets, and rugs.¹⁰⁷² This very case indicates that there were economic factors that played role in choosing appropriate gifts for the corresponding party. Such items could possess a commodity potential and therefore could be seen as a sort of economic exchange.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, 647.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 43-44; ed. Atsız, bâb 35, 120-121.

¹⁰⁷¹ Neşrî, vol. I, 193. “Andan Hisini [Misini, Silivri?] hisarına vardılar. Anun tekfurı Sultan Murad Gazi’ye karşı varub piş-keşler çekdi. Murad Han Gazi dahi cemi’in gazilere kismet itdi. Andan göçüb Bergoz’a vardılar. Kâfirleri hisarı koyub, kaçmışlar. Gaziler dahi hisarı yakub yıkıb oda urub yire beraber itdiler.” Neşrî, vol. I, 193.

¹⁰⁷² “Yaylaya gitseler emânetlerini Bilecük hisarında korlar idi. Kaçan gelseler tulum ile peynirler ve kadun ile yağlar, kaymak katıkları ve eyü halılar ve kilimler göndürürler idi.” Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 11; ed. Atsız, bâb 9, 98-99.

Aşıkpaşazade frequently refers to mutual concerns of trust between the two parties. It shows itself in reciprocal relations, that is, both the Ottomans and the neighboring Byzantine settlements/fortresses kept the status quo by establishing friendly relations with each other. In another instance, for the wedding of the daughter of the tekfur of Bilecik, Osman is portrayed as he sent a flock of sheep to the tekfur and addressing the latter he is said to have remarked as follows:

Oh my brother, let this serve to the participants to the wedding.
Hopefully, I will bring my own gift [“saçu” – a particular item
designating presents for a wedding ceremony] once I join. If I do
not have a gift worthy of my brother, I prepared one worthy of
us.¹⁰⁷³

Aşıkpaşazade stresses that these gifts are the ones that Osman sent before he was invited to the ceremony, after which the tekfur sent Köse Mihal in return as inviter, who brought many gold and silver properties. Neşrî uses another term. He writes that the tekfur sent some equipments (avadanlık) to Osman. Once the gifts were delivered to Osman, he rewarded Mihal with many gifts owing to his role as the person who invited the Ottoman ruler to the event.¹⁰⁷⁴ In the context of various challenging Turkish emirates trying to make their presence firm in the region, the whole picture can be interpreted as an attempt to keep the balance of power. Aşıkpaşazade mentions that the local Byzantine cities and their inhabitants felt

¹⁰⁷³ “Eyitdi kim: ‘Kardaşum bunı düğüne hizmet edenlere yedürsün’ dedi. ‘İnşallah ben dahı varduğum vaktın saçumı iledem’ dedi. ‘Ve ger kardaşuma lâıyk saçum yoğ ise bize lâıykın eyledüm’ dedi.” Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 15; ed. Atsız, bâb 12, 101.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Neşrî, vol. I, 99. “Bilecük tekfûrüne Osman Gazi muhabbetler gösterdi. Ve evvelden bunun ile gayibâne âşinâlıkları var idi. Ve illâ sûret ile biri birin görmemişler idi. Zîrâ Oman Gazi yaylaya gitseler cemi‘ emânetlerini Bilecük hisarında korlar idi. Ol sebepden âşinâ olmuşlar idi.” Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 14; ed. Atsız, bâb 11, 100-101. This follows a series of visits of messengers delivering the messages between Osman and the tekfur of Bilecik. Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 14-15, 15-16; ed. Atsız, bâbs 11-12, 100-102.

comforted due to the tense relations between the Ottomans and their major rival, the Germiyanid emirate.¹⁰⁷⁵

Gifts appear to be one of the frequently referred phenomena in Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle. The text gives information not only on the gifts exchanged between the Byzantine court and the Ottomans but also between the Byzantine local governors of frontier regions and Osman as partly explained above. When Aşıkpaşazade explains Köse Mihal's daughter's marriage ceremony, he emphasizes the gifts that were brought by Osman for the wedding. In the text, Osman is said to have brought fine rugs, kilims and a flock of sheep as presents (i.e. saçu), which were much enjoyed by the invited tekvurs. These guests indeed admired Osman's generosity. At that context, Neşrî adds to these items "butters" (yağlar).¹⁰⁷⁶ The discourse on the positive qualities of Osman is prevalent throughout Aşıkpaşazade's text. In another instance, following Mihal's daughter's wedding, for the mission of announcing the marriage ceremony of the castellan of Belokome, Mihal is portrayed as a messenger who was entrusted to invite Osman to the event.¹⁰⁷⁷ As we see Köse Mihal appearing as a messenger bringing the messages of Osman and the castellan of Prousa back and forth.¹⁰⁷⁸ In the Ottoman chronicles, Osman is represented as a person showing off his generosity by granting great gifts to certain individuals. For

¹⁰⁷⁵ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 11-12; ed. Atsız, bâb 9, 98-99. See Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 107. When Osman asked his brother Gündüz how they could conquer the neighboring lands, the response was a call for attacks against these lands. However, as Aşıkpaşazade narrates, Osman disapproved that approach by adopting tranquility and offering friendly relations with the neighbors. Osman had obtained the image of a trustful person in the eyes of his Byzantine neighbors.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 15-16; ed. Atsız, bâb 12, 101-102; Neşrî, vol. I, 96.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 15-16; ed. Atsız, bâb 12, 101-102.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 14, 15-16; ed. Atsız, bâb 11-12, 100-102.

instance, Osman presented many gifts when he was invited to the wedding of the tekvr of Bilecik and the daughter of the tekvr of Yar-hisar.¹⁰⁷⁹

On the other hand, Murad I's gifts to his companion out of the booty he collected during the raids into Macedonia exemplify the acceptable gifts in the age. As indicated in the case of Murad I's generous gesture, the Ottoman ruler gave slaves and pack animals, which were desirable presents. These were all once the properties of the Bulgarians and Byzantines.¹⁰⁸⁰

Gift-giving practices reveal that there were two distinct groups of receivers: gifts to political authority (rulers as well as officials) and gifts to envoys. Researchers have difficulties detecting the real addresses of the gifts that are mentioned in extant documents because they are rarely pointed out.¹⁰⁸¹ One can infer from the context that the majority of the cases are related to the gifts prepared and presented for the rulers themselves. There are also occasions in which the envoys themselves were rewarded in return for their efforts in diplomatic procedures.

On the other hand, gifts to envoys occupy relatively exceptional places in the sources. For instance, Sphrantzes received many gifts from Constantine, by then the despot of the Morea, for his efforts in concluding a truce with the city of Patras. Moreover, the historian, following his mission to Murad II's court, was presented with gifts and honors by the Ottoman ruler.¹⁰⁸² The cases in which sources refer to envoys being rewarded by the hosting court can be multiplied. One can present an example from the historical narrative of Kantakouzenos. For the marriage

¹⁰⁷⁹ Neşrî, vol. I, 96-98.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 29-30; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, 51-53.

¹⁰⁸¹ Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome. The rise of the resident ambassador*, 166: "It is not always straightforward – nor was it intended to be – to discern for which of these two selves a gift was intended."

¹⁰⁸² Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 29.3, 100.

negotiations between the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, Andronikos III, who was the co-emperor at that moment, warmly received the envoys coming from Serbia, Kantakouzenos mentions that the emperor “rewarded the ambassadors royally” (ἀσμένως δὲ αὐτοὺς δεξάμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ δώροις ἀμειψάμενος βασιλικῶς).¹⁰⁸³

In a different context, between the Serbians and the Ottomans, the Ottoman chronicles narrate the history of events leading to the marriage alliance between the two polities. In 1427-8, Murad II received various properties from the Serbian ruler who is said to have sent a great amount of money to the viziers separately so that they were able to convince Murad to cede some territories and give them to the Serbians.¹⁰⁸⁴

Gifts to rulers constitute the majority of the cases. Chalkokondyles mentions a Byzantine embassy that was sent to Murad II by the emperor John VIII Palaiologos. In an attempt not to provoke him upon his crossing to Europe and use of the Byzantine territories for his march and of the Byzantine markets for food supply for the Ottoman army, the emperor won over the Ottoman ruler by presenting him gifts.¹⁰⁸⁵ When Manuel II Palaiologos sent his noblest archontes to Mehmed I in order to remind the Ottoman ruler of his promises made during his stay in Constantinople and thus request him to surrender all the lands accordingly, Mehmed gave them many gifts (δώροις πλείστοις).¹⁰⁸⁶ Similarly, in early 1416, Manuel II received Mehmed I and his companions in the imperial trireme and offered them a banquet. As a unique source for this event, Doukas mentions that Manuel welcomed

¹⁰⁸³ Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 187.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 117; ed. Atsız, bâb 104, 173: “Paşalara dahi mebâlig-i azîm göndürmüş idi.” Neşrî, vol. II, 607.: “...Paşalara dahi ayrı ayrı pişkeşler gönderup...”

¹⁰⁸⁵ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 111-112; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, 101-103: “ἐθεράπευε τὸν βασιλέα δώροις.”

¹⁰⁸⁶ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.1, 133. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3334.

(δεξιόμοι) his guests and gave them many gifts (ὁ βασιλεὺς αὐτὸν σὺν δώροις πλείστοις καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ δεξιῶσας).¹⁰⁸⁷

The issue of the size and magnificence of the gift brings about the topic of who carried them over. The contents and costs of gifts might have played an important function in selecting appropriate representatives to deliver gift(s) to the responding court. In the spring or summer of 1307, Andronikos II bestowed many costly gifts to the Turkish ruler (Καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα τὰ μήνυτρα ἔφθανον, καὶ βασιλεὺς πέμπων ἐπολυώρει σφᾶς συχνοῖς καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέσι φιλοτιμήμασιν).¹⁰⁸⁸ Furthermore, in 1424, after Murad II was enthroned as the new Ottoman ruler, various sovereigns sent emissaries to congratulate him on his new reign. The Byzantine emperor entrusted the *mesazon* Loukas Notaras to acclaim Murad and also to renew the treaties that were previously concluded. The mission of Notaras included presenting gifts which were many in quantity (σὺν δώροις πολλοῖς). Doukas adds that the other leaders followed suit.¹⁰⁸⁹ Doukas presents a similar gift-giving practices in an occasion of the change of rulers upon Mehmed II's enthronement, the neighboring polities approached the new sultan with gifts and made their obeisance to him.¹⁰⁹⁰ The value of a gift could be determinant in the expected resonance that it would create on the receiving party. It was a way of showing off representing the giver's preeminence. In that regard, the Byzantine Empire tried to keep its status of a superior authority in not only political or historical but also cultural spheres.

The issue of the high value of gifts is also observable in Byzantine relations with the West. John V Palaiologos was the first emperor who broke the imperial

¹⁰⁸⁷ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 20.8, 139.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. IV, Book 13.35, 701.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 29.3, 245-247; trans. Magoulas, 169.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.12, 289-291; trans. Magoulas, 191.

protocol and initiated to visit foreign countries during his reign. In 1366, his travel to Hungary ended in a failure. His young son Manuel was detained as a hostage. In 1369, John V traveled to Rome and consequently converted to Catholicism.¹⁰⁹¹ Different from Michael VIII, who converted to the Catholic faith without going to Rome, John V's conversion was strictly personal. Michael VIII had sent gifts to Rome. Leading to the Council of Lyons, one of the two Byzantine ships, which was carrying "lavish imperial gifts of golden icons, censers, and silks," sank, while the pope received the others.¹⁰⁹²

To what extent did the parties accomplish in gaining the desired consequences by way of cultivating gift diplomacy? On this issue of successful and unsuccessful gifts, it has recently been argued by Alexander D. Beihammer that it had a decisive impact in determining the ways of reproachment or challenge in relations.¹⁰⁹³ One thing that would be added to this well-put description could be underlining the role of the content of gifts.

Did the use of certain gifts in the context of Byzantine-Ottoman contacts reflect social and cultural dimensions? How far does a gift symbolize or tell something about the intentions of its sender? To what extent could its receiver understand the veiled meaning if there was any, or how could a receiver reciprocate a gift? Given that the gift exchange might have carried a traditional non-profit aspect that both the giver and the receiver could act without any benefit. As far as the contents of the gifts attested in primary sources are concerned, it cannot be argued with certainty that a gift could be evaluated by its material value. However, it may

¹⁰⁹¹ Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 201.

¹⁰⁹² Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 202.

¹⁰⁹³ Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354)," 480.

have possibly possessed a symbolic meaning in the eyes of both sides, because gift-giving was conducted as an intentional activity for the sake of social prestige, often not for material or tangible profit.

In theory, a receiver of a gift reacts by sending out his own gift in response. The tendency of reciprocating a gift not with tit-for-tat, but with more superior gift than what was received is observable in the early Ottoman diplomatic tradition. Neşrî mentions that an envoy of the Mamluk sultan Berquq visited the Ottoman court to deliver Berquq's request to be accepted as a son by the Ottoman ruler. The envoy brought great gifts (*azim belekler*) to Murad and received so much more gifts in return.¹⁰⁹⁴ The issue of counter-gifts is traceable in various other circumstances. Süleyman, the emir of Karasi, gave Kantakouzenos horses and weapons as gifts when they both convened in Gallipoli. The emir received gifts in return.¹⁰⁹⁵

As far as the extant sources are concerned, the gift exchange did not include artworks or manuscripts in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic contacts except for a single case in which the gift happened to be an illuminated manuscript with an image of Sitt Khatun and her brother, Malik Arslan, to be presented by the Byzantines to Prince Mehmed at the time of the marriage between Mehmed II and Sitt Khatun, the daughter of the emir of the Dulkadiroglu emirate.¹⁰⁹⁶ Other extraordinary gifts also appeared in other contexts. A Genoese embassy visited Orhan's court in Prousa around 1351. Albeit other precious items such as furs and silks, the Genoese envoys,

¹⁰⁹⁴ Neşrî, vol. I, 216-218.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 476.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice (GR. 516, fols. 2v-3r). On this, see Redford, "Byzantium and the Islamic world, 1261-1557," 394-95.

