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THE MOST NOBLE PART OF THE EMPIRE: THE IMAGE OF ITALY AND SICILY IN 11TH-CENTURY BYZANTINE HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Abstract. This paper aims to show how 11th-century Byzantine historians viewed Italy and Sicily during a specific period when the Empire lost all its possessions in these provinces. By analysing the histories of Michael Psellus, Cecaumenus, Michael Attaliates, John Scylitzes, and *Scylitzes Continuatus*, we explore their portrayal of the loss of these provinces, which were historically closely linked to Ancient Roman history. After presenting Byzantine Italy and Sicily in the 11th century, the paper discusses the image of Italy as the birthplace of Ancient Rome and references to the distant past of Italy and Sicily found in the texts under review. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of Italy and Sicily for these historians, examining possible differences in their presentation of the provinces and the reasons behind them. In the final part, the paper analyses how anecdotes in the histories can offer valuable information on the understanding of these regions and their place in Byzantine collective memory.

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The 11th century was a crucial time for the history of Byzantine Italy. During this period, Byzantium lost its Italian possessions to the Normans and made its final attempt to reconquer Sicily from the Arabs. Unlike the 12th and 13th centuries, when the threat from the West was so serious that it led to the fall of Constantinople in 1204, 11th-century historians did not pay as much attention to the West. The great turmoil within the Empire that started with the raids of Duke Robert Guiscard and early Crusades, even though emerging at the end of the 11th century, began to be written about in the form of histories (or other historiographical genres) only some decades later in the works of Nicephorus Bryennius, Anna Comnene and John Zonaras.[3]

However, the gradual loss of the westernmost provinces, one by one, must have left a significant impact on the 11th-century Constantinople historiographers. Firstly, because it signalled the beginning of a long period of wars, and secondly, because these provinces played an important role in the "Byzantine collective identity."[4] Beining Romans who traced their origins back to the city founded on the hills by the Tiber around 1,800 years earlier,[5] for Byzantines, Italy as the birthplace of Ancient Rome surely had a special place in their collective memory, just as Jerusalem was important from a Christian point of

[3] For a discussion of how 11th- and 12th-century Comnenian historians viewed this issue and their motives for writing histories, see Hunger (1968), Maisano (1978–1979), Scott (1981), and Stanković (2011).

[4] Some scholars may find the term "Byzantine collective identity" problematic from the standpoint of contemporary sociology (Papadopoulou, 2014, pp. 161–162), or question whether Byzantines/Romans even had an identity (Haldon & Stouraitis, 2022, p. 5). By this I mean their evident identification as Romans that is omnipresent in our sources, something that Hobsbawm (1990) would like to call a "proto-nation", although the phrase "Byzantine collective identity" should be understood in the broadest possible sense.

[5] The Roman and Greek aspects of Byzantine identity are still a subject of scholarly debate. See, for example, Ahrweiler (1998), Carras (2004), Haldon & Stouraitis (2022), Kaldellis (2019), and Stouraitsis (2022).

view. Although merely a minor province during the Middle Byzantine period, the possession of Italy was also a matter of prestige.[6]

Historiographical genres are important in this respect since they portray how learned Byzantines viewed this historical issue. The histories from this period that have survived mostly focus on Constantinople and its emperors. However, depending on the author, they also occasionally address matters in the border provinces, with varying degrees of emphasis. The extent to which Italy and Sicily are discussed in the sources under consideration also reflects the authors' attitude and the importance attributed to these regions.

All the texts examined in this paper were written in the second half of the 11th century, most likely in Constantinople. However, not all are contemporaneous with the events they cover: some are compilations, while others are based on and incorporate older sources. Nonetheless, these accounts are also significant because they provide a comprehensive portrayal of Italy and Sicily, including their earlier history leading up to the 11th century. These texts are part of 11th-century Byzantine historiography, even if their focus is not strictly the 11th century.

The sources examined (presented in a somewhat chronological order based on the time they were written), include two works by Michael Psellus—his well-known *Chronographia* and the lesser-known *Short History*;[7] Cecaumenus's book of advice, the so-called *Strategikon*; Michael Attaliates's *History*; John Scylitzes's *Synopsis of Histories*; and the anonymous *Scylitzes Continuatus*.[8] Almost all of these texts are histories,[9] except for the work of Cecaumenus. Cecaumenus's narrative is hard to put into the frame of a single genre according to M. D. Spadaro: it is not a true *strategikon*, but simply a book of advice.[10] Because Cecaumenus writes about many historical events, his text has great historical value, and it can be added to the list of historiographical narratives of the period. In view of

[6] On the importance of having a province called "Italy" in the light of Byzantine-German relations, see Von Falkenhausen (1978, pp. 49–51).

[7] Aerts argues that Michael Psellus did not write the *Short History*, suggesting instead that it was written by another, possibly anonymous, author from the 11th or 12th century (Pselli Hist. Synt., pp. ix–xv). However, Aerts's arguments have been dismissed and subsequent research has confirmed that the *Short History* was indeed written by Psellus (Репајић, 2016, p. 36).

[8] Even though some scholars (e.g., McGeer & Nesbitt, 2020, pp. 5–20) still believe Scyliztes was the author of *Scylitzes Continuatus*, Kiapidou (Κιαπίδου, 2010) has demonstrated that they could not have been the same person.

[9] Scylitzes's text is a synopsis of histories and thus qualifies as a history, despite using various types of sources; also, it often provides important details not found elsewhere. However, saying that his work is a chronicle because it covers a long period of time would be misleading. For further discussion on genre classification and the originality of Psellus's *Short History*, see Dželebdžić (Џелебџић, 2005).

[10] Cecaumeno, 14–16.

the stated purpose of this paper, homilies, orations, *vitae* of saints, and other texts with historical references are excluded from this analysis.

The portrayal of Italy and Sicily as given in these sources is analysed in thematic chapters, highlighting the most significant and indicative examples rather than presenting a chronological retelling. The history of Byzantine Italy and Sicily cannot be presented only as depicted in Byzantine sources originating at the Empire's centre. Thus, this paper aims to show the representation of these regions in Byzantine collective memory and literature, including the image of past and contemporary events.

Introduction: A Historical Overview

In the early 11th century, Byzantium was faced with issues that prevented it from focusing more closely on its westernmost borders. Byzantine Italy's stability depended on the competence of its own *katepano*; under Basil II, Basil Boioannes was appointed as *katepano* of Italy and achieved significant success in pacifying the region. After the exhausting war with the Bulgarians, Emperor Basil II intended to lead a military campaign in Italy and Sicily, but he died in 1025 while preparing for it. His successors were aware of this ambition but were unable to accomplish anything noteworthy. It was only under Michael IV that a significant expedition, led by George Maniaces (1038–1040), succeeded in seizing much of Sicily whilst the Sicilian Arabs were quarrelling among themselves. However, Maniaces was recalled from his duty and, by the year 1042, his successors had lost all that he had accomplished. Even though he was reinstated as the *katepano* of Italy in 1042, not much could be done, since the local Longobards of Byzantine Italy were rebelling with their Norman allies—former Byzantine mercenaries who had become increasingly more independent. Maniaces died during his rebellion against Constantine XI Monomachus, and Byzantine Italy was pacified only after a local magnate from Bari, Argyrus, was appointed dux of Italy.

This did not stop the Normans, who continued alienating Byzantine territories from their stronghold in Melfi. They first took Northern Apulia and then Calabria. With the fall of Bari in 1071, Byzantium lost all its lands in Italy. A pivotal moment happened in 1059 when the Pope recognised the Normans as his *de facto* allies, acknowledging their conquest and claims in Italy and Sicily. Facing civil wars and the Seljuk threat in its eastern territories, the Byzantine central government was unable to counter the Normans.

Starting in 1061, the Normans (unlike the Byzantines) succeeded in conquering all of Sicily from the Arabs and consolidating their rule over the next thirty years. As they grew in power becoming a threat to the rest of the Empire, the Byzantines, unable to provide sufficient military resistance, focused on

improving diplomatic relations with them and binding the new conquerors to the imperial family. Eventually, Emperor Michael VII Ducas arranged a political marriage between his son and the daughter of the Norman Duke Robert Guiscard. However, this move backfired when Michael VII was overthrown in 1078 which only worsened their relations.

Being an imperial in-law provided Guiscard with a *casus belli* against the newly enthroned Nicephorus III Botaniates. Guiscard brought forth a military expedition under the pretext of reinstating the deposed emperor, and for four years, he and his sons waged war in the Byzantine Balkan provinces. They were eventually repelled by Emperor Alexius I Comnenus, and Guiscard died in Cephalonia in 1085. The peace that ensued was only temporary, and hostilities between the Normans and Byzantines reignited during the First Crusade, when Guiscard's eldest son, Prince Bohemond I of Taranto, participated in the Crusade, which led to renewed animosities.[11]

The events in Italy and Sicily elicited different levels of interest from the above-mentioned historians, depending on when and for whom they were writing. Certain fallacies in Byzantine emperors' Italian policies may have been omitted in some accounts, while others may have highlighted them since it was in their interest to portray previous emperors as incapable of resolving the issue. This is particularly evident in the latter half of the 11th century, when the texts under consideration were written. Their treatment of the first half of the century is similar, with little attention paid to Italian provinces except for major events that had broader impact on the whole Empire, such as George Maniaces's rebellion and downfall.

The differing treatments of same events in the sources under review offer insights into the varied perceptions of the historians. Several themes that were important for framing such an image will be explored, together with an examination of the perception of Rome itself as the place Roman history originated from, both in the past and in the time these texts were written. It will be shown how the ancient Italic peoples were presented and whether their names left some mark on this period. Additionally, the position of Italy and Sicily in relation to other parts of the Empire will be considered, especially the New Rome—i.e., Constantinople. This can be observed from a strictly political and historical point of view, as well as from a wider stance of collective memory. A comparison of how and whether Italy and Sicily essentially differed in the narrative will be given, together with the extent to which they were written about. Finally, the paper will provide a brief examination of Italy- and Sicily-themed anecdotes in the sources.

[11] Bibliography on this topic is extensive; however, some particularly useful titles include Ahrweiler (1975, p. 82); Angold (1997, pp. 32–54, 129–135); Cheynet (1990, pp. 48–49, 57–58, 337–364); Kolia-Dermitzaki (1997); Loud (2000, pp. 26–29, 66–80, 92–137, 147–162, 186–197, 209–223; 2004, pp. 94–116); Riley-Smith (2004); and Von Falkenhausen (1978, pp. 52–65, 72–75).

Italy as the Birthplace of Ancient Rome and References to the Distant Past

While other texts might serve the purpose equally well,[12] the crucial source to introduce the topic of Italy as the birthplace of Ancient Rome is Psellus's *Short History*. Starting with Romulus, Psellus notes that the son of the *Hellenic* god Ares was the founder of Rome.[13] Here, Hellenic means pagan, and the whole history of Roman kings and emperors is full of such examples, of whom some are associated with the Hellenic or pagan religion and thought,[14] even after Constantine the Great. One of the examples shows Emperor Jovian declaring that he "did not wish to rule over pagans (*Ἑλλήνων*) but over Christians", because Julian the Apostate had previously converted all Christians to paganism/Hellenism.[15] In his *Chronographia*, Psellus alludes to the same pagan emperors as role models for Romanus III Argyrus,[16] mentioning Greek rulers such as Alexander the Great or Pyrrhus of Epirus when writing about other Byzantine emperors of his era.[17] However, Cecaumenus lists only Scipio Aemilianus and Belisarius as good military role models, contrasting them with Pyrrhus and Hannibal.[18]

Hellenic/Greek elements were at the same time pagan, but they also intertwined with Roman history from the beginning.[19] This reflects the Byzantine identity as both Roman and Hellenic, with the Roman aspect prevailing due to the Hellenic element being pagan, while Hellenism remained in its "secular" form as the language of literature and knowledge.[20] The Roman identity was merely altered in its aspects regarding belief, with Romans no longer being *Hellenes* but Christians. This evolution prompts Cecaumenus to admire Roman generals like Scipio and Belisarius, despite the fact the first was pagan and both Pyrrhus and Hannibal were enemies of Rome. Similarly, Attaliates makes references to ancient Roman generals—two Scipiones and Aemilius Paulus—as defenders

[12] The structure of this work is very interesting and its theme quite uncommon in Byzantine historiography. However, because of the historical circumstances under Michael VII Ducas, there was a notable interest in Ancient Rome among the Byzantines (Џелебџић, 2005, pp. 23–25).

[13] Pselli Synt. Hist., 2, 6.

[14] Ibid., 16, 15; 18, 13–14; 22, 61.

[15] Ibid., 40, 15–23.

[16] Pselli Chron., III 2, 5–8; III 8, 17–19.

[17] Ibid., VI 134, 9; VI 163, 2–5.

[18] Cecaumeno, 78, 30–80, 5.

[19] In Byzantium, Octavian Augustus and Alexander the Great were frequently mentioned juxtaposed, both as predecessors of the Byzantines themselves and as preferred role models for Byzantine emperors (Станковић, 2006, pp. 127–128).

[20] On Hellenism in Byzantium, see Agapitos (2022) and Kaldellis (2008).

of their *πατρίς*, the city of Rome, who waged war against the Macedonian king Perseus, "a descendent of Alexander the Great."[21]

Attaliates draws many parallels between the "present" and ancient Romans,[22] but it is evident that, despite their differing religious identities, ancient pagan and present Christian Romans are seen as not fundamentally different in terms of their identity. The only difference is for the Romans "of today", the entire Byzantine Empire (*Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονία*) is their *πατρίς*, not only the city of Rome. Hence, whenever and whichever Rome is mentioned, it is regarded as the *πατρίς*, and it can be seen that the Romans who fought Macedonians, Greeks, or Carthaginians were portrayed as ancestors of the historians in question.