Andalo de Mari and Tommaso di Magnerri, were carrying 42 hectoliters of Trilia wine, which was a popular commodity in the period.¹⁰⁹⁷

After concluding a treaty in 1333, Andronikos III Palaiologos and Orhan exchanged gifts as symbols of their conciliation, which secured the city of Nicomedia from the Ottoman attacks. As one of the most extensive lists for a diplomatic occasion, the gifts in this encounter are worth considering and deserve a separate treatment. The gift exchange most probably took place via envoys. Orhan presented the emperor with horses, hunting dogs, carpets and panther skins. On the other hand, the Byzantine emperor sent silver drinking vessels, both woolen and silken clothes. As Kantakouzenos describes, among the emperor's gifts, there was also an imperial saddlecloth, as always particularly worn by "the satraps" [rulers] of the "barbarians" appreciated and seen as an honor and a sign of friendship.¹⁰⁹⁸ So Orhan was much happier about it than about the other gifts and expressed his gratitude to the emperor. On this occasion, the items have much in common with the gifts that were presented between Osman and local Byzantine power holders as previously mentioned. For the Ottoman part, horses and carpets were still appreciated as befitting gifts for the Byzantines, whereas the Byzantines conveyed refined artifacts like drinking vessels made up of silver or garments of varied sorts, woolen or silken. These items were thought to be the best options as gifts to the Ottoman court. However, some items were never observed before and after 1333. These were hunting dogs and panther skins presented to the Byzantines, or imperial saddlecloth

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ballard, "A propos de la Bataille du Bosphore. L'expédition génoise de Paganino Doria à Constantinople," 457; Lowry, "Impropriety and impiety among the early Ottoman sultans (1351-1451)," 29-38.

¹⁰⁹⁸ "ἔπειτα ἀλλήλους ἡμεΐβοντο δώροις, Ὁρχάνης μὲν ἵππους πέμψας καὶ κύνας θηρευτικὰς τάπητάς τε καὶ παρδάλεων δοράς. βασιλεὺς δὲ ἐκπώματά τε ἀργυρᾶ καὶ ὑφάσματα οὐκ ἐξ ἐρίων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ Σηρικὰ ..." Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 447.

as a gift of Andronikos III. This last item is particularly important because it represents a wider group of favored gift commodities: horses. As mentioned above, horses were frequently handed over as gifts. These precious commodities were considered to be highly prestigious for the aristocrats and soldiers of both societies. They also had important functions in logistical matters as well, as horses were the most important way to travel quickly. Ibn Battuta, who traveled to Anatolia in the early 1330s, mentions the low price of horses, equal to a dirham. He states that the horses of the region were in great quantity.¹⁰⁹⁹ The Byzantines also presented horses as gifts to their Turkish counterparts. The wife of Kantakouzenos, Irene, offered one hundred horses to his husband's strongest ally Umur in order to fight alongside Kantakouzenos in Thrace.¹¹⁰⁰ A later source informs further use of horses as gift items. Sphrantzes talks about an excellent horse (ἄλογον ἄριστον) given by his own brother. The particular story of this horse is interesting, because the author explains how it changed hands after it was first gifted by the Ottoman ruler (ὁ ἀμνηρᾶς δέδωκε) to Isaakios Asanes.¹¹⁰¹ As we observed in the previous chapter, Isaakios Asanes participated in the Byzantine embassy of 1420-1 with the purpose of welcoming Mehmed I at the suburb of Constantinople. Since there is a single embassy of Isaakios Asanes to the Ottomans, this horse might have been given to the envoy during the contact as a gift.

This showering of gifts probably was a way of declaring the magnificence/splendor of Byzantium, still felt across the neighboring countries and was sought as an imperial policy as reminiscent of the earlier centuries. A Serbian

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibn Battuta, trans. Gibb, vol. II, 478.

¹¹⁰⁰ Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-1354)," 479-482.

¹¹⁰¹ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 17.9, 46.

governor, whom Kantakouzenos names as Liberios (PLP 14888) in his account, possibly in a borderland between Byzantium and Serbia was invited by the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, who aimed to strengthen the relations between the two states through the governor. Receiving his guest hospitably and generously, Kantakouzenos sent him bountiful stone objects and silver implements.¹¹⁰² Furthermore, the Byzantine emperor promised his son Manuel, whom the Serbian governor admired his intelligence and befitting character, a marriage with Liberios's daughter, if he accepted to help Kantakouzenos repair by then the already lost connection with the Serbian king.¹¹⁰³ The reception must have created an admirable image of the Byzantine state and consolidated the perception of Byzantium as a "respected" power in the eyes of the Serbian ruler and in the realm of the whole of Christianity.

Kantakouzenos's purpose seems to have been achieved, because when he arrived in Serbia, his meeting with the Serbian king went so well that the Byzantine emperor was able to reinstall a friendship between the two states. This meeting illustrates another exchange of gifts between the two rulers. Both rulers expressed their generosity through splendid gifts to each other. Kantakouzenos gratified the king and his wife with magnificent objects from his personal treasures (χαρίζεται μὲν γὰρ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ τε Κράλῃ καὶ τῇ συζύγῳ πολυτελῆ τινα κειμήλια τῶν αὐτοῦ θησαυρῶν).¹¹⁰⁴ In return (ἀντιδίδωσι), the Serbian king provided things that could be identified as in-kind, such as residential buildings and necessities for the emperor's army such as food and accommodations.¹¹⁰⁵

¹¹⁰² "δαψιλέστερον ἐξ ὧν ἐπεφέρετο λιθοκολλήτων σκευῶν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀργυρωμάτων ἀντεχαρίζετο" Gregoras, vol. II, 638.

¹¹⁰³ Gregoras, vol. II, 638-639.

¹¹⁰⁴ Gregoras, vol. II, 640.

¹¹⁰⁵ Gregoras, vol. II, 640.

The diplomacy over the kidnapping of the son of Orhan, Halil, by pirates is also illustrative in this respect.¹¹⁰⁶ A group of Phocaean pirates kidnapped Orhan's son Halil in 1356-1357.¹¹⁰⁷ The Ottoman ruler, as Gregoras writes, had no chance but appealed to the Byzantine emperor John V Palaiologos. In return for help, Orhan promised him to be his "honest friend and devoted servant." Moreover, he offered money if he could get back his son alive. Gregoras interprets this incident as God's wish so that the Byzantines could take a breath in distress which they had been suffering for many years due to the military pressure via the approaching Turkish troops against the Byzantine territories. It put the Ottomans in a somewhat inferior position, because Orhan strongly needed Byzantine help to find his son. Gregoras gives further details about Orhan's diplomatic efforts. The Ottoman ruler incessantly sent messengers to the Byzantine emperor asking an immediate action. He was aided by three rowers in search of the pirates. The expenses of their manning and equipment were also covered by Orhan, who also voluntarily sent more money, promised to end the disputes with John V Palaiologos as well as accepting to surrender Matthew Kantakouzenos.¹¹⁰⁸ The Byzantine Empire here functioned as an intermediary. Envoys were sent to Kalotheos, the governor of Phocaia, which was a city under the Genoese control but remained faithful to Byzantium. Kalotheos was called to help. Yet, the governor who was a former supporter of John VI Kantakouzenos found the mere request not suitable to his status and less awarding.

¹¹⁰⁶ The story is told in Gregoras, vol. III, 558-566 and 503-510. See Tinnefeld, "Kaiser Ioannes V. Palaiologos und der gouverneur von Phokaia 1356-1358: Ein beispiel für den verfall der byzantinischen zentralgewalt um die mitte des 14. jahrhunderts," 266 ff.; Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, 261; Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1481*, 25-26.

¹¹⁰⁷ Halil was one of the eight children of the Ottoman ruler. Born in 1347 his mother was probably Theodora, the daughter of John VI Kantakouzenos. See Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460*, 134-135, f.n. 4.

¹¹⁰⁸ Gregoras, vol. III, 561-566.

He demanded money and status in the eyes of the emperor. Despite John V Palaiologos's consecutive attempts more than three times, he was not given a positive response. John V decided to go to Phocaea by himself and solve the problem. His efforts to siege and take control of Phocaea, whose governor did not obey him in this context, came to nothing even though he had the military support of the ruler of the neighboring Sarukhan Emirate.¹¹⁰⁹ Orhan was so persistent in sending embassies to the Byzantine emperor for the sake of the liberation of his son. In the winter of 1357-1358, we hear again of John V's visit to Phocaea for Orhan's request. Returning from there with empty hands, John was visited by the Ottoman ruler, who came from the highlands of Bithynia to the coast at Chalcedon. Gregoras narrates this very significant event. Accordingly, Orhan met with the emperor but at the outset from a short distance on boats via envoys. Yet, it seems that the emperor wanted the conversation to be closer, so he welcomed Orhan all with his entourage in the fortress called Arkla (modern Kız Kulesi), where the meeting took place. This is a very important piece of evidence for diplomatic communication between the Byzantine Empire with the early Ottomans. At that meeting, both parties demonstrated benevolence to each other. The conversations ended with a feast celebrating the agreement between the two allies. They reached a compromise, according to which they should continue to bring Orhan's son back and conclude a marriage alliance between Orhan's son and John's daughter. This was aimed at being a herald of a Byzantine-Ottoman peace. Moreover, John V wanted Orhan to select Halil, his son-in-law to be, as his heir so that the Byzantine emperor could benefit

¹¹⁰⁹ Tinnefeld, "Kaiser Ioannes V. Palaiologos und der gouverneur von Phokaia 1356-1358: Ein beispiel für den verfall der byzantinischen zentralgewalt um die mitte des 14. jahrhunderts," 266.

from it and retain peace. However, our sources do not speak about the conclusion of this proposed marriage.¹¹¹⁰

After handing over 100,000 hyperpyra to Kalotheos, who was also entitled to respectable honors, John received the Ottoman prince and sailed together to Constantinople. Gregoras mentions some irregularities in the protocol when they arrived at Constantinople.¹¹¹¹ In 1358, Demetrios Kydones refers to this treaty between John V and Orhan in one of his letters addressed to Constantine Asanes, pointing to a mutual exchange of gifts. He wrote that the emperor could make everyone happy just as he already reconciled Asia with Europe. Accordingly, when John V surrendered Halil (who was kidnapped and later released by the Phocaeen pirates to Orhan by the Byzantine emperor's endeavor), a large crowd including the Byzantine leading men and soldiers marched to Nicaea, where they joined a great mass of Bithynians (i.e. Ottomans) to celebrate the result of a collaboration between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state.¹¹¹² Gregoras mentions that the Bithynians, which were composed of barbarians and *mixobarbaroi* (μυξοβάρβαροι), brought many gifts of sheep, cattle, household items, and goods of this nature, whereas the Byzantines provided counter-gifts by proper favors and gifts (without naming them).¹¹¹³ This may indicate the still nomadic and agricultural nature of the early Ottomans if not it was a form of presenting objects that were peculiar to the mode of living culture of the giver. At this time, live animals may also have been

¹¹¹⁰ Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The structure of power*, 92-93.

¹¹¹¹ Gregoras, vol. III, 505.

¹¹¹² Demetrios Kydones's letter to Konstantinos Asanes is published in Tinnefeld (trans.), *Demetrios Kydones. Briefe*, 266-268; Ryder, *The career and writings of Demetrius Kydones*, 155.

¹¹¹³ "δῶρα φέροντες παντοδαπά, πρόβατα καὶ βόας καὶ ἔπιπλα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἅττα πάμπολλά τε καὶ πολυειδῆ. ὀλίγαις δ' ὕστερον ἡμέραις οἱ προπέμναντες ἐπανῆκον Βυζάντιοι μεθ' ὧν προσῆκεν ἐκεῖθεν χαρίτων καὶ δώρων." Gregoras, vol. III, 509. On this embassy, see Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3055. Cf. Kydones, *Briefe*, 266-268.

much needed in Byzantium. In other words, the Ottomans could have chosen these items perhaps because they knew that the Byzantines indeed needed them. In a state of post-civil strife period in Byzantium, that is after the 1340s, the empire's land economy and agriculture were in ruins. For the Ottomans, therefore, it might be reasonable to opt to prefer the Byzantines with what the latter was really deprived of. A question can be posed here: To what extent were these gifts demanded previously by the receiver? As far as our primary sources are concerned, no information is at hand to make an argument that the gifts were prepared on request.

One of the requirements of most of the gift-giving procedures was reciprocity. This notion can well be observed in various contexts in Byzantine-Ottoman diplomatic communications. In the winter of 1421-1422, Murad I dispatched Çandarlı İbrahim as his envoy to Constantinople requesting Manuel II's support to restore the Ottoman throne in a context in which the pretender Mustafa constituted a serious pretender for the Ottoman ruler. Moreover, when a Wallachian messenger paid a visit to the Ottoman court, it was Çandarlı Halil who received him and talked to him on behalf of the Ottoman ruler. Halil's response to the messenger was to stay disconnected from the Hungarians. In return for that policy, as Chalkokondyles notes, they expected to "receive gifts and garments" (οἷσεσθαι δώρα τε καὶ ἐσθῆτας πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως) from Murad II.¹¹¹⁴

An interesting reference to the use of gifts as diplomatic instrument appears in a very important testimony of Syropoulos, who participated the Council of Ferrara/Florence and was able to depict an extensive portrait of the years 1438-1440. In his memoirs, accompanying the emperor and his extended entourage Syropoulos

¹¹¹⁴ Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 135; trans. Kaldellis, vol. II, Book 7.51, 147.

gives the details of the return voyage from Italy to Constantinople. He mentions that the governor of Gallipoli sent his representative to greet the emperor and invite him to the castle of Gallipoli for a rest. John VIII Palaiologos responded this gesture by dispatching a certain Laskaris Mamalis, who carried a silver vase (δῶρον μαστραπᾶν ἀργυροῦν) as a gift to the governor.¹¹¹⁵ This particular example indicates that the diplomatic gift exchange was not always between the rulers but also occurred between a ruler and a local official.

As seen in the Appendix, a detailed analysis of what is provided in historical sources leads us to conclude that we have only 14 encounters in which gifts are presented, with specific descriptions out of a total of 32 separate encounters bearing a mention of the gift. The flow of gifts to the Ottoman court is more specifically explained compared to the ones carried by the Ottoman envoys. While there are 11 different encounters with detailed gift descriptions presented to the Ottomans, only 3 cases offer information about the contents of the gifts provided to the Byzantine court. There are 2 cases where sources speak of mutual gift exchanges. The remaining 20 encounters reveal nothing more than a mere mention of the term gift that is presented without further identification. In terms of these anonymous gifts, an analysis would reveal the predominance of the Byzantine gifts handed over to the Ottoman court. Here, I restricted myself to the gift exchanges that occurred between the two polities' rulers and partly excluded the gift exchanges that happened to be prevalent between the Ottoman authorities and the Byzantine local powerholders.

With regard to the sources mentioning the gifts, there is an interesting picture indicating a predominance of Byzantine sources. The only Ottoman source for a gift

¹¹¹⁵ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, XI, 22, 544.

exchange comes from the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade, who marks the gift (or bribe, “yüz balık ilçi”) handed over to the grand vizier Çandarlı Ali.¹¹¹⁶ Another exclusive indication belongs to Nicolò Barbaro, who refers to the gifts that are said to have been presented by some aristocrats of the emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos to Mehmed II.¹¹¹⁷ All other references happen to occur in the Byzantine accounts, namely the writings of Pachymeres, Kantakouzenos, Gregoras, Doukas, Sphrantzes, and Chalkokondyles.

As far as the contents of the gift exchanges are concerned, the picture rendered by the sources is more detailed. While the Ottomans are portrayed as giving horses, hunting dogs, carpets and panther skins, money, and lands, the Byzantines presented the following gifts to the Ottoman court: silver drinking vessels, woolen and silken clothes, saddle cloth, as well as cash and gold, mostly in the form of tribute.

In conclusion, sources on the goods involved in gift exchanges between the Byzantines and the Ottomans do not allow us to trace a clear pattern. It is difficult to ascertain the real content of the gifts as a whole in most cases because there are often unidentified gifts, where the primary sources do not elaborate further on their contents. Nevertheless, both sides utilized a particular performance in gift exchange to establish or resume good relations with the other.

¹¹¹⁶ Aşıkpaşazade, ed. Âli Bey, 67; ed. Atsız, bâb 61, 137.

¹¹¹⁷ Nicolò Barbaro, *Diary of the siege of Constantinople 1453*, 78.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As once described by Angeliki E. Laiou, early fourteenth-century Byzantine diplomacy, as it had been confined to certain limits, “took the form of requests for help against the Turks or the Catalans, with the promise of rewards of one sort or another.”¹¹¹⁸ By the second half of the 1320s, the situation in Anatolia was worsening with regard to Byzantium. Gregoras mentions in his narrative that the ignorance and the neglect of the eastern territories of the empire resulted in the handover of several cities in Bithynia, including Prousa.¹¹¹⁹ In this context of ex-Byzantine territories becoming new Ottoman domains, diplomatic contacts between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state endured mutually, as both polities developed delicate political approaches utilizing several embassies.

In terms of what the historical records in Pachymeres’s and Gregoras’s accounts concerned, which stand as the most extensive Byzantine historical accounts shedding light on the early years of the Ottoman emirate, there is almost no diplomatic communication revealed between Constantinople and Osman’s emirate. The single instance is the two consecutive embassies in spring/summer 1307, which are absent in Dölger’s study. In the first of these embassies, Byzantium was represented by Maria Palaiologina, who approached Osman with extreme arrogance and threatened him to appeal to Kharbanda, as Pachymeres informs. Until the late 1320s, Franz Dölger does not refer to any diplomatic contact between Byzantium and

¹¹¹⁸ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The foreign policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, 185.

¹¹¹⁹ “ἐν τούτοις τοῖς χρόνοις τῶν ἐφ’ ὧν ἀμεληθέντων αἱ πλεῖσται πόλεις καὶ χωραὶ τῆς Βιθυνίας ὑπὸ τοῖς Τούρκοις ἐγένοντο.” Gregoras, vol. I, 384. Gregoras thinks that all these bad events were related with natural phenomena that were considered as signs. Gregoras, vol. I, 384-385.

the Ottoman emirate. However, both Pachymeres's and Gregoras's accounts bear references to a series of embassies sent to the Mamluks, a sign of intense diplomatic traffic between the courts in Cairo and Constantinople. For that period, Dölger counts sixteen different contacts between the two courts, whereas he reserves a couple of entries to Turkish contingents of Anatolia, a mission to the Turkish leader Isaak Melik, and a contract with the Turkish leader Halil (Halil Ece) in 1310-1311, none of which were Ottoman.¹¹²⁰ On the other hand, it is the Ottoman sources, however, throwing some light to the early Ottoman years, which seem to have testified instances of diplomatic contacts with more local character.

Cemal Kafadar has argued that the first encounters took place in the 1340s in the context of inviting the rival Turkish emirates by the Byzantines, who expected to use their military capacity in the internal strife in Byzantium.¹¹²¹ Although Kafadar's argument still remains relevant because the factor that he presents determined the setting throughout the period of shifting alliances of the 1340s, the initial encounters predate the 1340s and can even be securely placed in the first decade of the fourteenth century. The contact realized by Maria Palaiologina and an exchange of embassies in the summer of 1333 enable us to place the initial contacts much earlier. While Maria's mission aimed to settle an alliance with the Ilkhanids, perhaps as an intimidating maneuver against Osman, the later embassies took place in the aftermath of the battle of Pelekanon in June 1329. John VI Kantakouzenos's historical account is the only source for these embassies that were exchanged in order to negotiate peace terms between the two parties. Moreover, there was another contact earlier. Around 1328, as Kantakouzenos narrates, a Turkish army happened

¹¹²⁰ Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 2291 and 2318.

¹¹²¹ Kafadar, *Between two worlds: The construction of the Ottoman State*, 138.

to be invited by Andronikos II Palaiologos in an attempt to receive military support in the civil war against his grandson Andronikos III. It is difficult, however, to argue with certainty that this embassy was targeted at the Ottomans, because Kantakouzenos gives no clear indication of that event. However, a detail possibly indicates that these Turks were none other than the Ottomans, because they crossed the Bosphorus coming from the East (Περσικὴ στρατιὰ ... ἐκ τῆς ἑω διαβάσα) and thanks to the agreement with Andronikos II (κατὰ συμμαχίαν τοῦ πάππου καὶ βασιλέως) they joined his troops.¹¹²² At that time, the territories beyond the eastern frontiers of the Byzantine Empire were controlled by the Ottomans. Such a call for military support from the Ottomans must have required an embassy, despite the lack of direct reference in historical evidence.

In a recent article, Alexander D. Beihammer evaluates the historical account of John VI Kantakouzenos to analyze Byzantine-Turkish alliances that happened to be determinant in the political contest during the first half of the fourteenth century. The author seeks to explain how these contacts functioned in shaping a politically stable empire in the political environment of the region. In this picture, he also underlines the key role of John VI Kantakouzenos, which his contemporaries and even modern historians tended to disregard as they usually equate his reign with corruption. Beihammer's excellent use of materials mainly from Kantakouzenos's account as well as the accounts of Gregoras and Enverî draws attention to a complex form of diplomatic dialogue between the Byzantine and Ottoman courts.¹¹²³

¹¹²² Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 151. In the following page, there is another reference to the agreement between Andronikos II and the Turks: "ἐκ τῆς Περσικῆς συμμαχίας τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου βασιλέως." See Kantakouzenos, vol. I, 152.

¹¹²³ Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-54)," 457-488.

Furthermore, Beihammer rightly observes that Kantakouzenos's policy of reproachment with his Turkish neighbors lies in the requirements of the shifting political atmosphere of the early fourteenth-century Aegean and Byzantine worlds by pointing out that the diplomatic contacts ending with alliances between the Byzantine Empire and the Turkish principalities including the Ottomans predate Kantakouzenos's efforts and for that manner they represent a change in the political culture.¹¹²⁴ Both internal and regional factors, which can simply be rendered as political, military, and logistical, played a role in seeking manpower to equip for military endurance as opposed to the everchanging antagonism. For the Byzantine emperors, the primary motivation behind the employment of Turkish military troops was to gain superiority over their foes; whereas the Turkish warriors were compelled by gifts and money that they received in return for diplomatic alliances.¹¹²⁵

Other than the ones which are treated in detail in historical sources, there are occasional references to specific diplomatic missions without sufficient information. These references are usually made in passing. When Sphrantzes, for instance, narrates the embassy of 8 June 1422 to Murad II's court, he mentions that the same envoys in this very embassy had been sent to Murad earlier in order to negotiate a treaty of friendship.¹¹²⁶ However, about this preceding embassy, we hear nothing in Sphrantzes's account. Another example again from the author's narrative can

¹¹²⁴ Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-54)," 462-463.

¹¹²⁵ For the role of taking captives, booty and receiving gifts among the ghazis, see the Ottoman chronicles. Kantakouzenos (Kantakouzenos, vol. II, 593) underlines these factors as a principal motivation behind the fulfillment of these groups: "ἀλλ' ἀπελθόντας εἰς Βυζάντιον πρὸς βασιλῖδα καὶ δῶρα δεξαμένους καὶ τὰ ἐπηγγελέμενα χρήματα τῷ σφῶν σατράπῃ ἐπανάκειν πρὸς αὐτὸν, καὶ πάντα τὰ κελευόμενα ποιεῖν." Beihammer provides several references to such descriptions from the historical accounts of Kantakouzenos, Gregoras and Enveri. See Beihammer, "Crusade, civil strife, and Byzantine-Turkish coalitions in the time of emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1341-54)," 469, f.n. 51.

¹¹²⁶ τοὺς ἀποκρισιαρίους, οὓς προαπέστειλαν εἰς ἐκεῖνον διὰ κατάστασιν ἀγάπης. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10 and 11, 22.

illustrate the point further. Sphrantzes gives the identities of the Byzantine envoys who were entrusted to conclude the treaty with Murad II on 22 February 1424. The author himself was also in the embassy together with Loukas Notaras and Manuel Melakhrenos. Explaining the reason for the selection of these envoys, Sphrantzes writes that one of the envoys, Manuel Melakhrenos, visited the Ottoman ruler earlier to prepare this treaty.¹¹²⁷ While other sources inform us of these two instances, no further information on Melakhrenos's previous visit is given in the text.

The envoys entrusted in the same embassy were not always in accord with one another. Markos Palaiologos Iagaris was assigned to be Sphrantzes's fellow during his embassy to Murad II's court in 1429. This embassy is otherwise unknown. It probably bears traces of a clash of conflicts within the Byzantine bureaucracy, since, according to Sphrantzes's testimony, Iagaris did not like Sphrantzes's delegation in this mission. Holding a cynical attitude, Iagaris laughed at Sphrantzes. No information is given as to whether this incident took place in front of the Grand Vizier İbrahim Paşa. As the author transmits, Sphrantzes's speech was liked by the grand vizier, which made Sphrantzes content that his request was accepted. That conflicting relationship between the two envoys possibly resulted in Sphrantzes's preference for a journey homeward without his fellow envoy. He was accompanied by a noble Turkish official on his way back.¹¹²⁸ Therefore, there was not always a uniformity among the members of a same diplomatic mission.

Sometimes contradictory descriptions and narratives among the primary sources become evident; a certain diplomatic occasion can be described differently,

¹¹²⁷ ὅτι ὁ μὲν Μελαχρηνὸς προαπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν ἀμνηρᾶν καὶ ἐγνώρισεν ὅτι θέλει γενέσθαι τὴν ἀγάπην. Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.

¹¹²⁸ Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.5, 66.

and the names of envoys can vary from source to source. Before John VIII Palaiologos departed for the council at Ferrara, he dispatched an envoy to Murad II. This visit aimed to inform the Ottoman ruler about John VIII's participation to the meeting there. For Syropoulos, the Byzantine envoy was Paul Asanes. On the other hand, Sphrantzes proposes an alternative person for the same purpose. It was Andronikos Iagaris for him. It has been argued that these two individuals were in the same embassy.¹¹²⁹ However, one should bear in mind that these two men could be members of separate missions. Asking questions concerning John VIII's search for alliance and support from the Latins, Murad II's viziers posed a warning to the envoy that the Byzantine emperor should seek friendship with their sultan. Sphrantzes also underlines Murad's attempt to dissuade John VIII from going personally to the West. In return for the emperor's submission to him, Murad could help in any matters needed. This open objection to Byzantine foreign policy brought the relations to an edge.¹¹³⁰ As a result of the emperor's submission, Murad had planned an assault against Constantinople.¹¹³¹

The selection of envoys depended on the policies of each ruler. A change of ruler usually went hand in hand with a shift of foreign policy, or at least keeping the status quo by some adjustments. Having different priorities and targets, emperors' policies are revealed through their diplomatic agendas. Similar to Malamut's argument regarding the Ottoman rulers' role in deciding on the Byzantine envoys who visited the Ottoman court, the Byzantine emperors had possibly imposed their

¹¹²⁹ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 183, f.n. 4.

¹¹³⁰ Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 182; Zachariadou, "The Ottomans, the Greek Orthodox Church and the perils of the Papacy," 23.

¹¹³¹ Zachariadou, "The Ottomans, the Greek Orthodox Church and the perils of the Papacy," 23-24. Ottoman political thought for this period is shaped by the alert condition of the sultan on account of a possible crusade under the leadership of the pope. See, Zachariadou, "From holy war to just war," 15-23.

preferences to the Ottoman rulers on the individuals whom they contacted. This seems evident if one looks at the initial years of Manuel II's reign. Çandarlı Ali appears as a prominent figure in this respect. As the grand vizier of Bayezid, he showed remarkable intimacy with the Byzantine emperor, whom he did his best to save the emperor's life namely at Serres. Moreover, as both Chalkokondyles and an anonymous Greek chronicle testify, in 1394 Ali served as Bayezid's envoy to Manuel, to whom he conveyed his lord's call for the emperor's annual military mission requiring the support of the Ottoman army in campaigns.¹¹³² The change in political circumstances and mutual relations between Manuel and Bayezid gave way to the Ottoman siege of Constantinople in the year 1394, which lasted for more than eight years.¹¹³³ It may be speculated that the long period of the siege might have resulted from the fact that Bayezid entrusted Ali with the command of the army in front of the City.¹¹³⁴ The alleged intimacy of the Ottoman vizier with the Byzantine emperor might have constituted a major factor behind the extension of the siege of Constantinople.

Sometimes the overall reign of a certain emperor did not show a uniform character when his diplomatic approaches were concerned. There could be an alteration in foreign policy depending not only on the inner dynamics of the state but also on the political developments that took place abroad. For instance, Manuel II's offensive policy during the initial years of his reign left its place in a sort of policy of

¹¹³² Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 76-77; Philippides, *Byzantium, Europe, and the early Ottoman sultans, 1373-1513. An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the seventeenth century (Codex Barberinus Graecus 111)*, 28; Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 121-122. For this embassy, Dölger, *Regesten*, vol. V, no. 3234, gives the year 1391, possibly due to his reliance on problematic chronology of Chalkokondyles as Barker comments. See Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, 122, f.n. 49.

¹¹³³ Gautier, "Un récit inédit sur le siege de Constantinople par les Turcs (1394-1402)," 100-117.

¹¹³⁴ For the information that Ali was entrusted with the command of the army in the siege, see Başar, "Osmanlıların fetihten önce gerçekleştirmiş oldukları İstanbul kuşatmaları," 117, 119.

reconciliation in the later parts of his reign. He came to terms with Murad and therefore returned to his father's policy of appeasement after the Ottoman victory in Thessalonike. The Ottomans won both the city and Manuel II. The need for military aid led Manuel to visit various courts in Western Europe seeking reassurance for his empire. As a consequence, the fact that Manuel found a way to challenge Bayezid's authority by submitting to the Western powers paved the way for Bayezid's open animosity against the Byzantine emperor. That seems to have brought the diplomatic relations of both polities to a standstill. In the period of Manuel's absence, a single Ottoman embassy visited John VII in Constantinople in 1400-1401 to deliver an ultimatum to surrender Constantinople.¹¹³⁵

The visual and ceremonial dimensions of diplomatic occasions changed in the Palaiologan period. The weak state of the treasury in Byzantium caused financial difficulties that might have led the emperors to reduce the state budget. Pachymeres, in his account, relates the main problems behind the loss of Asia Minor to the wrong fiscal policies and mismanagement of diplomacy after Michael VIII Palaiologos took the throne. From the author's perspective, both the economy and diplomacy were well-managed under the Nicaean emperors, particularly under the reign of John III Vatatzes.¹¹³⁶ Yet, the situation in the Palaiologan era brought a serious dwindling scale of diplomatic ceremonies. This has been explained in the thesis by citing Gregoras's words of striking comparison using the "air" and "dust" metaphors.¹¹³⁷

¹¹³⁵ Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 15.5, 89.