Are there any mentions of Italy at the time of Ancient Rome? There are almost none except for when the texts are referring to the city of Rome itself. When portraying Byzantine commander Michael Docianus fighting the Normans at Cannae in 1041, Scylitzes reminds his readers that this was the site of the famous battle between the Romans and Hannibal.[23] Just as Psellus compares contemporary emperors to ancient ones, Scylitzes compares Constantine VII Porphyrogenite and his court to that of the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius.[24] Although the second example is rather vague and classicist, Scylitzes's mention of Cannae shows that the memory of the Punic Wars and Hannibal was still very much alive, with Hannibal mentioned multiple times in the sources under review. Likewise, he does not refer to the earlier battle in 1018, when *katepano* Basil Boioannes defeated the Normans at the same site. The Byzantine defeat by the Normans in the battle of 1041—not that of 1018, though both took place in the 11th century—bore sufficient resemblance for John Scylitzes to compare it to the famous battle of 216 BC, when the Romans also clashed with their enemies on the same battlefield.

The city of Rome itself in Antiquity was mentioned only in the context of its foundation myth and the relocation of the Empire's capital to the New Rome on Bosporus by Constantine the Great. The foundation of Rome and the period before and after the Roman kings is interesting for references to the many peoples inhabiting ancient Italy. Psellus mentions Albanians, Sicels/*Siculi*, and Latins;[25] all these *ethne*, along with the information Psellus cites, are taken from earlier texts, especially Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Џелебџић, 2005, p. 27). In the manner of Byzantine historians, these names are used to represent the peoples of their time, though their application seems rather interesting. "Latins" was one of the ethnonyms starting to be exploited in the 11th century and it was never used for the Byzantines themselves. They were aware that it was an ancient appellation for

[21] Ata., 160, 1–161, 6.

[22] Ibid., 87, 5–25; 143, 18–144, 22.

[23] Scyl., 426, 25–27.

[24] Pselli Synt. Hist., 94, 14–15.

[25] Ibid., 2, 8; 2, 10–16; 2, 31–36; 4, 42–43; 4, 49.

Romans before Romulus changed it (similarly, "Italians" was used for Romans as well) (Suidae, III 237, pp. 7–12; Kazhdan, 1991, p. 1187; Ahrweiler, 1998, p. 3).

"Latins" (*Λατῖνοι*), similar to other ancient ethnic designations, are almost synonymous with the western peoples called "Franks" (*Φράγκοι*) by the Byzantines of that era, which was a broader term used for various ethnolinguistic groups (the Normans being among the most frequently mentioned in these historical sources).[26] The case of "Italians" (*Ἰταλοί*) is a bit more complicated, as the term could refer to people from Italy, including the Longobards[27] since the sources use *Longobardy* and *Italy* interchangeably,[28] and Psellus even calls Normans "Italians"[29] (unlike other sources, which consistently use "Franks/Latins from Italy" but never "Italians").[30] "Albanians" (*Ἀλβανοί*) are also mentioned; for example, Attaliates notes that "once our allies, who are members of the same state and rite as we are, Albanians and Latins, [and] who dwell by the Western Rome near the Italian provinces."[31] However, in my opinion, he is not referring to the medieval ancestors of modern Albanians but to the Longobards or Normans, since he uses the term *Arbanitai*[32] at the end of his history when referring to Albanians. His account is hard to follow regarding Western peoples, whereas he is much more precise about

[26] Ata., 27, 2; 35, 17–25; 111, 12–13; 112, 10; 135, 21–22; 214, 19; Cecaumeno, 116, 1; 126, 19–20, 206, 14–15; Pselli Chron., VII 160, 3; Scyl., 425, 11; 427, 44–48; Scyl. Cont., 167, 21. The term *Normans*, thus also *Franks*, did not only indicate people from Normandy but generally from the other side of the Alpes, or *Northmen*, in its etymological meaning. For more about the use of this ethnonym, see Loud (2000, pp. 81–83, 90–91).

[27] Scyl., 262, 32–35; 263, 40; 426, 35–36; 440, 24. Here the dux of Italy Argyrus is called only "Argyrus the Italian," on a certain occasion when he helped Emperor Constantine IX to defend Constantinople from the usurper Leo Tornicius in 1047, indicating a close relationship between him and the emperor. This appellation also shows Argyrus to be more "Byzantine" than if he had been called "Longobard" or another name in the similar vein. Previously, when Scylitzes mentions his father Melus, he says that Melus incited the "people of Longobardy" to revolt (Ibid., 348, 97–8); Scyl. Cont., 169, 7. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if the "Italians" mentioned are Byzantines, Longobards, or something else, while if they are called Longobards, it is always clear these people are not Byzantines (Hellenophone Christians of the Constantinopolitan rite).

[28] This is most evident in the following passages in the texts under review: Pselli Chron., VI 78, 4–5; Scyl., 146, 67–147, 26; 264, 70; 348, 97–8; Scyl. Cont., 167, 4–170, 1. See also the explanation in Von Falkenhausen (1978, pp. 49–51).

[29] Pselli Chron., VII 24, 20.

[30] Ata., 93, 4; 212, 23–25; Scyl. Cont., 182, 18.

[31] οἵ ποτε σύμμαχοι καὶ τῆς ἰσοπολιτείας ἡμῖν συμμετέχοντες, ὡς καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς θρησκείας, Ἀλβανοὶ καὶ Λατῖνοι ὅσοι κατὰ τὴν ἑσπερίαν Ῥώμην τοῖς ἰταλικοῖς πλησιάζουσι μέρεσι (Ata., 7, 11–13).

[32] Ibid., 213, 2. The anonymous author of the *Scylitzes Continuatus* often changes the ethnonyms used by Attaliates. While he uses Attaliates's designation in most of his narrative, here they are also called *Ἀρβανῖται* (Scyl. Cont., 182, 20). Pérez Martín (Ata., 237) argues they are Albanians, while Kaldellis and Krallis (Attalaietes, 2012, p. 595) disagree; there is no consensus among scholars on this issue (Kazhdan, 1991, pp. 52–53). Other authors are

the East and wrote differently about foreign nations at the beginning of his work compared to the end. So, these *Albanians* were probably Normans,[33] but whoever they were, the point remains the same—the author sought to archaise the name of a people in Italy that was associated with ancient Roman history.