¹¹³⁶ Pachymeres, ed. Failler, vol. I, 23-35; Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 267, 270-271. For an evaluation of Pachymeres's account in connection with its critiques on the Palaiologan policies, see Angelov, *Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330*, 260-269.

¹¹³⁷ Cecily J. Hilsdale utilized this approach in a remarkable way to explain the rough period of the fourteenth century Byzantium and how the imperial image was used as a gift in the empire's diplomatic agenda. See Hilsdale, *Byzantine art and diplomacy in an age of decline*, 199-213.

The financial status did not recover considerably until the final days of the empire. Both the economic and psychological conditions of the mob in the eastern frontier regions prepared the ground for the takeover by the hands of the Turks. Continuous warfare along the borders brought serious dangers for the inhabitants of these regions, who suffered and often lacked even their vital necessities, such as shelter, food, and money.¹¹³⁸

No considerable and long-term achievement was achieved as a consequence of all these embassies directed to the Western powers. The Byzantine “diplomatic offensive” ended up as a gradual process that finally evolved into an isolation in the eyes of the political powers who were expected to provide military aid; this new circumstance set the new normal and compelled the emperors in Constantinople to accept the union of churches.¹¹³⁹ All in all, Byzantine diplomacy in the Palaiologan era can be described as even-tempered and proactive, whereas the Ottomans adopted ad hoc diplomacy determining diplomatic maneuvers that derived from frequent changes in political circumstances.¹¹⁴⁰

In conclusion, this thesis emphasized the diplomatic communications between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman state by developing some underpinnings of certain aspects of this one-and-a-half-century-long relationship. There is still much to be studied on the factors that played a role in Byzantine-Ottoman official relations. The main scholarly effort here was an attempt to figure out the place of envoys within these diplomatic contacts. In order to contribute to a fuller picture of the role of envoys we need to focus on the dichotomy envisaging the factors that played a

¹¹³⁸ Gregoras, vol. II, 790, 810-811. Arnakis, “Byzantium’s Anatolian provinces during the reign of Michael Palaeologus,” 37-44. For the economic crisis in the period, see Smyrlis, “Financial crisis and the limits of taxation under Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1321),” 71-82.

¹¹³⁹ Harris, *Greek émigrés in the West 1400-1520*, 43.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ari, “Early Ottoman diplomacy: Ad hoc period,” 36-65.

role in their employment. At that point, one needs to ask whether the individuals in both parties entrusted with a task of diplomatic communication happened to be ad hoc agents, or whether they were predetermined by various factors including their affinity to the ruler, offices occupied, and personal qualifications. This thesis attempted to investigate all recorded embassies between the Byzantine Empire and the Ottomans, and by this way is meant to define the place of each individual identified in historical sources in varying diplomatic settings. Consequently, it argued that the Byzantine diplomatic agents visiting the Ottoman court were selected from among (what we may call) the imperial diplomatic circle, depending on the context. The efficiency of Byzantine diplomatic service can significantly be attributed to the talents of its practitioners (that is, the ambassadors). No matter how the imperial directions were relayed, their personal contributions and leading function during the diplomatic contacts seem to have made a significant impact.

APPENDIX

LIST OF EMBASSIES MENTIONED IN BYZANTINE AND OTTOMAN SOURCES

Code	Date	Sender	Recipient	Envoy	Venue	Purpose of embassy	Düger, <i>Regesten</i> , figure" page no.	Mahmut, "La figure" page no.	Sources	Gifts	Quotations from sources
1	Spring/Summer 1307	Andronikos II	Orman	Maria Palaiologina (sister of the emperor)	Nicaea	Asking to lift the siege of Nicaea and promoting the alliance between Byzantium and the Ilkhanids			Pachymeres, ed. Fallaer, vol. IV, Book 13, 25-683.		"Τὸ δὲ πρὸς τὸν Σουλτανῶν εἶδος καὶ λίαν ἐξυμνεῖται. Καὶ τὰ τῆς Νικαίας μέρη κατασκευαστὰ προσέκοιτο, τὴν αἰκίαν ἀντιθέσθαι τῇ Μοσῶν, τὴν καὶ δεσποῦσαν τὸν Μαργαρίτῃ θρόνον, ὅπως μὴ ἀπὸ ἀπὸ τῆς αἰκίας τῆς Νικαίας ἐκτείνῃται δὲ καὶ αὐτὴν καταμνησθὲν εἶδος, καθίσταται τὸ πρὸς τὸν Σουλτανῶν εἶδος καὶ τὰ τὸν Πάτριον ἀπολαύσας ὅς αὐτὸν ἐπὶ ἡμέτερα. Pachymeres, ed. Fallaer, vol. IV, Book 13, 25, 683.
2	Summer 1307 (?)	Andronikos II	Orman		Nicaea	Insisting on the aim of the previous embassy but in a milder way			Pachymeres, ed. Fallaer, vol. IV, Book 13, 35, 701-703.	magnificent acts of orientation (i.e. gifts) (μεγαλοπρεπὲς φελομνησθῶν) Pachymeres, ed. Fallaer, vol. IV, Book 13, 35, 701.	"Ἐξυμνεῖται καὶ ἀνεκλήν, καὶ μέλλων πρὶν τὴν Νικαίαν, διουρῶν αἶμα, εἶχε τὰ πρῶτα τοῦ Σουλτάνου ἐλθόντος τὰ εἶδη, καὶ μέλλων ὅτι ἡ ἀντιθέσθαι τοῦ βασιλέως Μωῦσα καὶ (...) Καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα τὰ μὴν τὰ εἶδη, καὶ βασιλεὺς ἤματι ἐπὶ αὐτῶν αὐτὸς αὐτὸς καὶ μετὰ ἡμετέρας φελομνησθῶν." Pachymeres, ed. Fallaer, vol. IV, Book 13, 35, 701.
3	Prior to 1328	Andronikos II	Orman (perhaps Orhan)			Asking for military support against his grandson Andronikos III. This looks like mercenary groups were called based on an agreement.			Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 150-153.		The Turks sheltering in Constantinople then demanded ships for crossing to their territories: "ἄμα δὲ καὶ ναὺς εἰς τὴν Πάτριον πρὸς τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡρώδην, (...) Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 152.
4	Summer 1333 or ca. Autumn 1330 (Dölger)	Orhan	Andronikos III	embassy		To settle a peace agreement. Andronikos III had already made a campaign against the Ottomans in the region. This campaign ended with a defeat in Pelekanos in June 1329. The entry should be evaluated in this context.	2702		Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 447.		"Ὅρσαν πρὸς βασιλέα πᾶσι." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 447.
5	August 1333 or ca. Autumn 1330 (Dölger)	Andronikos III	Orhan			As a response to the one above, upon initiation of Andronikos II for negotiating peace. A treaty was signed consequently.	2703		Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 446-448; Loebeitz, "Chronique brève, part II" 40, 52-54; Schreiner, <i>Die byzantinischen Chroniken</i> , vol. I, dir. no. 8127, 80, vol. II, 243-244.	Andronikos III gave silver drinking cups and woollen and silken woven robes. Orhan gave horses, hunting dogs, rugs, leopard skins.	"ὅτι τὸν πρὸς βασιλέα" Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 447. "ἔταξα ἀλλήλους ἡμεῖς τοὺς δούλους, Ὅρσαν μὲν τῶν πᾶσι καὶ σὺν βασιλεὺς ταπεινὰς καὶ καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα δὲ καταμνησθῶν τὸν πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα οὐκ ἐξ ἑαυτὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ Σουλτάνου, ..." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. I, 447. A tribute is mentioned in a short chronicle. Schreiner, <i>Die byzantinischen Chroniken</i> , vol. I, dir. no. 8127, 80, vol. II, 243-244.
6	Summer 1341 (Dölger)	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan			Securing the peace. A treaty was concluded as a provisional truce.			Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 66.		"καὶ τὸν Ὅρσαν, εἰς τὴν κατὰ Βυζάντιον ἑκείνην, καταμνησθῶν πρὸς ἐπὶ τῆς (...) εἶτα δὲ καὶ τὸν βασιλέα ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκείνης, ἀπὸ τῆς πρὸς τὴν ἐκείνην καταμνησθῶν." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 66.
7	1345 (?)	the regency government in Constantinople-Alejos Apokatakos (?)	Orhan			Offering an alliance and promising to hand over a lot of money	2903		Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 507.	offering a lot of money (πολλὰ χρήματα) in return for alliance	"ὅτι καὶ γὰρ χρῆς, καὶ πρὸς τὸν πρὸς Ὅρσαν τὸν Πάτριον πρὸς βασιλέα καταμνησθῶν, πολλὰ ἐπαγγελόμενος, παρὲν χρήματα." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 507. As Kantakouzenos mentions, the same offer was made to the ruler of Karas shortly before.

	Late 1344 - Early 8 1345	Anna of Savoy	Orhan									"Βασίλεις δὲ ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς παθόμενος, ὡς βασιλεὺς προσέβηεν ποταῖο πρὸς Ὀρχάνην ἐπὶ συμμάχῃ, πέμψας καὶ αὐτὸς ἑξαρχὴν ὅπως αὐτῷ μάλλον, καὶ μὴ Βυζαντίους πρόσδοτο, καὶ εὖλετο Ὀρχάνῃ τὴν πρὸς Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν βασιλεὺς μάλλον συμμάχῃ, καὶ πέμψας Χατζὴν τὸν εὐνοῶντα, ἐπέδωκε τὴν σπανιδίαν (true)." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 498; "προξένοισι τῇ δεσποτῇ Ἀννῇ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ βασιλεὺς Ἰωάννου ἐπὶ μέρους τοῦ σέβου προσέβηεν εἰς τὸν ἡγεμόνα τῆς Βιθυνίας καὶ Φρυγίας, ἐπὶ δὲ καὶ Παφλαγονίας, τὸν δὲ ὁ λόγος φθάσει ἐδύλωσεν, τὸν Ὀρχάν, τὸ αὐτίκα ἀφ' ὧν καὶ βορέβαν, ὡς ἡν καταλαβέμεθα τῷ Καντακουζηνῷ ἀποστάτῃ ὅτι τῆς βασιλείας, συνθεμένη δόνηα αὐτῷ ποσότητα χρυσίου πολλοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἀνταποδίδουσι οἱ Τοῦρκου Ρωμανίους ἡμετέρους τοῦ Καντακουζηνῷ, ἔργον ἔδωκεν πάλιν καὶ παρῶσιν ἐντα βούλονται • καὶ τοὺς μὴ θέλοντας πάλιν τοὺς αὐτοὺς ἀρχαλμύλους, ἀναμειδίους περὶν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ Σκουαρίου, καὶ ἔργον καὶ φέρειν αὐτοὺς ἐντα βούλονται, πάντα ἐνοστήσει δὲ Ὀρχάν καὶ ἡδύως ἀκούσας (ἴδμεν γὰρ τὴν ποταμὴν πρὸ πολλοῦ γέσσαν) καὶ θαρσάλεως πρήσας καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς ἡρόνης τὸ μετὰ χάριος προσεσὼν πέμψαι τοὺς πρέσβεις ἀγαλλόμενος καὶ χαίρωντας, οὐκ εὐδότες οἱ ἄλλοι τίνα μετακλόνονται εἰς βορέβαν, καὶ ποταμὴν βορέβαν ἐκθλίβουσαν ἵνα ποιήσῃ ἐμπεδωσθῇ εἰς τὴν νῆσον ἣν ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς προξένοισι. Στάδας οὖν Τοῦρκους τὸν ἄρβανον γάλαδος δέκα ὁ Ὀρχάν, καὶ τὸν παρβόνον δαμέντες τῆς πόλεως δέχονται τοῦτους μετὰ χάριος, οἱ πολῖται, καὶ τὰ τῆς πόλεως ταῖσι καὶ τὰς ἐνὸν ἡμέρας καταπαρήσαντες καὶ φιλοξυνηθέντες παρὰ τῆς δεσποτῆς καὶ τὸν Ρωμανὸν ἐξίσαι κατὰ τοῦ Καντακουζηνῷ." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 8.182, 55, 57.
	Late 1344 - Early 9 1345	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan									Βασίλεις δὲ ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς παθόμενος, ὡς βασιλεὺς προσέβηεν ποταῖο πρὸς Ὀρχάνην ἐπὶ συμμάχῃ, πέμψας καὶ αὐτὸς ἑξαρχὴν ὅπως αὐτῷ μάλλον, καὶ μὴ Βυζαντίους πρόσδοτο, καὶ εὖλετο Ὀρχάνῃ τὴν πρὸς Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν βασιλεὺς μάλλον συμμάχῃ, καὶ πέμψας Χατζὴν τὸν εὐνοῶντα, ἐπέδωκε τὴν σπανιδίαν (true). Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 498.
	Winter 1344-10 1345	Orhan	John VI Kantakouzenos	Haji (Xerçî)								"Βασίλεις δὲ ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς παθόμενος, ὡς βασιλεὺς προσέβηεν ποταῖο πρὸς Ὀρχάνην ἐπὶ συμμάχῃ, πέμψας καὶ αὐτὸς ἑξαρχὴν ὅπως αὐτῷ μάλλον, καὶ μὴ Βυζαντίους πρόσδοτο, καὶ εὖλετο Ὀρχάνῃ τὴν πρὸς Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν βασιλεὺς μάλλον συμμάχῃ, καὶ πέμψας Χατζὴν τὸν εὐνοῶντα, ἐπέδωκε τὴν σπανιδίαν (true)." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 498.
	Winter 1345-11 1346	Orhan	John VI Kantakouzenos									"μετὰ τούτῳ δὲ Ὀρχάνῃ πρὸς Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν βασιλεὺς προσέβηεν πέμψας," Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 585. "Βασίλεις δὲ οὕτε ἀπαιτεῖτο τὴν προσέβηεν, οὐτ' εὐδὲς συνέθετο πρὸς τὴν ἐπαγγέμεν, ἀλλὰ προσήνως τε καὶ ἡμέρους τοὺς πρόσβηεν χρηματίσας καὶ δόρα παρασχόμενος, ..." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 585-586.
	Winter 1345-12 1346	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan									"στειλάς πρέσβεις" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 9.1, 57. "ὑπολαμβάνει τοὺς πρέσβεις ἀπέμψας" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 10.1, 59. "ἐξαρχὴν ποταμὸν τούτων ἐνήργηεν τε τοὺς Ἑλληνες ἀνοήτως." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 27. "πέμψας δὲ προσέβηεν πρὸς Ὀρχάνην, τὴν τε θυγατέρα καταγρησάτω, καὶ στρατὸν ἐπέδωκε πέμψαν, ἥτις ἔξα τὴν γυναικα πρὸς αὐτόν." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. II, 587.
												"Ὀρχάνης δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς γαμβρὸς ... πανοικεργεῖ ἥδε πρὸς τοῦ Βυζαντίου τὴν παρὰ τὸν ὁ Σκουαρίου ἐξουσίαν ἀνομιάζει, συνθησόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 28. "τοὺς δὲ Τοῦρκους ἐπιδέσνησας ὡς ἔπαυσε αὐτὸν δόρους ἀλαζόνους ἀπέμψας, χάριτας ὁλοκαρῶν τῷ ἡγεμόνι καὶ γαμβρῷ αὐτοῦ τῷ Ὀρχάν, τοὺς δὲ πολίτας φιλοστήσας καὶ γένηα πάλαισα δούλησας." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 10.2, 63.
												"πέμψας πρὸς Ὀρχάνην τὸν γαμβρὸν ὁ βασιλεὺς, μετακλέπειτο στρατῶν." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 4.4, 32.

15	Autumn 1350	Orhan	John VI Kantakouzenos				Providing military aid: Orhan sent Ottoman troops to Matthew in the latter's fight to capture Thessalonike. The troops were led by Süleyman, the son of Orhan.				Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4.17, 114; Doukas, ed. Grcu, Book 10.5, 65.	"τόν τε Μαρτίνον τὸν υἱὸν ἐκέλευε τὴν Ῥωμανὴν ἔξουα σφραγίσαι, μετὰ τῶν ἡγεμόνων ἡγεῖσθαι τοὺς βαρβάρους τὴν εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4.17, 114. "Τότε καὶ Σουλταίν, εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Ὀγγάν, παρὰς ἀπὸ Λαμψιάου σὺν στρατῷ πλείστῳ ἐλθόντα Χρήστον. Ὁ δὲ διαστῆς Μαρτίνος, ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς συναρτίσας αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ ἐν Χερσονήσῳ Ἐξουμάου, συνάραται πόλεμον καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν Τούρκων ὥλεσε καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Σουλταίν." Doukas, ed. Grcu, Book 10.5, 65.
16	1351-1352 or 1352 (acc. to Gregoras)	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan		2987		Asking not to give support to the Genoese: At the end, the Byzantine Empire signed a peace treaty with both the Ottomans and the Genoese.				Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 99.	"ὅ δὲ βασιλεὺς πέμψας ἤϊστο τὸν ἡγεμόνα Βηθνίας καὶ γαμβρὸν Ὑρκανὸν μὴ βοηθεῖν Γεννοταῖς." Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 99.
17	Spring (?) 1352	Orhan	John VI Kantakouzenos				Asking for the release of the Serbian envoys: Coming to the plains of Chalkedonia to the coast (Χαλκιδόνιος, ... ἤρξα). Orhan demanded from there (ἐκείθεν) release of the surviving Serbian envoys, who were returning from their embassy from Prousa with an aim of concluding a marriage alliance between Stephen Dusan and one of Orhan's son. They were trapped by the son of the son-in-law of John VI Kantakouzenos. Orhan wanted the gold, which was being carried by the embassy to Orhan's prospective co-in-law to be returned to him. According to Gregoras, Orhan went further and asked for even worse demands from the Byzantine emperor without giving further details. Kantakouzenos does not talk about this, but only the consequences of Turkish raids. The ambush against the embassy grew Orhan's anger. The Ottoman ruler ordered several pillages in Thrace and the other Byzantine territories in Europe.				Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 116-118.	"ὡς αἶθεν ὡς ἀπὸ ὀύρου δεσποτικοῦ τοῖς τε πρίσβεσι μετὰ τῶν χρημάτων ἀνήγα, καὶ ἀπαλὰς τὸν προτέρων μαζίσκος πολλὰ προσέειπα." Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 117.
18	Autumn 1352	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan		2998		Making alliance: The alliance was to be strengthened and extended against John V Palaiologos. John promised and gave stronger oaths to Orhan.				Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 151; Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4.33, 247 and Book 4.36, 266.	"ἄρδον μὲν οὖν πέμπων ἐς Ὑρκανὸν τὸν γαμβρὸν καὶ σφετέρην τὸν ἐν Βιθνίᾳ βαρβάρων, καὶ ἐμα ἐξ τοῦς γέγοντα Γεννοταῖς, ὅρακος κατανοήτους αἰδοῦς παρὰ τῶν ἀπὸν τεχνοποιήσας, ...". Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 151. "ἀρσβαῖον καὶ αὐτὸς πρὸς Σουλταίν τὸν τῆς Παλαιολῆς ἡγούμενον πολεμικὸς σφραγίς, (...) ἐπέμας καὶ γράμμασιν, ...". Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4.36, 266.
19	Autumn 1352	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan				Requesting troops: John VI "made a bid to the barbarian Hyrcanus (Orhan) sent an embassy and secretly informed him that he should hurry equip twenty thousand heavily armed men." Gregoras, III, 180-181.				Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 180-181; Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4.16, 111.	"Τέμας γὰρ βαρβάρῳ κρήρα μνηύα τῷ Ὑρκανῷ δευμπίσιος τὴν ταχίστην ὠλήτας παρσκαύσα." Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 180-181; "ἐπέμας δὲ καὶ πρὸς Ὀγγάνην τὸν γαμβρὸν ἀρσβαῖον, σφραγίσαν αὐτὸν πρὸς συμμάχων." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4.16, 111.
20	Autumn 1352	John VI Kantakouzenos	Süleyman, the son of Orhan		3000		Letters sent to Süleyman				Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 250, 266, 268.	"ἐπιστολὴν δὲ διὰ τῆς Θήνης, ἐστὶ καὶ βασιλεὺς ὁ νόος ἐκ τῆς Αἰουῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετὰ τῶν συμμάχων τὴν φθορὴν πρίσβεσις ἐπέμας πρὸς Σουλταίν τὸν σφετέρην καὶ καταλάτταν ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν, ὁδρὰ τε παρέχον καὶ λόγους ...". Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 250.
21	1350-1354 (Dölger dates it wrongly to March 1362)	John V	Süleyman, the son of Orhan		3082 and 3083		Making a treaty: The terms of the treaty were basically friendship and mutual support in the face of Serbian threat especially for the benefit of the Byzantines.				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 1, 22-23; Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1.28, 38.	"ἕταρον μύστου ὁ Ἐλλήνων βασιλεὺς διαπραγματεύμενος, σπουδὰς τε ἐποιήσατο πρὸς Σουλταίνην τὸν Ὀγγάνου, καὶ ὄντην ἐπὶ τοῖς Τριβαλόνις, ...". Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 1, p. 23.
22	1354	Süleyman, the son of Orhan	John V Palaiologos or John VI Kantakouzenos		3013 and 3019		Negotiations and a proposal of a treaty: In exchange for sixty thousand drachmas, Süleyman would give back to the Greeks the towns he had appropriated and go back to Asia as well as lift the ongoing sieges of the Byzantine towns in Thrace. However, the treaty was not concluded. The contact is narrated by Kantakouzenos with a different amount of proposal, according to which Süleyman would receive 10,000 hyperpyra to return the fortress of Tzympe to the Byzantines.				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 27; Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 277-279; See Nicol, <i>The Reluctant Emperor</i> , 126-127, 178.	"πέμας πρσβαῖον πρὸς Ὀγγάνην τὸν γαμβρὸν" Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 277. "μυρίους χρυσούς, ὁ βασιλεὺς ὑπέσχετο παρῆεν φιλοτίμος. Μετὰ μυσρὸν δὲ καὶ ἐπέμας τοῖς βαρβάρους τὸν γένον." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 277. *Dölger states that the direction of the embassy was the other way round, that is from Kantakouzenos to Orhan.

23	Spring 1354	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan				On account of Süleyman's breach of the treaty already made and not giving up the cities he recently occupied	3022		Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 279-280.	gifts of money four times greater than the previous one (μηνιάδας χρυσίου τέτταρες)	"προβίαιος συνεχρὶς ἐπιστεῖτο πρὸς Ὀρχάνην τὸν γαμβρὸν καὶ τὰς ἡραπαμένας πόλεις ἦλθεν τὸν αὐτὸν ἀποδοῦναι." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 279. "μηνιάδας χρυσίου τέτταρες." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 280.
24	Spring 1354 or 1355 (?)	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan				Asking for a meeting in Nicomedia: After an earthquake in 1354, the Ottomans gained the control of the cities of Gallipoli. Kantakouzenos made this request. Orhan did not come to the proposed meeting. Demetrios Kydones mentions that within a year following the conquest of Gallipoli by the Ottomans, a tribute began to be imposed on Byzantium.	3023		Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 195-199, 242 (?) and Book 28:67-68, 220-222 and Book 29:1-4, 223-226; Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, Book 4:38, 279-281; Kydones, PG 154, 1012D; Amakis, "Gregory Palamas," 112.		"τοῦτε δὲ ἐπεὶ ἦσαν ἀπαισμένα αἱ τρήσεις, ἐν Νικομηδείᾳ τε ἐγένετο καὶ πρὸς ἑαυμάτε. πρὸς Ὀρχάνην τὸν γαμβρὸν, ὃς ἀφ' ὧν ἐμεν καὶ αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ τὸν προκαμμένον ἐνεκα." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, p. 281. "ὁ δ' ἔρασκε νοστήν καὶ δαδόντας ἔργον τὸ νῦν εἶναι ἀπαντᾶσθαι τῆς κλήνης." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, p. 281.
25	Late autumn - early winter 1354	Orhan	John VI Kantakouzenos		Constantinople		On the issue of surrendering the Thracian cities that the Ottomans occupied: Kantakouzenos received the envoys. Granting much gratitude for their good will, the emperor dismissed the envoys by lavishing gifts on them.			Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 284.	lavish gifts (δόρους πολυτίμους)	"πολλὰς δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁμολογήσας χάριτας ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν εὐνοίας καὶ τοὺς πρὸςβαίει δόρους πολυτίμους ἀμειψόμενος ἀπέπεμψε." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 284.
26	1354-1355	John VI Kantakouzenos	Orhan		Bursa		Aiming to end Gregory Palamas' captivity	3025		Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 252.	money (πρήματα) enough for handing over Palamas; perhaps regarded as a ransom to free Palamas	"ἰδίῳ σὺν πολλῇ τῇ σπουδῇ πεποιμένος Ὑρασίου τὸν γαμβρὸν καὶ βασιλέαρον χρήματα πρὸς Βιθυνίαν τὴν ἐκεῖνου δεξιάν καὶ γινώμην ἱκανὴν ἔχοντα ἐμπόδιον, ..." Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 252.
27	Summer 1356	Matthew Kantakouzenos	Orhan				To raise an army against John V	3016		Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 324.		"προβίαιον δὲ πρὸς Ὀρχάνην ἀνέκα πέμψας τὸν γαμβρὸν" Kantakouzenos, III, 324. "ὁ πρὸςβαίει." Kantakouzenos, Bonn ed., vol. III, 324.
28	Winter 1357 or 1358 or Spring 1356 (Dölger)	Orhan	John V Palaiologos		Arkla		Requesting immediate actions to find Orhan's son: Orhan promised a marriage alliance between his son and John V's daughter in return for help. The parties exchanged gifts.	3055		Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 503-510, 558-566, specifically on 504 and 509; Timetfeld, <i>Demetrios Kydones Briefe</i> , 266-268.	Following the Σπονδαί between John V and Orhan, they went to Nicaea, where gifts are mentioned that were exchanged mutually: "They brought many gifts sheep and cattle, household items and all kinds of things like that. A few days later the accompanying Byzantines returned with the proper favors and gifts back from there."	"ἐπεγγράτε τῆναυτὰ διὰ τὸν μεταξὺ πρὸςβαίειν. ἡμέρας ἀνῆλκοσαν ἐνταῦθα πρὸς, καὶ οὕτως πρὸς ἄλλους τίς τε δεξιόσας καὶ φιλοφροσύνας παρῆνται" Gregoras, III, 504. "ἔδοξα φέρωντες παντοδαπά, πρήματα καὶ βίους καὶ ἐμπόδια καὶ ταῦτα ἅτα ἀπαπολά τὰ καὶ πολιὰ καὶ, ὁλῆος δ' ἵσμεν ἡμέρας οἱ ἀποσημάντες ἐπαφῆκον Βιθυνίῳ μεθ' ὃν ἀποσημῶν ἐκεῖθεν χάριτον καὶ δόρον." Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 509.
29	Autumn 1357	John V Palaiologos	Orhan				Confirming that John V was not in any sort of treachery: Before he arrived at Prokonessos, in order to mollify the Ottoman ruler and make him confident, John V gave a pledge to Orhan. John V was not to blame for the abandonment of the siege of Phocaea and the fleet's return.	3069		Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 566.		"ἐπεὶ δ' ἔργα καὶ ἐξ Προκωνήσων τῶν ἀφῆκοντες, ἔδοξεν ἐκεῖθεν δεξιάν ἐξ ἐφῆδον τοῦ Ὑρασίου πεπομμένον, ..." Gregoras, Bonn ed., vol. III, 566.
30	Summer 1371	Murad I	John V				To negotiate the return of Gallipoli			Charanis, "Strife," 296-297; Necipoğlu, "Circulation," 106 citing Kydones, "Oratio de non reddenda Gallipoli petente Amurata," in PG 154, 1009. Necipoğlu dates this event to 1371.		