None of these peoples can be connected to the old ethnic groups living at the time of ancient Rome and their names are merely geographical references. More importantly, they did not bear Roman identity. The use of the term *Italian* is typically ambiguous because it was not only an *ethikon* (like "Longobard"),[34] but also an attribute that could apply to true Romans (Byzantines). This is illustrated by Psellus's portrayal of Romanus III, who was well educated in the *Ἰταλῶν λόγοις*, the "Italian sciences," i.e., the study of law.[35] While Sicilians/*Siculi* are mentioned in the story of Rome's origins, they were unimportant later, with the name *Sicilians* used mostly for Sicilian Arabs, just as *Cretans* referred to Arabs of Crete while the island was in Arab hands.[36] Scylitzes also calls the sea between Sicily and modern-day Greece (roughly the Ionian Sea) the "Sicilian Sea" (*Σικελικὸν πέλαγος*)[37] when he describes the location of the Arab fleet after it sacked Byzantine Ragusa and Corfu and was hit by a storm. Still, no special connotation is attached to the name as such, it being merely archaic. The name that had the power of invoking ancient parallels regarding Sicilian Arabas labelled them as "Carthaginians", used for the Arabs of Ifriqiya, since they had once occupied Sicily.[38]

There is one name we do not find in the foundation story of Rome that was used by the Byzantines when referring to themselves. *Ausones* were an old Italic people; according to LSJ, they were the *Aurunci* of Livy, and the term was often used to designate Italians, hence also Italy.[39] We find the same information in

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also more prone to believe that these *Ἀλβανοί* are not modern-day Albanians (Коматина, 2021, pp. 25–26).

[33] Since *Latins* were mostly Normans, as discussed above, it makes sense to identify *Albanians* with the Longobards. However, Attaliates also mentions them alongside Byzantines when writing about George Maniaces's troops (Ata., 15, 12), which suggests that they were Normans, since we are told about a group of Normans (called *Maniakatoi*) who stayed in Byzantium after following Maniaces in his rebellion and entered the emperor's service after his death (Scyl. Cont., 167, 14). It is possible Attaliates made a mistake or used Western ethnonyms inconsistently, thus referring to the Longobards as *Latins* and to the Franks as *Albanians* in this part of the text. Kaldellis and Krallis (Attalaietes, 2012, p. 595) also believe that the *Albanians* mentioned in this part of the text were Normans.

[34] Suidae, III 226, 23.

[35] Pselli Chron., III 2, 2–3.

[36] For such use of the term *Sicilians*: Scyl., 266, 33–34; 398, 76; 398, 94; 400, 54. Vice versa, when Crete was in Byzantine hands, it allowed Emperor Nicephorus III to gather *δυνάμεις ῥωμαϊκὰς ἐκ Κρήτης* (Ata., 206, 16).

[37] Scyl., 386, 64.

[38] Ibid., 145, 71–77; 149, 81; 151, 20; 158, 26… as far as 407, 22.

[39] *Liddel, Scott, Jones Ancient Greek Lexicon* (LSJ), *Αὔσονες*: https://lsj.gr/wiki/%CE% 91%E1%BD%94%CF%83%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%82 (accessed 12 September 2023).

Souda, where Ausones are labelled "Italians" and the Sicilian Sea the "Ausonian Sea".[40] In his commentary on a poem by Theodore Prodromus where the Byzantines were labelled as *Ausones* (12th century), Ferjančić (Калић et al., 1971, p. 176) explains that this means Romans/Byzantines. "Ausones" was in no way reserved for Italians or Byzantines from Italy in the 11th century: Attaliates often uses the term as a synonym for the Romans, which at that time meant only Byzantines. Interestingly, the term bears no relation to Italy; it could rather be applied to the Byzantines in the Balkan provinces or Byzantines in general,[41] or even the Empire on its Eastern borders.[42] Conversely, it can be observed that "Romans" (*Ῥωμαῖοι*, Byzantines) was used for the people whom Duke Robert Guiscard wanted to expel from Italy.[43] There are other instances that confirm that people from Italy could be classified as Romans.[44] In conclusion, there was no difference between the Romans and Ausones, with the second label merely being more poetic. It had nothing to do with Byzantine Italy or Italy whatsoever, unlike the term Roman, which was related to Italy, with the province also called *Ῥωμανία* where less formal register is used.[45]

The translation of the Roman capital from Rome to Constantinople was a big milestone in Roman history from the Byzantine point of view.[46] At the beginning of his *Short History*, Psellus says that he will recount the history of emperors from the "elder" to the "younger/new" Rome.[47] Therefore, this alteration of Roman identity was essentially related to the shift from one Rome to another. The empire that Constantine's sons inherited was divided into three parts. Constans I got Italy and "the [city] of Romans," while Constantius II inherited "all of the East with the *megalopolis* that he [Constantine the Great] had founded."[48] Italy remained tied to the old Roman city, the birthplace of all Romans, whereas the new capital was the "great city" founded by the great Emperor Constantine I.[49] Attaliates similarly wrote about the "elder" (*πρεσβυτέρη*) or "old" (*παλαιά*) and the "new"

[40] Suidae, I 417, 7–9.

[41] Ata., 25, 6. (It is indicative that he says here that the Patzinaks have wasted *τὴν ῥωμαϊκὴν γῆν* and spilled lots of blood *τῶν Αὐσόνων*, with the terms *Roman* and *Ausonian* used side by side); 157, 5.

[42] Ibid., 89, 7.

[43] Scyl. Cont., 167, 18–19. Peters-Custot (2014, pp. 181–191) argues that Italian Byzantines were actually Greeks, who were Romans only as subjects of the Byzantine emperor, which is an opinion not shared by the author of this paper.

[44] Scyl., 263, 58; 348, 97–8; 383, 97–384, 12. We also see that the *Ῥωμαῖοι* could have been the people in Sicily: Ibid., 180, 20–21; 400, 50–401, 66.

[45] Scyl. Cont., 167, 26–27; 170, 13.

[46] For more on this topic, see Beck (1970) and Dölger (1964).

[47] Pselli Synt. Hist., 2, 1–2.

[48] Ibid., 36, 41–46.

[49] In his *Chronographia*, Psellus also uses the term *Μεγαλόπολις* as one of the names for Constantinople (Pselli Chron., IV 47, 2).

(*νέα*) Rome not only in his description of the relocation of the Roman capital but also of the fabricated ancestry of Nicephorus III. The pagan Fabii of the old Rome were moved to the new capital by Constantine I and, in Constantinople, the once pagan Roman Fabii became the Christian Roman Phocae.[50] Again, this illustrates how the Romans changed their capital and faith, while their Roman identity was preserved. Their Romanness did not disappear in spite of their relocation from the elder Rome and Italy.[51] Additionally, writing about Western geography, Attaliates was under the influence of his time in equating Italy with the Byzantine provinces lost to the Normans during his lifetime and identifying it with Southern Italy. Thus, he notes that "Rome lies *ὑπὲρ τὴν Ἰταλίαν*,"[52] which probably meant "just above/beyond (i.e., north of) Italy," since Attaliates dedicates a complete paragraph in his geography explaining what lies on each side of Rome. I find his view on Rome anachronistic, showing that Italy and Rome were both associated with one another and yet considered distinct. Italy was remembered as the region where Rome had been founded, yet Rome could be relocated, as indeed it was. Consequently, Italy could be remembered for its Romanness, but this did not monopolise its claim on Roman heritage.