37	1379 (?)	John V and Manuel II	Murad I			Finalizing the restoration of authority of Manuel II and his father John V to the Byzantine throne and accepting a tribute of 30,000 gold pieces and Barker incorrectly read the amount as 3,000 (Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 34, fn. 89). In this contract, Philadelphia's surrender may have also been accepted. According to Chalkokondyles, Murad, whom he wrongly calls Bayezid, at first dispatched a messenger (ἀπαγγέλλας ἑγγελεύων, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 57) to Constantinople to ask for the public opinion concerning who should be the ruler in their empire.			Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 57-58; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 2.6, 100; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 33-34.	tribute of 30,000 gold coins	"ἐτάξατο φόρον ἑτάξαν ὁ Ἐπιμανθηλὸς ἐς τριημιόβιον χρυσόνους, καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἔθρονον ἐπὶ σφραγίδι ἐνεργετοῦμένου." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 58.
38	Beginning of the year 1381	John V	Emir Suleyman (?)	Demetrios Kydones	Kortvation	"Order unknown" as Dölger remarks. Requesting a fortress from Murad as revealed in the appendix added to the text of the treaty of November 2, 1382 between Byzantium and Genoa: It was Andronikos IV's son (perhaps John VII) who engaged in this contact.	3169		Demetrios Kydones, <i>Correspondance</i> , ed. and trans. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 218, 98.		"τὸ μὲν βραδεὶ τῆς ἀρεσκείας καὶ δικτὴν ἐνομιτὴν ἀποσφάλλαν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ αὐτὸς τ' ἐγένετο ἄνω ἡγεμόνα παῖσιν τὸν βαρβαρον." "ad. Lin. 26: ἔδεικτο, καὶ ὅλος ἔμει καὶ κορυφαίον τῆς γυναικὸς λογίζμενος νόρον..." a letter by Kydones to Manuel II, penned in Constantinople in 1381: Demetrios Kydones, <i>Correspondance</i> , ed. and trans. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 218, 98.
39	1382 or before 1382	Andronikos IV	Murad I	Andronikos IV's son (Perhaps John VII)					Loenertz, "Fragment d'une lettre de Jean V Paléologue," 37-40; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 51.		"Item nepos "meus de uoluntate [it]u patris sui luit ad turchas et preebat castrum (unum)." [He went to the Turks and sought a castle.] Cited in Loenertz, "Fragment d'une lettre de Jean V Paléologue," 37.
40	1384-1385 (?)	John V	Hayreddin Pasha			Asking for a truce upon the siege of Thessalonike	3181		Demetrios Kydones, <i>Correspondance</i> , ed. and trans. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 318, 246, ll. 5-7, 21-22; Çelik, <i>Manuel II</i> , 107.		"ἡ τοῦ Ἡεροδοτοῦ θαλὴ ἐκπόρε: ἀπόσβας ὑάεσθαι τὸν βασιλέα ἀπὸς Κασσίου, ἀπώζοντος αὐτὸν τε καὶ τοὺς Θεσσαλονικεῖων ἐπὶ τὴν..." a letter by Kydones to Manuel II, penned in Constantinople in 1385-6: Demetrios Kydones, <i>Correspondance</i> , ed. and trans. Raymond-I. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 318, 246.
41	1387-1388	Murad I				Asking to arrange a visit by Manuel II to the Ottoman ruler in person: The Ottoman embassy met with Manuel in a barren island (maybe Yenidos as Barker proposed). It is mentioned in a letter of Demetrios Kydones to Rhadenos dated summer 1387.			Demetrios Kydones, <i>Correspondance</i> , ed. and trans. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 352, 294, ll. 17-19; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 61-62.	gifts (?)	"ἡ γὰρ μοι τὸ μικρὸν ἀνὴρον καὶ τοὺς ὀλίγους παρὰς καὶ τοὺς ὕπαρ πᾶν ἀλλεργὸν ἀπόσβας καὶ τὰ φιλόδοξονα ταῦτ' ἤματα καὶ τὰδὲ ὅσους ὑπὰς δαδαίαν παρόντων." [The barbarians attempted to entice so many of you with these gentle words ...] Demetrios Kydones, <i>Correspondance</i> , ed. and trans. Loenertz, vol. II, no. 352, 294, ll. 17-19. An exchange of embassies is mentioned in the source. See Charanis, "Strife," 302.
42	Summer 1387 or late 1387 or early 1388	John V	Murad I		Bursa	Softening the relations between the two parties: Upon the visit of the Ottoman envoys recorded in the previous entry, John V asked Murad to receive Manuel following the tensions between them. Manuel personally visited Murad, whose response was noteworthy as narrated by Chalkokondyles.			Loenertz, <i>Recueils des Lettres de Demétrius Kydonès</i> , 118; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 42-43; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, Book 1.49-50&55, 72-76, 84; Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 19-20; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 62-63.		"Ἀγοράστῃ δὲ πονθόμενος τὸν βασιλέα παῖδα ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀπεκτασθαι ἠγάσθη τε αὐτὸν τῆς γυναικὸς, καὶ ἑαυτὸν τε." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 42-43; trans. Kaldellis, vol. I, 74. "... he [Manuel] made his way to Prousa, appeared before Sultan Murad, and paid his respects. Upon seeing him, Sultan Murad offered a kindly reception. They greeted each other and conversed. Manuel begged for pardon and confessed his guilt. Sultan Murad granted forgiveness and said: 'Let the city that was yours be mine from now on.' Manuel complied. The sultan kissed him on the forehead and said: 'Young Prince, you will be a better person now that you have admitted your guilt and have repented.' Lord Manuel responded: 'I give thanks to God for sending your Lordship into this world in order to punish our evil intentions.' Greatly flattered, the sultan allowed him to return to his father, Emperor John Palaeologus, in the City. So he departed." Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 19-20.
43	1389 (?)	Bayezid I	Manuel II (?)			Treaty with the Byzantines			Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 54.		"Ἐξέληται σκανδαλὸς ἐκείνησαν." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 54.
44	Before April 1390, when John VII entered to Constantinople	Bayezid I	John VII			Demanding Selymbria upon the death of John VII's father Andronikos IV: When John entered the City and usurped the throne in 1390, according to Doukas, he complied with Bayezid's demand so he accepted to bring a Turkish judge to the City. Then, he ceded all the lands including Selymbria to the Ottoman sultan. Bayezid had promised John to give the Peloponnese. But it seems that it never realized.			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.2, 83 and Book 14.4, 85 and Book 15.1, 87.		"ἐξήγατο παρὰ τοῦ Πατριάρχου Σηλυβρίας" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.2, 83; "προσέχητος τοῖς" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.4, 85; "κατὰ τὸ ἀπαιτῆται τοῦ Πατριάρχου Σελυβρίων" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 15.1, 87.

	After the battle of Nicopolis (1396)	52	Bayezid I	Manuel II	Demanding the surrender of Constantinople: Manuel II did not send a response to that embassy.								"πρότερον πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Μανουὴλ ἀποστολέας ἐστὲν τὴν Πόλιν." This very attempt was left unanswered. "πρὸς δὲ οὐδ' ἀνέκρινεν ἰδοὺκεν." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 14.1, 81. Bayezid's demand for the surrender of the city seems to have been more than once: "... whenever he [Bayezid] demanded the cession of Constantinople, he never failed to mention the name of John, Manuel's nephew, saying, 'Manuel, leave the City. Let John be brought in as the rightful heir of the Empire - and I will observe a state of complete serenity and peace with the Constantinopolitans.' Manuel was aware that the populace was being shaken by dissensions." Doukas, trans. Magoulas, Book 14.1-2, 85-86.
	1394 or 1391 (Dölger)	53	Bayezid I	Manuel II	Calling Manuel to the Ottoman court for military aid. In return of this embassy Manuel went back to Bayezid's presence.								"ταυταυτε, Μανυ" Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 2.27, 76. "... he [Bayezid] dispatched his first εἰσὺς called Ali o Emperor Palaeologus in the City to supposed to add: 'If you do not come, I will march, wage war and seize both you and Constantinople.' But the εἰσὺς said nothing of the sort to Palaeologus; he merely told him to avoid Sultan Bayezid because he was nourishing evil thoughts. Lord Manuel Palaeologus then instructed the εἰσὺς to report back that he was making preparations to come soon, provided that he was not prevented by an illness, so the εἰσὺς left and related his response to Bayezid who was satisfied, some time passed and he failed to come." Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 28.
	1400-1401 (?)	54	Bayezid I	John VII, regent in Constantinople	An ultimatum demanding the surrender of Constantinople: This can be regarded as a diplomatic contact in absence of Manuel II. There is no direct reference to an embassy here but since Bayezid sent his message, it must have been carried over to John via envoy(s). The embassy was sent from Edirne.								"ἦλθεν εἰς Ἀδριανούπολιν καὶ τὸ βασιλεὺς ἰοάννην μνηστὴν" and "καί τις μνηστὴρ" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 15.5, 89.
	1400-1401 (?)	55	John VII, the regent in Constantinople	Bayezid I	Rejecting Bayezid's demand								"Οὐ δὲ ἀνασπινεῖντο" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 15.5, 89.
	August 6, 1401	56	allied embassy (John VII's was also in)	Bayezid I, actually to the mother of Celebi (Bayezid I)	Negotiating peace: There were other individuals representing the Genoese and the Venetians in the embassy. A gift of 5000 hyperpyra from Genoa is mentioned.								"... while Manuel was thus away in France the Young Emperor had sought and come to terms of amity with Sultan Bayazid – who was [at Angora] at that date, being on the point of fighting his great battle with Timur. The agreement came to was that if the Turkish sultan should be the victor [at Angora], he John would then resign to him the city of Constantinople and become its vassal". Clavijo, trans. Le Strange, 52.
	1401-1402	57	John VII	Bayezid I	Coming to an agreement: If Bayezid succeeded in his war against Timur, John VII would surrender the city of Constantinople								οὐ δὲ ἐν τῇ Πόλει λαοκρατορήσας, ὁ λαὸς ἔργους, ἐλαβὼν δὲ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῆς Πόλεως, τὴν εἰρήνην καὶ ἀποστρέφον ἐν τῷ Κορνατίῳ πρὸς τὸν σουλτάνον <τοῦ> παρὰδεδότῃ τὴν Πόλιν." Schreiner, <i>Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken</i>, vol. I, chr. no. 22/28. "And those in the City being famished, the people fled. And certain of the leaders took the keys of the City and carried them into Koyatios to the Sultan, to surrender the City." This translation appears in Barker, <i>Manuel II</i>, 215, fn. 19.
	1402	58	a Byzantine delegation	Bayezid I	Bearing the keys of Constantinople and intending to surrender the city: The delegation departed to Koyatios, which did not take place due to the defeat of Bayezid at the hands of Timur.								Schreiner, <i>Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken</i>, vol. I, chr. no. 22/28-30, 184-185; Loeferer, "Chronicon breve de imperatoribus, ab anno 1341 ad annum 1453 e codice Vaticano graeco 162," 210; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i>, 215.
	December 1402	59	Süleyman	Manuel II	Trying to reach Manuel II in Venice to negotiate with him a treaty								N. Iorga, <i>Notes et Extraits</i>, vol. I, 125-126; Thiriet, <i>Régences</i>, vol. II, no. 1038, 33; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i>, 223.

60	January-February 1403	Süleyman	Manuel II or in his absence John VII (?) The parties of the treaty: Christian powers including the Byzantine Empire, Venice, Genoa, the Knights of Rhodes and the Duke of Naxos	Süleyman and Manuel II	Constantinople or Gallipoli	Peace treaty: Süleyman, "falling at the feet of the emperor," was personally present in the city, holding conversation with Manuel II. Chalkokondyles refers to that treaty: "He was their friend and granted them any favor that was in his power to give, if they asked it of him." Chalkokondyles, trans. Kaldellis, Book 4.7, 287; ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 163. Nesrî does not talk about Süleyman's presence in Constantinople but refers to an envoy, who brought İsa back. Nesrî, vol. II, 433.	3201			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 18.2, 111; trans. Magoulias, Book 18, 101; Demis, "Byzantine-Turkish Treaty"; Nesrî, vol. II, 431-435; Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi," 270-1; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 163.	"ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀρπυστὶν κατέστανεν πορείας καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν Ἀδριανουπόλει πέμψας." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 18.2, 113. "Emir Süleyman dahi bunu maslahat gördüp, İstanbül tekvüruna bîr yazıp, adam viribidiler ki, İsa Bey'i bunda göndere, tekvür mekubun mazmünuna bilip, Emir Süleyman'dan bazı nesne üzerine mukarrer edip, muahede olubup, İsa Bey'i verdi. İsa Beg dahi eyleyle gelip, hemen tevakküt emeyip, Gelibolu'dan geçip İstanmet-i Karnas vilyetini aldı." Nesrî, vol. II, 431-433.
61	1403	Süleyman	Manuel II			A letter by Süleyman addressed to the emperor in Constantinople that aimed to have İsa Beg back: With this treaty Manuel II was convinced about various matters. This may well be a reference to 1403 treaty mentioned in the previous entry.				Kastritsis, <i>The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan</i> , 62; An almost identical story is told in Nesrî's chronicle. Nesrî, vol. II, 432.	"Pis anuñ tedbirî budur ki İstanbül Tekvürü'na mektûb yazup ilqî gönderevüz ki: 'İsa Beg kardeşuñuzı tiz vire. An Sultân tarafına havâle idüp ola ki biri gıdıp birî kala. Pis dıñşman bir kalacak is, asândur, anı ilden sürüp il ve gün bızâm olur, yahûd bu 'zî il vırıp pıdışâhlık bızâm olur didiler. Emir Süleymân bunu maslahat görüp, İstanbül Tekvürü'na yazup âdem viribidiler.' " İsa Beg'i bunda gönder" diyû. Tekvür bîi mazmûn bilip, İsa Beg'i verdi. İsa Beg dâlp ilqî ile gelüp hemân tevakküt imeyüp Gelibol'dan geçip tınanî Karnes vilyetini aldı." Kastritsis, <i>The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan</i>, 62.
62	(?)	Manuel II	Emir Süleyman			Advising Süleyman not to use his time wantonly				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 163.	"Ἐπαρθεῖσθε μοῦ οὐκ οὐν αὐτὸ καὶ οἱ Ἑλλάδες." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, Book 4, 163.
63	Spring, 1410	Süleyman	Manuel II			Asking aid for transferring the troops of Süleyman: Süleyman asked to be ferried across the Dardanelle to Europe. However, Manuel II declined the request. In the end he ferried Süleyman's army across the straits and supported him against Musa at the battle of Kosmidion.				Kastritsis, <i>The Sons of Bayezid</i> , 146-147 citing a Ragusan report dated 30 May 1410.	"And that Celopia [Süleyman] has appeared with many men on the coast [of Gallipoli] and has been diverted, asking the emperor and the Genoese to ferry him across, which was honorably denied to him, and has had to go back on account of the trouble of his brother Crespia [Kyritzis, i.e. Mehmed]." Translation by Kastritsis, <i>The Sons of Bayezid</i>, 146.
64	summer 1410	Süleyman	Manuel II			Renewal of alliance: Personally visiting Constantinople, as Ahval states, Süleyman sought a renewal of the alliance with the emperor by promising him some regions. A marriage between Manuel's granddaughter and Süleyman was offered. Perhaps Süleyman delivered his son Orhan and his daughter to Manuel as hostages. In return for Manuel's help, the emperor received a promise of some regions.				Kastritsis, <i>The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan</i> , 76; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. I, 161; Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 18.2, 111; Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 33; Nesrî, vol. II, 479; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 252-4.	"...All Paşa İbod Ankara'da vefât imişdi, sâ'ir vezirleri ile şöyle maslahat gördiler ki gece vîl gıdudiz dıneyüp gide, Rûmil'ne geçip Musa Çelebi'nüñ işin bir yafia ide. Andan kalkıp geçip isti cılı birle gıdıp varup İstanbül'a yerdiler. İstanbül tekvüruna bu 'zî il adayıub andan geçip gıdiler." Kastritsis, <i>The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan</i>, 76. "Ve sair vüzerâ ile dıneyip, şöyle maslahat gördiler ki, gece gıdudiz dıneyüp gıdeler ve Rûmil'ne geçip Musa Çelebi'nin işin bir yafia edeler. Andan geçip, isti'calle gıdıp, İstanbül'a yettiler. İstanbül tekvünuna bazı il adayıp, andan geçip, gıdiler." Nesrî, vol. II, 479. "ὁ δὲ Μουσαναὐτὸν παρσένος ἐν τῇ δόμῃ· ἀνελθὼν ἑστὸς τῆς πόλεως, καὶ πᾶσαν ἐν τοῖς ποταμὶ τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ δάσαν τοῖτον λόγον ὅτι ἑλθὼν ἐσκαπὲσται ἐς τὸν ποταμὸν ἡμῶν ὅτι δὲ παρὶπ ἡμῶν ἔσται ἡμεῖς ὅταν φῶτα ῥῥῶσιν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνταδιδάτω ἔσσαν. Νύκτον ἀνταρῶσαν με ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς φράξας, ὁρῶν καὶ ἄλλαν γῆν διὰ τὸν γόνιαν ἐκτεκρίσμεν." δὸς αὐτῷ καὶ ὁμήρους ἑνα τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀνθρῶπον καὶ μίαν τὴν ἀδελφίδαν φαρμακείων ἐπιστάτην, ἡτοιμασθεὶς δοῦναι τῷ βασιλεὶ τὴν Θεσσαλονικίαν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Στρατιῶντος ἄγχις αὐτοῦ Ζητούσιον καὶ τὴν Πηλοπόννησον, αὐτῷ δὲ τῆς πόλεως κρήνη ἀπὸ Ἰαννίνων μέγαν ἱερὸν σροῖον, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ σροῖου μέγαν θάλασσαν ἄνωγα τὰ παρὰ αὐτὰ τὰ ἐν Ἐξέστιον πόρην κείσεται, ὃ δὲ βασιλεὺς ἀρπυστὶνκατέστανεν πορείας καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν Ἀδριανουπόλει πέμψας, ἵστασε. Ἀνθρῶπον τὸν Ἀσκανόριον, ἀνδρα σὺνὸν καὶ κρητὰ καὶ πολυμάκτα ἄνθρωπον, τοῦ παρὰ αὐτῷ Θεσσαλονικίαν." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 18.2, 111-112. "... he [Süleyman] went to Constantinople and married the daughter of Lord Theodoros, emperor John's son." Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 33.

78	Autumn 1416	Manuel II	Mehmed I			Requesting for the expenses of the refugees: After both Mustafa and Juneid were exiled, the former was to the island of Lemnos, and the latter was kept in seclusion in the Monastery of the Panmakaristos in Constantinople. "the emperor dispatched ambassadors to Mehmed to request that he assume the expenses for the support of Mustafa and Juneid because there were thirty youths held in detention with the former and ten with the latter." Doukas, <i>trans. Magoulas</i> , Book 22.5, 125.			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 159.	"ἐρεῖδαι ἀποκρηστρίους" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 159.
79	Autumn 1416	Mehmed I	Manuel II			Requesting that the pretender Mustafa would not be released			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 159-161.	"ῥαβδίζεις οὐκ οὐλοῦντα ἐγγράφους καὶ ὅρκους οὐ ἀποδέχας ἀντίποινα" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.5, 161.
80	Autumn 1416	Manuel II	Mehmed I			Reminding Mehmed of the agreements on the expenses for Mustafa: This might have taken place in the following years because the agreement on the expenses was just made in Autumn 1416. But there is a possibility that the amount would be paid in parts.			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.7, 163.	"ἐρεῖδαν" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 22.7, 163.
81	1420 October or winter (?)	Manuel II	Mehmed I			Discussing some matters: Manuel II decided to send an embassy to Mehmed who was going to Asia Minor from the Bosphorus. The meeting took place in Koutoulios (Kutulus); See Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 352) district. The vessels were provided for Mehmed for his transportation to Asia Minor. Manuel and his sons were waiting for Mehmed in Diplokionion.		3384	Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 351-354.	gifts (μετὰ ... δόρον) Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.2, 16.
82	Spring 1421	Manuel II	Mehmed I			Getting information about the sultan's future intentions: Demetrios Laskaris Leontares was received with great honor and affection. But the ambassador could not meet Mehmed, because the latter died three days later.		3385	Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.4, 16.	"ἐρεῖδαι" and "ἀποκρηστρίους" Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 7.4, 16.
83	1421 (spring ?)	Murad II	Manuel II			Announcing Mehmed's death and Murad's accession and renewing just pledges of peace			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.3, 171.	"ἐρεῖδαι ἑτοίμαζον" ... ὑπὸ νεκρῶν Μωῦχαρ καὶ τὴν ἀνέγκειαν Μωῦχαρ καὶ νεκρῶν ἀντιπροσώπων ἀγγέλους, ὡς εἶπες τοῖς νῦν ἀγγέλοις καὶ ἡγεμόσι" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.3, 171.
84	ca. June 1421	Manuel II	Murad II			Consoling the Ottoman ruler after his father's death and congratulating him for his reign: More particularly, it requested Murad II's two sons as hostages. The envoys were met by Bayezid Pasha.		3388	Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.4, 173; Balivet, <i>Romanie byzantine et Pays de Rum Turc</i> , 105-109.	"ἐρεῖδαι ἐρεῖδαν" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 23.4, 173.
85	1421 or September or Autumn 1420 (acc. to Sphrantzes)	Manuel II	Mustafa (the pretender)			Asking for the return of Gallipoli according to the promise that Mustafa made earlier			Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 9.1, 20; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 357, fn. 103.	"ἐντέλλεται παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως, τάχα κατὰ τὰς ὑποσχέσεις," Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 9.1, 20.

93	April 1422 (?)	Manuel II	Murad II	Theologos Korax	Edime	Upon Murad II's plan to attack Constantinople	3390	83	Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1, 229; trans. Magoulas, Book 28.1, 161-163; for some comments on this embassy, see Malamut, "La figure," 83-84.	"στρέλλει ἀποσπασθέν" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1, 229.	
94	8 June 1422 or before 10 June 1422	Manuel II	Murad II	Lachanas Palaiologos, Markos Palaiologos Iagaris (Iagros)		Presenting "convincing" arguments that Bayezid was the cause of Murad's misfortunes and requesting the handing over Murad II's two sons to Manuel II; Murad put the envoys under custody as mentioned in Kananos' text.	3391	84	Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.1-7, 231; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 360; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22; Kananos, ed. Bekker, 465. The reference in Doukas corresponds to the one by Sphrantzes below. See Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 360, fn. 108 interprets different accounts for the embassies in 1422.	"στρέλλει πρὸς τὸν Μωράτ ἀποσπασθέντες Παλαιολόγων τὸν Λαγαρὸν καὶ Μάρκον Ἰάγρον" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.2, 231.	
95	April 1422 or before 15 June 1422 (acc. to Deliger)	Manuel II	Murad II	Demetrios Kantakouzenos, Markos Laskaris, Angelos Philomates	possibly Edime in front of the walls of Constantinople	To arrange a treaty of friendship, to maintain peace and lift the siege of Constantinople or maybe to inquire about the previous embassy by Markos Iagros and Lachanas Palaiologos and their absence, because Murad II had put them in prison (acc. to Malamut); Murad II was at the gates of Constantinople on 15 June 1422. He brought the envoys in chains in front of the walls of Constantinople (Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22). Demetrios Kantakouzenos was released in 1424.	3390	84	Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22; Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 47; Kananos, ed. Cuomo, 18, ll. 126-131; Barker, <i>Manuel II</i> , 360.	When Murad came he brought with him the Byzantine envoys in chains: "ἄφρον μὲν" αὐτοῦ καὶ διαρπάξας τοὺς ἀποσπασθέντες," Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 10.1, 22. "The Emperor Palaeologus from within the City sent envoys and sued for peace. When Murad heard his offer, he laughed and dismissed the envoys. But as he proved unable to conquer it, he took his troops and departed." Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 47. "ἔλεγε καὶ μὲν αὐτοῦ τότε σιδηροδουλομένους τοὺς ἀποσπασθέντες τοῦ βασιλέως, ὁποῖους αὐτὸς ἤγαγεντο μάλ' ὄν, ἵνα πέμψῃ περὶ εἰρήνης τε καὶ ἀγάμης· αὐτὸς δὲ ὡς βαρβάρους ὤρεος καὶ ἀνάνθρωπος, σιδηρὰ καὶ φυλακὰς αὐτοὺς καταδύκεσεν· καὶ τοὺς ἐναντίους ὡς ἡσυχίᾳς ἡπάειλε εἰς θάνατον· προσβυζαλόμενος δὲ τάχα καὶ αὐτὸν ὡς ἀνὰ γαστράν, ἔλεγε γὰρ· δότι με οὐ Ρωμῆα ἀνασπύροντες συνείπουν, διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὺς φυλακὴν καταδύκεσθαι." Kananos, ed. Cuomo, 18, ll. 126-131.	
96	June 1422	Manuel II	Murad II	Theologos Korax		Attempt to persuade Murad to lift the siege: Theologos Korax met Murad and his nobles. He could not change Murad's mind.	3392 (84-85)		Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.3, 231.	"στρέλλει τούτων [ὁ Θεολόγος] πρὸς τὸν Μωράτ, ὡς εἴθην πρὸςβείσαν τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.3, 231.	
97	ca. September 1422	Manuel II	Murad II			To come to terms with Murad II and ask to lift the siege of Constantinople: Murad lifted the siege on September 6. Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 145, fn. 12.	3393		Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, 12; Codex Barberinus Graecus 111, trans. Philippides, 47. It could be the same mission with the one before the previous entry. See Philippides and Hanak, <i>Cardinal Isidore</i> , 367.	"ἐπαρξινυσίνοντο" Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 12.	
98	ca. September 1422	Manuel II	Murad II			Pleading with Murad: Manuel II "secretly posted letters to the Sarabdar Ilyas to bring the child [Mustafa, one of the children of Mehmed I] to Prusa while providing Ilyas with a large amount of gold to hire a mercenary army to conduct the child to Bithynia." Doukas, trans. Magoulas, Book 28.6, 164.	3394		Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 12; Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.6, 235.	"πρὸςβίαις τε ἔπεισαν" Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 12. "πέμψαι κρηφίος γυναικὸς πρὸς τὸν σαρατάρ Ἰλιάς ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ ἔργου τὸ παιδίον ἐν τῇ Προσπῇ στειλάς πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ γυναικίᾳ μένος πολλὸν δοῦναι αὐτῷ καὶ στήθαι πώλεσθαι τὸν στρατὸν καὶ ἐκδοῦναι τὸ παιδίον ἐν τῇ Ἀναρχίᾳ τῆς Βιθυνίας," Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 28.6, 235.	
99	ca. Summer 1423	John VIII	Murad II			Regarding the embassy which was released from prison on 22 February 1424	3407		Dölger refers to the same place where no. 3413 is mentioned. Actually, there is a difference between the Bonn edition, which Dölger refers to, and Darkó's edition. The part that Dölger refers to is absent in Darkó's. Sphrantzes, Bonn ed., 118.	"τῇ δὲ εὖ" τοῦ Φεβρουαρίου μηνὸς τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔτους ἐπαύσαντες ὀκτωμηνεῶν ἔστατες μετὰ τοῦ ἡμῖν βασιλέως, καὶ τότε τοὺς πρὸςβίαις ἡλεόδοκοντα," Sphrantzes, Bonn ed., 118.	
100	Before 22 February 1424 or perhaps in summer 1423 (?) (acc. to Malamut)	John VIII (?)	Murad II	Manuel Melakhrenos		To conclude the treaty of 22 February 1424	3412	86	Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26; trans. Philippides, Book 12.4, 28	"ὁ μὲν Μελαχρήνος προσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν ἡμῖν καὶ ἐγνώρισεν, ὅτι θέλει γενέσθαι τὴν εἰρήνην" Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.	