This idea prevailed into later historical periods. First of all, Psellus never mentions the events of 476 or any other incident that marked the loss of the old capital under Zeno.[53] After the relocation of the capital and the division of the imperial courts following the death of Theodosius I, Western emperors are omitted from the accounts.[54] Psellus discusses the two Romes again when writing about the reign of Emperor Constans II, who, according to the story, went to Syracuse with the intention of moving the capital once again, from Constantinople back to the "elder" Rome.[55] In this passage, Constans II is portrayed as wicked because he did not "embrace the piety of his father but the heresy of his grandfather," that is, Heraclius I's Monothelitism. Therefore, his rule must also have been viewed as wicked. The emperor's alleged statement that "all must honour mothers [more] than daughters," which explains why he wanted to move the capital back to Rome,[56] should be interpreted from the same perspective. The idea that Rome was the "mother" of Constantinople was certainly viewed as true and something to be proud of but at the same time insolent, if that meant moving the capital back to Rome. The author does not fail to mention that Constans's successor,

[50] Ata., 159, 12–2.
[51] Ibid., 161, 8–9; 162, 21–22.
[52] Ibid., 161, 16.
[53] Pselli Synt. Hist., 52, 20–30.
[54] Ibid., 36, 35–36; 46–48.
[55] Ibid., 68, 14–20.
[56] Ibid., 68, 37–38.

Constantine IV, grieved his murdered father but nevertheless returned to "New Rome" after eliminating his father's assassins.[57]

This kind of reference to the old Rome appears in many of the texts under consideration, especially when they write about the more recent past and events or consider the two Romes in general. When Psellus discusses the world's great centres of learning, he mentions the two Romes and calls them respectively "the first and lesser one, and the latter and greater one."[58] Thus, being the "elder Rome" did not necessarily mean that it was *a priori* better. It had lost its previous splendour when it ceased to be the capital of the Roman Empire. In this manner, Scylitzes refers to it as "once very glorious Rome," when describing the Arab raids and conquests in Italy in the mid-10th century.[59] Rome is *περίδοξος*[60] whenever the sources refer to the days before and during Constantine I.

The Importance of Imperial Italy vs Provincial and Somewhat Foreign Sicily in the Histories under Review

Compared to other sources, Psellus's *Chronographia* pays the least attention to Italy. Nevertheless, it also gives the most convincing and articulate characterisation of Italy regarding its importance to the Byzantines. We find it in Psellus's account on George Maniaces being sent to Italy to fight those who had deprived the Byzantines "of the most noble part of the Empire."[61] No other formulation shows how highly the Byzantines regarded Italy. And yet, it appears in a text that generally does not focus much on Italian affairs. However, it is not surprising that a *φιλορώμαιος* such as Psellus[62] made this observation, already writing about the downfall of Maniaces and his mission in Byzantine Italy.

The texts highlight the excellence and splendour of Italian cities, but they often serve merely as tropes in the narrative. While cities such as Otranto[63] and Reggio Calabria[64] are described in these terms, the depiction of the foundation

[57] Ibid., 68, 38–43.

[58] Pselli Chron., VI 43, 2–3.

[59] τῆς ποτε μεγαλοδόξου Ῥώμης (Scyl., 146, 6–7).

[60] Scyl. Cont., 172, 13.

[61] ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν Ἰταλίαν ἀποσεσυλήμεθα καὶ τὸ σεμνότατον τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀφῃρήμεθα μέρος (Pselli Chron., VI 78, 1–2). He uses the first-person plural form of the verbs, which makes the statement even more personal for the Byzantines.

[62] Ibid., VI 154, 3; VI 190, 7.

[63] ἡ Ἱδροῦντα πόλις ἐστὶ τῆς Ἰταλίας παρὰ θάλασσαν, πολυάνθρωπος καὶ πλουσία (Cecaumeno, 114, 20). It is worth noting that Cecaumenus portrays Thessalonica (Ibid., 96, 7) and a city in Hellas (Ibid., 120, 29) using the same terms.

[64] […] τὸ Ῥήγιον, πόλιν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανῆ, ἐν ᾧ συνήθως ὁ δοὺξ Ἰταλίας διέτριβεν· ἦσαν γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ οἰκήματά τε διαπρεπῆ καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδείων ἀφθονία πολλή (Scyl. Cont., 168, 22–24).

of Gallipoli by Scylitzes warrants closer examination. After North African Arabs had ravaged Italy, Basil I founded a new city at a strategically advantageous location, a small natural isthmus aptly named *Καλίπολις*. Since the Arabs had displaced the local population, the emperor resettled the *λαός* from Heraclea Pontica in this newly founded city and they "*Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἔθεσι καὶ στολαῖς καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ πάσῃ πολιτικῇ καταστάσει ἄγονται ἄχρι τῆς σήμερον*."[65]

Kaldellis (2019, p. 40) argues that the Byzantines from Italy were considered distinct from other Byzantines and were not regarded as "Romans." He also suggests that the Byzantines from Constantinople and Heraclea Pontica (let us not forget the proximity of the two cities and the fact that the former was once a suffragan bishopric of the latter (Станковић, 2003, p. 117)) were considered the "standard Romans" (at least from the perspective of Constantinople). The second explanation is surely the one closer to the truth. McCormick's (1998, pp. 18–19) explanation might be more satisfactory. He interprets the passage from Scylitzes differently, concluding that Italian Byzantines were distinguishable by their dress and hairstyle, and (based on other sources) were perceived as more Byzantine-like by non-Byzantines in Italy. In addition, I would add that it was crucial that the settlers came from the close vicinity of the capital and retained their old customs. This seems to have been important to the interpolators of Scylitzes's text since this information was not part of his original writing, indicating that this interpolation was likely from the time the Byzantines had already lost Italy to the Normans.

Another noteworthy observation is the use of the term *λαός* for the people of Heraclea, which has various connotations and differs from *ἔθνος* and *γένος*. Also, the adjective *ῥωμαϊκός* is used instead of the plural noun *Ῥωμαίων* in the possessive genitive case, typically used to denote ethnicity or nationality.[66] This suggests that the inhabitants of Gallipoli were considered "more Roman" or closer to the "standard Romans" from Constantinople than other Byzantines in the region, such as those from Salento (Loud, 2000, pp. 30–31; Peters-Custot, 2013, p. 206). However, this is claimed in one of the histories and may not necessarily reflect objective truth.

Additionally, during the Norman conquest, some Italian cities stayed loyal to Byzantium and neither surrendered nor were taken by force. Bari, Taranto, Brindisi, Otranto, Gallipoli and "Orae" are listed by name twice (with Gallipoli and "Orae" mentioned only the second time), on different occasions,[67] unlike the Sicilian cities which are usually not mentioned by name. The most praising description of Sicily is given by Attaliates, for whom it is "an island so big

[65] Scyl., 151, 19–26.

[66] Of course, how much "ethnic" or "national" could one have been in the pre-industrial world, i.e., not in our modern sense of meaning.

[67] Scyl., 427, 49–50; Scyl. Cont., 168, 29–169, 1.

and renowned that it, encircled with great cities, is in need of no goods."[68] The former Byzantine capital of Sicily, Syracuse, is the only Sicilian city given a short *ekphrasis*,[69] while the rest are usually just grouped together without being named, as in Attaliates's and some other cases.[70] Some cities are mentioned as places where something important for the narrative happened,[71] but we do not find the same kind of interest in Sicily as in Italy.

Besides these two Byzantine provinces, there was also a third province belonging to the far Byzantine West.[72] Calabria was an independent *thema* on the Apennine Peninsula with close connections to Sicily and occasionally administered by the same governor as *Λογγοβαρδία/Ιταλία* (Von Falkenhausen, 1978, pp. 30–31, 40–43, 49–51).[73] The texts treat Calabria similarly to Sicily. As noted previously, only Reggio is described or referred to in greater detail because it housed the residence of the dux of Italy, with most other cities only referred to by name.[74] The main difference is that Calabria was mostly in Byzantine hands, unlike Sicily, which historians treated in the same manner as other Byzantine islands seized by the Arabs at some point in history. Thus, Calabria is somewhere in between, not only geographically; it did not have the prestige that was attached solely to Italy (i.e., both Apulia and Calabria, or just Apulia/Longobardy), but it was not as foreign to the Byzantines as Sicily. Calabria was only partially taken by the Arabs in the 9th and 10th centuries, which also befell Apulia (Loud, 2000, pp. 18–19; Von Falkenhausen, 1978, pp. 20–23), but we find Scylitzes using the same verb *χειρόω* when he writes both about Nicephorus Phocas the Elder's campaign in Calabria[75] and Maniaces's conquest in Sicily.[76] At other places in the texts, there is nothing special or out of the ordinary about how Calabria is described, with

[68] νῆσος οὕτω μεγάλη καὶ περιβόητος καὶ πόλεσι περιζωσμένη μεγίσταις καὶ τῶν ἄλλων χρηστῶν οὐδενὸς ἀποδέουσα (Ata., 7, 7–8).

[69] καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ πυρποληθῆναι θείους ναούς, περιβόητον καὶ λαμπρὰν μέχρι τοῦδε γενομένην καὶ πολλοὺς βαρβαρικοὺς ἀποσεισαμένην πολέμους, ἐν ἀκαρεῖ δὲ χρόνου πᾶσαν ἀποβεβληκυῖαν τὴν εὔκλειαν (Scyl., 159, 43–46).

[70] [ὁ Μανιάκης] εἶλε πόλεις Σικελικὰς τρισκαίδεκα (Ibid., 403, 28–29); ὁ γὰρ Μανιάκης αἱρῶν τὰς τῆς νήσου πόλεις ἀκροπόλεις ἐν αὐταῖς ᾠκοδόμει καὶ φρουροὺς ἐφίστα τοὺς ἱκανοὺς, ἵνα μὴ οἱ ἐγχώριοι δύναιντ' ἂν ἐξ ἐπιβουλῆς ἀνακτᾶσθαι τὰς πόλεις (Ibid., 406, 9–12).

[71] Rometta (Ibid., 403, 26); Troina as a plain in Sicily (Ibid., 403, 83); Palermo, mostly as Arab Sicilian headquarters (Ibid., 262, 20; 267, 58; 407, 43); or Messina (Ibid., 407, 23).

[72] There was also Lucania for some time, but it is so poorly documented that not much can be said about it, especially since it is not mentioned anywhere in the narrative sources (Von Falkenhausen, 1978, pp. 65–72).

[73] For a slightly different opinion on the position of Calabria in the Byzantine administrative system in Italy, see Loud (2000, pp. 30–31).

[74] Bisignano (Cecaumeno, 126, 18); Antea, Tropea and Santa Severina (Scyl., 160, 75–76).

[75] Scyl., 160, 69–77.

[76] Ibid., 403, 30; 407, 46.

its local population being no different from any other one living elsewhere in the Empire.[77]

All these Byzantine provinces are juxtaposed with one another, often written about together, but they did not all carry the same importance for the rest of Byzantium, nor were they viewed from the same perspective. This is evident from accounts of campaigns mounted under Basil I, who sent Leo Astypes, Procopius, and Nasar to Apulia and Calabria to fight against the Arabs from Sicily.[78] The passage describes Sicily as Arab territory, whose cities were subjected to pay taxes to the Arabs. When the Byzantines came, they sacked Sicily and seized much booty, in contrast to the two provinces in Italy, which were liberated by the Byzantine army from "barbarian hands" and where Byzantine authority was reinstated. This is why the fall of Sicily and Italy is very significant in realising their similarities and differences from the Byzantine perspective.

Sicily was conquered first, but the sources do not state explicitly when this happened. The story of Turmarchus Euphemius, who surrendered Sicily to the Arabs so he could be proclaimed emperor, only marks the beginning of the Arab conquest of Sicily and Italy during the reign of Michael II.[79] The texts do not specify any particular events marking the fall of Sicily; only the siege of Taormina in 902 is mentioned, without an explanation of its significance.[80] There are no mentions of the fall of Rometta in 964,[81] even though it is considered the final episode of the Arab conquest of Sicily (Von Falkenhausen, 1978, p. 30).[82] When describing George Maniaces's victory over the Arabs at Rometta during his attempt to retake the island, Scylitzes makes no allusion to the fall of the city some fifty years earlier[83] (despite his reference to the Battle of Cannae, which occurred about 1,200 years before, but not to the battle of 1018). Since Maniaces conquered "the whole island"[84] in the 1030s, everything that had happened in the 9th and 10th centuries would have been considered relatively temporary. The Byzantines only saw the fall of Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, in 878 as a turning point that eventually led to the Empire losing its biggest island.[85] The true loss of Sicily is linked to the

[77] Ibid., 264, 82; 265, 4–267–62; Scyl. Cont., 168, 19–21; 182, 86. The rebels fighting under Basilacius included Gregory Mesemerius, who came from an influential Byzantine family from Calabria; for more, see McGeer and Nesbitt (2020, p. 183) and Von Falkenhausen (1978, p. 155).

[78] Scyl., 155, 47–64.