101	20 or 22 February 1424	John VIII (in Manuel's absence, because he was ill)	Murad II	Manuel Melakhenos, Loukas Notaras, George Sphrantzes	To conclude a treaty about dismantling the Isthmos fortification and to make a peace	3413 86-87	Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 16; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26; Schreiner, <i>Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken</i> , vol. I, chr. no. 13/11, 118; Mioni Chronicle, 42.	"ήξιουν σφείσι σπένδονταί, ειρήνην μύητρο έτοιμασαν" Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 5, 16. "ετοιμασμεν ορκομυσικά, ήσάτην" Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 12.4, 26.
102	20 or 22 February 1424	John VIII	Murad II		Regarding the peace treaty that was completed by Notaras and Melakhenos: Doukas writes that Murad "was not at all disposed to come to terms with Emperor John, but harbored an implacable hatred against him." Doukas, trans. Magoulias, Book 28, 165.	3414	Doukas, ed. Greu, Book 29.1, 245, trans. Magoulias, Book 29.1, 169.	"Ο βασιλεύς ον τοιαύτης ποιήσεως κατάστασιν και τελείαν ειρήνην μετά το Μωράτ δοός αυτού τάς πόλεις και κόμης ής είχαν ή Ποντική θάλασσα πλην των κάστρον άν οικ ήγονήθη λαβείν έν τη μάχη, ον Μισσηρίως Δέρκους και άλλα, και τό Ζηρούσιον ον τις, λοιπός γήρους το Στρυμόνος, και κατ' έτος τέλος άσπιδον τραυοισών χιλιάδων ειρηναίων κατά τό δυνατόν άσάτην." Doukas, ed. Greu, Book 29.1, 245.
103	1424 (?)	John VIII	Murad II	Loukas Notaras (by then he was holding the title of <i>mesazon</i>)	Acclaiming Murad II and presenting him "many gifts": In that mission, treaties of peace and friendship were also negotiated.	87	Doukas, ed. Greu, Book 29.3, 245-247, trans. Magoulias, Book 29.3, 169.	"συνέγκλον δέ τον πέριξ ήγεμόνων άποκρισάριοι, άλλα και τον μακράν. έπειτα γάρ ο βασιλεύς τον κύριον Λουκάον Νοταράν τον αύτό μεσάζοντα ον δούρος πολλούς, όμοίους και Λύκωρος ό δεσπότης Σαββίως, άλλα και Νρανός ό Βλαχίς ήγεμόν, ό Μιτωλήνης αλλόθενς και Χαι και Ρόδοι άπαντες ευφαιμήσονται, πάντες ον έλθονν πίστας από αυτού και έδωκαν τον ένω ειρηναία και πόλεις μεσσί ον αυτού και αύτός ον αιώσε, πλην τον Βενετικόν, όι ατίαν την ήν λέξαν ήρχοι" Doukas, ed. Greu, Book 29.3, 245-247.
104	1429-1430 (?)	Murad II	Constantine XI, the Despot of the Morea	an Ottoman noble (<i>archon</i>)	Carrying an ultimatum warning the Byzantines to depart and discontinue the siege of Patras		Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 19.5, 58.	"Ιδοὺ καὶ ἄρρον τοῦ ἀμυρᾶ μετὰ τινος ὀλίγου ἡμέρας," Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 19.5, 58.
105	1429	Murad II, Turahan	Constantine XI, the Despot of the Morea		Sending off an envoy of Murad II and another one from Turahan carrying messages that include the order not to accept the surrender of Patras		Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.1, 64.	"Σὺν Τούρκῳ" Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, 20.1, p. 64. "τοὺς σκόλῳδες," Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.4, 66.
106	1429 VIII	Constantine XI, the Despot of the Morea or John VIII	Murad II	George Sphrantzes, Markos Palaiologos Iagaris	Regarding Patras		Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.3-5, 64-66.	Sphrantzes did not like Iagaris, who is identified as συντακροιστήρης (fellow ambassador) of Sphrantzes, Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.5, 66.
107	September 1429	Constantine XI, the Despot of the Morea or John VIII	Turahan	George Sphrantzes	To complete the negotiations regarding the sovereignty of Patras (τήν περί της Πάτρας δουλείαν τελείως διαφθερά)		Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.8, 68.	"επαιστέρεσθαι εις τὰ Τρικάλα πρὸς τὸν Τουρκαζήν" Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 20.8, 68.
108	April 1432	John VIII	Saraca, vizier of Murad II	Manuel Stachlitzes	An envoy carrying a letter including variety of topics not mentioned specifically: Murad II was suspecting that Byzantium, together with the Western powers, was preparing an attack against him.	3513	Óz, "Bizans İmparator'unun Bir Namisi;" Wittek, "Ein Brief;" Babinger and Dölger, "Ein Auslandsbrief;" Oikonomides, "On the Date of John VIII's Letter."	"το πός, ένα εις την ήγειαν του με τ(ον) Θε(ω)ν, διά τοῦτο άποσταλάμεν κύρ Μανουήλ τ(ον) Στραγγέζ(ην), νά έλθῃ νά μάθῃ, όμοί(ας) νά χωρητήσῃ καί έαός, άνευθιγκμέν τον δε καί τινος δουλεί(ας), όσο(ας) θέλα δέξεν πρὸς έαός," Babinger and Dölger, "Ein Auslandsbrief", 21.
109	Spring-Summer 1437 (?)	Murad II	John VIII		An attempt by Murad II, who approached John with an embassy requesting to abandon the idea of submitting to the West as understood from the embassy below, as Syropoulos narrates		Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 182; Zacharadou, "The Ottomans", 23.	"Τού γάρ λαόν κύρ Παύλον πρὸςέως σπαλίανος τότε πρὸς τὸν Ἀμυρᾶν, εἶπον αὐτὸ οἱ βασιλῆδες. Τί ἐν τὸ κτεταγόν τὸν βασιλέα καὶ ἀπεργέται πρὸς τοὺς Λατίνους; Εἰ έγα τνᾶ άναγκην, εἰπάτο τούτην, καὶ ὁ αὐθέντης θεωρεσάσαι πούτην, σπειτρον θεωρεσάειν ευρίσκει από τοῦ αὐθέντου παρὸ τὸν Λατίνων, καὶ πλέον συμφορά τὸ βασιλεὺς ἡ φύλα τοῦ Ἀμυρᾶ ήπαρ τὸν Λατίνων. Παρατηράσθω οὖν την πρὸς Λατίνους άποδομίαν καὶ ευρίσκει άπαρ άν ζήτησῃ παρὸ τοῦ αὐθέντου." Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 182.
110	September - November 1437 (before he leaves for Ferrara)	John VIII	Murad II	Paul Asanes (Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris acc. to Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 23.8, 84)	Informing about the emperor's trip to Ferrara-Florence as Syropoulos describes: Sphrantzes mentions the influence of Halil Pasla on the final decision of Murad II not to attack Constantinople in Manuel's absence.	347/5	Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 182; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 23.8, 84.	"Τού γάρ λαόν κύρ Παύλον πρὸςέως σπαλίανος τότε πρὸς τὸν Ἀμυρᾶν, εἶπον αὐτὸ οἱ βασιλῆδες. Τί ἐν τὸ κτεταγόν τὸν βασιλέα καὶ ἀπεργέται πρὸς τοὺς Λατίνους; Εἰ έγα τνᾶ άναγκην, εἰπάτο τούτην, καὶ ὁ αὐθέντης θεωρεσάσαι πούτην, σπειτρον θεωρεσάειν ευρίσκει από τοῦ αὐθέντου παρὸ τὸν Λατίνων, καὶ πλέον συμφορά τὸ βασιλεὺς ἡ φύλα τοῦ Ἀμυρᾶ ήπαρ τὸν Λατίνων. Παρατηράσθω οὖν την πρὸς Λατίνους άποδομίαν καὶ ευρίσκει άπαρ άν ζήτησῃ παρὸ τοῦ αὐθέντου." Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 182.

111	Early 1440	governor of Gallipoli	John VIII	a man of the governor	off the shore of Gallipoli	Inviting the emperor to take a rest in the castle of Gallipoli				Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 544.	"ἔπειλαν ὁ τῆς Καλλινοπόλεως ἄρχον ἕνα ἐκ τῶν ἐμποῦ ἀνθρώπων τὸν Ἀργυρῶν προσερχόμενα τῷ βασιλεῖ." Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 544.
112	Early 1440	governor of Gallipoli (ὁ τῆς Καλλινοπόλεως ἄρχων)		Laskaris Mamalis	the castle of Gallipoli	Rendering a friendly invitation of the governor of Gallipoli, which offered the emperor to take some rest in the castle after his tiresome journey from Italy				Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 544.	silver vase (δῶρον μαστραπῶν ἀργυρῶν)
113	After July 1439 or February 1440		Murad II	names unknown; perhaps Paul Asanes (acc. to Malami)		Expressing gratitude and sincere friendship after the Council of Ferrara-Florence	3492			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 31.8, 269; trans. Magoulias, Book 31.8, 181; Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 80.	"Ἀπαδέξατο δὲ ποτὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἔπειλαν αὐτῷ δῶρον μαστραπῶν ἀργυρῶν μετὰ τοῦ Ἀσκερίου τοῦ Μάμουλ᾽." Syropoulos, ed. Laurent, 544.
114	1442 or beginning of 1443 (acc. to Dölger)	Demetrios, son of Manuel II	Murad II			Requesting military help for his siege of Constantinople to take Constantinople from John VIII	3501			Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 81; Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, 90-92, trans. Philippides, 53; Runciman, <i>Fall of Constantinople</i> , 52; Doukas, trans. Magoulias, 303, fn. 221.	"ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς πέμψαι πρέσβεις πρὸς τὸν Μωῦρητ δακτύλιον ἐγγυμοσύνην καὶ ἀκριβοῦς πάλιν εἰς αὐτὸν" Doukas, Book 31.8, 269; "πρέσβεις πέμψοντες ἤξουν τε αὐτῷ εἰρήνην ποιέσθαι καὶ ἐμπεδῶσαι αὐτῷ τὰς συνοδάς." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 80.
115	1443	Murad II	John VIII			Informing the emperor that "[Murad] had crossed [the Hellespont] safely, was about to march against his enemy [the Italians and the Westerners acc. to Chalkokondyles], and urged him [the Byzantine emperor] to pray for his success in the coming wars.				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 99.	"ἔπειλαν ἔπειψε." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 81.
116	Early 1443	John VIII	Murad II			An attempt to protect peace and treaty between John VIII and Murad II: John VIII did not act against the Ottoman ruler upon the latter's crossing in Byzantine territories and other contents of the current treaty between them.				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 111.	"ἔπειλαν ἔπειψε." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 6, 99.
117	After 10 October 1444	John VIII	Murad II			Congratulations and presents to the sultan after the battle of Varna				Ostroghsky, "The Palaeologi," 384; Doukas, trans. Magoulias, 185, fn. 217; Sphrantzes, trans. Philippides, 141, fn. 16.	"ἔπειλαν ἔπειψε." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 111.
118	1444 or 1446	Murad II		George Chalkokondyles		Demanding the surrender of the cities in the Peloponnese, Thebes and the surrounding villages which Constantine took recently and which the despot did not accept				Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 32.7, 279.	Following the battle of Varna (1444), "the unfortunate Emperor of Constantinople [John VIII Palaiologos] hastened to offer congratulations and presents to the victor [Murad II]." Ostrogorsky, "The Palaeologi," 384.
119	Winter 1446	Constantine XI	Murad II			Demanding the Isthmos wall be stood and the sultan's lands beyond the wall that the latter had subjected: This may have been the same embassy as Doukas mentions (trans. Magoulias, Book 33, 186). Nicol <i>Lost Centuries of Byzantium</i> , 364) states that the envoy who was captured and made prisoner, was the father of the historian Laonikos Chalkokondyles.				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 113.	"ἔπειλαν ἔπειψε." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 113.
120	Late 1446 - Early 1447	Constantine XI	Murad II			A treaty about the control of the Peloponnese by the Byzantines provided that they would pay tribute				Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 119; trans. Sekoundinos, trans. Philippides, in <i>Meinung II the Conqueror</i> , 79-81.	"ἔπειλαν ἔπειψε." Chalkokondyles, ed. Darkó, vol. II, Book 7, 119; trans. Kaldellis, Book 7.28, 116.

121	6 December 1448	Constantine XI	Murad II	George Sphrantzes		Submitting for an approval of the selection of Constantine XI as the emperor of Constantinople	3519		89	Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 29.3, 100.	the Ottoman ruler sent the ambassador back with honor and gifts	ἡμῶν ἔγω ἀποκρίσας εἰς τὸν ὀμπρῶν ... καὶ μετὰ τιμῆς καὶ δόξης καμὲ ἀπέστειλε· Sphrantzes, ed. Maisano, Book 29.3, 100.
122	March 1449	Constantine XI	Murad II	Andronikos Palaiologos Iagaris (acc. to Malamut, "Les ambassades du dernier," 435)		Attempting to pacify Murad with gifts and conciliatory messages and thus aiming to remove all animosity between Constantine and Murad	3524		89	Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.1, 279.	gifts (σὺν δόξῃς)	"πρόσβασις σταυρὸς εἰς τὸν Μουράτ καὶ δεξιῶσις αὐτῶν, σὺν δόξῃσι καὶ μελαγχόῃσι λόγοις, εἰρήνευσεν αὐτῶν, ἄρως ἐκ μέσου πάντα παραλαμβάνοντα σκάνδαλα." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.1, 279.
123	February-March 1451	Constantine XI and Constantinopolitans	Mehmed II			Consoling the Ottoman ruler after his father's death and congratulating him for his reign	3530			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.12, 289, trans. Magoulias, Book 33.12, 191.		"μαθόντες καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἐνάλιασιν ἡδὺς ἡγεμονίαν, ἔπεισαν ἀρρέβας, πόρην παρρησίας καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς τὴν καθόριαν προσταγματούς;" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 33.12, 289.
124	1451 (?)	Constantine XI	Mehmed II			A treaty about Mehmed's cession of the the Asian coast to the Byzantines and offering them cities and lands for the upkeep of Orhan: Mehmed also made a treaty with the Peloponnesians upon visited by envoys from there.	3530			Chalkokondyles, ed. Darko, vol. II, Book 7, 142; Kritoboulos, Historiae I, ed. D. R. Reinsch, 5, 3, 17.		"ἐποδοῖς ἑρμούα" Chalkokondyles, ed. Darko, vol. II, Book 7, 142. "καὶ πρότερον μὲν σπένδοντα Ῥωμαῖος καὶ βασιλεὺς Κωνσταντῖνον" Kritoboulos, Historiae I, ed. D. R. Reinsch, 5, 3, 17.
125	Late Autumn 1451	Constantine XI	Mehmed II		Bursa	Rejecting the tribute and putting demands on "doubling the annuity": Byzantine envoys visited Mehmed while he was at the front possibly against Karaman. In this embassy, Constantine did not accept a tribute of three hundred thousand silver coins for Orhan being paid by the Ottomans and told that it was no longer the duty of the Byzantine state to feed Orhan. The envoys came up two selections, either they asked for "doubling the annuity" or they will release Orhan. Halli Pasha conveyed Mehmed II's response to the Byzantine envoys as follows: "Soon I will be in Adrianople. Come to me there and report to me all the urgent needs of the emperor and the City, and I will readily grant every request." Doukas, trans. Magoulias, Book 34, 192-194. Doukas states that it was the assembly of the Romans who dispatched the embassy to Mehmed II.				Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.2, 293.		"Ἢ γὰρ μὲρ τὸν Ῥωμαῖον συνεγογγή ἐσκέματό τινα ματαίαν βουλήν, στείλασα πρὸς αὐτὸν πρόσβασις;" Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.2, 293.
126	1452 before 26 March	Constantine XI	Mehmed II	Loukas Notaras (Kritoboulos writes that the embassy consisted of the emperor's associates.)	Edirne	An attempt to dissuade Mehmed from erecting a tower	3542			Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.6, 297-299; trans. Magoulias, Book 34.6, 195-196; the name of the ambassador is mentioned in Nesrî, vol. II, 689. Kritoboulos, trans. Riggs, 17; Nicolò Barbaro speaks of many embassies sent to Mehmed due to the fear of the Byzantine emperor. Two ambassadors from one of the embassies, once the building of the castle at the Bosphorus was completed in August 1452, were detained by the Ottoman ruler and then their heads were cut off. Nicolò Barbaro, 9.	Nicolò Barbaro says that by these embassies Constantine XI were presenting gifts to Mehmed.	"... ol yıl [1453] askerde kale yangıñ tamam oldu, hemen bahar oldıñu gıñı, Sultan Mehmed, Halil Paşa'ya emr etti: 'Lala, bu yıl İstanbul'a ysyğarm' deyrñ, asakır-ı 'uzım com' edip, Hunkâr İstanbul'a müteveccih oldu. Audan İstanbul'un tekvurı, veziri Kir-Luka nâm kâfirı elçileğē (چال) gönderip, aman diledi. Hunkâr elçiyē asla iltifat etmedi.' Nesrî, vol. II, 688.
127	After June 1452 or late 1452 (acc. to Doukas)	Constantine XI	Mehmed II			Stating that from that moment onwards the emperor will defend the city and its inhabitants, revealing his strong wish to defend the city from now on, since Mehmed chose battle and adding that the emperor was still open for a rapprochement		91		Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.11, 305.		"Καὶ στείλας ἀποκρισάμενος πρὸς τὸν τύροννον ἀνερ." Doukas, ed. Grecu, Book 34.11, 305.

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