[79] Ibid., 46, 35–74, 71.

[80] Ibid., 181, 91–21.

[81] Ibid., 267, 63–74.

[82] Loud (2000, p. 20) even considers the fall of Taormina was the end of Byzantine Sicily.

[83] Scyl., 403, 22–30.

[84] Ibid., 403, 29–30.

[85] Ibid., 262, 16–22. There is also a detailed account of how Syracuse fell (Ibid., 158, 26–160, 68).

tragic downfall of George Maniaces,[86] and the island was irreversibly lost when Catacalon Cecaumenus was forced to abandon Messina in 1042.[87]

After George Maniaces was removed from Italy and the Normans continued their conquest, the Byzantines shifted their focus from Sicily to the gradual loss of their Italian territories. The Norman conquest of Sicily, which occurred in the same century, is not mentioned by historians because Sicily was no longer part of the Empire at the time, and it was thus considered too distant. Sicily had been conquered by the Arabs, and the mentioned actions of Euphemius, characterised as *ἀποστασία*, *παρανομία* and *ἀπόνεια*, were viewed as such mainly because the Arabs were outsiders and Euphemius a usurper.[88] However, the Normans were seen as usurpers and *tyrants* in Byzantine Italy from the very beginning.

Even during the truce between Guiscard and Michael VII, when they became in-laws, Cecaumenus remarks that Guiscard *κατὰ συγχώρησιν Θεοῦ γεγονὼς τύραννος*,[89] highlighting the whole paradox of the Byzantine court attempting to legitimise a usurper through marriage as a form of *οἰκονομία*. At the end of the century, when Guiscard and Bohemond I waged war against Byzantium, there was no place for such an *oikonomia*. This policy was highly criticised later under Alexius I, especially the idea of marriage between the usurping Normans and the Byzantine imperial family.[90] Thus, we are given an account outlining the history of Norman-Byzantine relations only after 1085. The author of the *Scylitzes Continuatus* has no doubts that Guiscard "*τυραννικὸν ἔχων τὸ φρόνημα*"[91] and "*ἀποστασία μελετῶν*,"[92] and Scylitzes characterises the Norman rebellion in Apulia in 1041 using the verb *ἀποστατέω*,[93] when Byzantium started losing Italy.

Still, even *Scylitzes Continuatus* does not provide an account of how Bari fell in 1071, referencing only selectively the course of events that left Byzantium without Italy. This narrative suggests that there was a usurper in Italy, but its loss was not considered permanent at the time—this subject would not be addressed by historians until the next century. However, unlike Sicily, which is described in more detail, particularly through the recount about the career of George Maniaces (or Catacalon Cecaumenus, an important figure in Scylitzes's text), Italy did not receive as much attention before 1081–1085 for various reasons. The usurpers in Italy were still seen as threats that could be managed rather than fatal blows to the Empire's position in Italy. It was always preferable to write

[86] Ibid., 407, 45–47; Ata., 7, 1–8; Pselli Chron., VI 76, 12–13.
[87] Scyl,. 406, 16–407, 50.
[88] Ibid., 46, 35–47, 71.
[89] Cecaumeno, 126, 20.
[90] Scyl. Cont., 167, 4–170, 15.
[91] Ibid., 167, 17–18.
[92] Ibid., 168, 21.
[93] Scyl., 426, 23.

about the Byzantium's ability to reconquer a province, rather than recounting its loss immediately. This approach aligns with the narrative observed in the analysed texts, with Sicily certainly being a case in point.

Unlike Sicily, Italy could not be depicted as very distant and foreign. In Sicily, Maniaces's Battle at Rometta does not prompt any allusions to the earlier battle, while the new Battle of Cannae was an obvious reference to the Punic Wars. Even discussing the events of the same century, Scilitzes mentions Boioannes, whom Michael IV sent to Italy instead of Michael Docianus, because he reminded the emperor of another Boioannes, Basil, who had once brought "all of Italy up until Rome" under the imperial authority.[94] Although only about a decade separated these two figures, the earlier Boioannes had become so famous that we find a remark that he had even come as far as Rome (which is false, as he only extended imperial authority further north in Apulia). Again, it can be observed that nothing of greater significance for the Byzantines could be done in Italy if it did not include Rome as a referring point.

Italian and Sicilian Anecdotes

Lastly, we examine the extensive use of anecdotes concerning Italy and Sicily in the texts under consideration. Some passages provide merely raw data, such as names of Byzantine generals or governors, simple accounts of what and maybe where/when something took place etc. Often enough, we find picturesque stories that are based in (or are related to) these provinces. Scylitzes's narrative is full of such examples and from the beginning of the Arab conquest of Sicily, we have an interesting tale involving Euphemius who abducted a nun from a monastery and was subsequently beheaded by the Syracusan brothers while parading as emperor in front of the Sicilian capital.[95] There are various anecdotes in Scylitzes's *Synopsis* from the 9th and 10th centuries about supernatural phenomena in the Peloponnese following the fall of Syracuse, the extraordinary righteousness of a Byzantine general, or a friendship between a Longobard rebel and a Byzantine official.[96] In contrast, for the 11th century, it is difficult to determine if these stories are merely anecdotes or detailed accounts. Such a narrative is the story where the anonymous author of the *Scylitzes Continuatus* explains how Nicephorus Carantenus was defending Brindisi from the Normans.[97] This narrative lacks a moral point, and there is no divine intervention, nor are supernatural powers involved. Instead, the story focuses on the general's wit, a common theme in these texts.

[94] Ibid., 426, 37–41.

[95] Ibid., 46, 35–47, 68.

[96] Ibid., 158, 26–160, 68; 262, 28–263, 41; 263, 50–264, 70.

[97] Scyl. Cont., 169, 12–19.

Hence Cecaumenus's work helps us in placing Italy and Sicily on the map of Byzantine collective memory, as it is full of anecdotes from various parts of the Empire that had taken place in the 11th century. They usually concern Cecaumenus himself, as well as his ancestors from the Balkan and Eastern provinces. This is why his examples from the westernmost parts of Byzantium are particularly intriguing. If we exclude the tale of the father and son on Mount Etna, since it is too classicist,[98] Cecaumenus left us stories about Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily respectively.[99]

It is indicative that the Sicilian one, since it is from the 11th century, deals with Basil Pediates[100] from the time he was commanding in Sicily during the brief period between 1038 and 1042 when the Byzantines controlled parts of the island. This account is curious given that, as previously shown, the Byzantines considered Sicily foreign territory outside their interest if it was not a part of the Empire. Cecaumenus wrote this probably during the reign of Michael VII Ducas, long after they had lost the island and the Sicily was being occupied by the Normans, but the memory of a general who was wronged prevailed, despite Sicily no longer being part of Byzantium.

On the other hand, the two tales about Apulia and Calabria describe how the Normans deceived the local population to conquer their cities. Cecaumenus's narratives provides a glimpse into how the Normans and their conquest of Italy were penetrating the Byzantine collective memory during the delicate period of truce between the two parties. Italy and Sicily were still thought about, but now in the light of new circumstances that were taking place, while still following the canons of how the Byzantines were used to remember their former provinces in the first place.

Conclusion

Italy was most important being an Ancient Roman region closely related to Rome. However, although Italy kept its earlier prestige, both Rome and those parts that still belonged to Byzantium in the 11th century did not monopolise their claim on the Roman heritage in the eyes of Constantinopolitan Byzantines. Since the 4th century AD, Rome and Italy did not need to be Roman, because the first Christian emperor had moved the capital to the East (and its Romanness with it). Yet the charming position of (Roman) Italy was always present, and the Romans of the 11th century were keen to mention it often. Also, since in

[98] Cecaumeno, 194, 36–196, 9.

[99] Ibid., 114, 20–116, 20; 126, 28–128, 6; 92, 4–9.

[100] Basil Pediates is portrayed differently and rather negatively in other sources (Scyl., 406, 4–9).

their time it was already known as Longobardy, calling it "Italy" was a more classicist and Roman manner. It was an ambiguous term that could encompass Byzantines, Longobards, and it seemed that it would eventually mean Normans instead.[101] The Normans were the usurpers who became masters of Italy and the sources do not mention that they were also starting to seize Sicily. Sicily was no longer part of Byzantium but an Arab island. By itself, Sicily had no prestige; it was rich and famous, but not in any way crucial for the identity of the New Rome. Even Calabria as part of Italy in a wider sense, a Byzantine province like many others, did not find its own significance in our texts. Only *Ἰταλία* had appeal—but it was becoming home to the new usurpers of the Empire.

In every way, the incident, or better yet the *character* that personifies the fall of both Sicily and Italy is George Maniaces. His activities mark the final loss of Sicily for Byzantium, as well as the beginning of the Norman conquest of Italy that also left the Byzantines without "the most noble part of the Empire". The historians covered in this study were very cautious in their portrayal of contemporary events, at the time when Byzantium was gradually being pushed out of the Apennine Peninsula. The policies were still changing during the time these histories were being written, so different validations of the events that took place in the second half of the century can be found. In addition, the time distance between the historians and Maniaces made room for the writers to recount how they remembered the way in which Maniaces's fate and these provinces were interlinked.

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[101] For the later development of these themes and the appellation of Normans in Byzantine historiography, see Maisano (1978–1979).

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Најплеменитији део Царства: слика Италије и Сицилије у византијској историографији XI века

Резиме

Циљ рада је да прикаже како су византијски историчари XI века гледали на Италију и Сицилију. То је посебан тренутак у византијској историји јер је Царство тада остало без ових територија. Предмет истраживања је анализа историографских дела Михаила Псела, Кекавмена, Михаила Аталијата, Јована Скилице и *Скиличиног настављача* како би се дошло до перцепције какву су ови историчари имали о наведеним (тада већ) бившим византијским територијама. Последњи покушај повратка Сицилије, као и коначан губитак свих византијских упоришта у Италији, десио се управо у овом бурном веку за историју Византијског царства. Иако су Византинци били заокупљенији унутрашњим питањима и селџучким освајањима у источним провинцијама, посматрајући наше наративне изворе можемо да уочимо како и питање Италије и Сицилије и норманских освајања постаје нешто о чему ће се тек писати у XII веку, након што ове територије буду коначно изгубљене. У XI веку историчари су још увек били суздржани јер је и даље било неизвесно да ли су ти губици били сталног или привременог карактера. Међутим, циљ је видети и како се писало о најранијој прошлости, с обзиром на чињеницу да је Италија место где је настао стари Рим. Пошто су Византинци били Римљани, управо је важно како су Римљани XI века гледали на римску Италију. Италија је управо и била важна као колевка Рима и често када се Италија у наративима и спомиње, имплицира се и на стару престоницу Римског царства. Иако се види да је Рим увек задржао посебно место код Византинаца, он је виђен, пре свега, као ствар прошлости. Ни Рим ни они делови Италије који су били у византијским рукама нису држали монопол над римским наслеђем у очима Цариграђана. Још од IV века и времена

цара Константина Великог, Рим и Италија више нису били потребни да би неко био Римљанин, пошто је управо први хришћански цар преместио престоницу на Исток, где је уједно Цариград постао седиште римства. Ипак, посебан положај Италије никада није нестао и византијски историчари су умели често да га спомену или да Италију доведу у везу са старим Римом, односно да су Рим и Италија увек повезани. И сам назив *Ита̄лија* представљао је једну спону са Римом, док је вулгарнији облик за исту територију *Лангоба̄рдија* упућивао на оно неримско на Апенинском полуострву. Стога су *Ита̄лијани* били како Византинци тако и Лангобарди, а с обзиром на новонастале прилике у XI веку, постало је јасно да ће и тај термин постати заправо назив за нове господаре Италије – Нормане. Они су посматрани као узурпатори византијске Италије и то је оно о чему нам наши извори стидљиво говоре, док никако не спомињу норманско освајање Сицилије које је почело већ 1061. године. Разлог за то је што Сицилија у том тренутку није била византијска већ арабљанска територија, коју су Византинци нешто раније били заувек изгубили. Сицилија, иако богато и славно острво, није била од суштинске важности у свести Цариграда као Новог Рима. Чак ни Калабрија, византијска провинција на Апенинском полуострву попут многих других у Византији, није била у жижи интересовања наших историчара. Италија је једино због Рима могла имати већи значај, али је у овом периоду она постајала седиште нових узурпатора. Управо су због тога освајачи Италије и виђени као узурпатори, јер су Римљанима узимали ту важну територију. Византинци су губитак Сицилије и Италије гледали кроз дело византијског заповедника Георгија Манијакија, чија је војна експедиција, или само њено присуство (1038–1040, 1042), била последња нада да се сачува крајњи западни део Царства (како су то они перципирали). Након Манијакијевог пада, Сицилија је коначно изгубљена, а његов кратак боравак у Италији 1042. године коначно је наговестио норманско освајање Италије, које је оставило Византинце без „најплеменитијег дела Царства". Аутори наших историја били су опрезни при описивању савремених догађаја, док је Византија постепено била истискивана са Апенинског полуострва. Византијска италијанска политика мењала се са сваком сменом на престолу док су наши извори још били писани, тако да наилазимо на различите судове о збивањима из друге половине века. С друге стране, временска удаљеност је била довољно велика између историчара XI века и Георгија Манијакија, што је оставило простора да напишу како су они перципирали да су управо Манијакијева и судбина италијанских територија биле уско повезане.

Кључне речи: Византијска Италија и Сицилија; XI век; византијско-норманске односи; византијске историје.