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THE PORTRAYAL OF THE MALE FIGURE IN MICHAEL ATTALEIATES

Michael Attaleiates was no ordinary personality. Born in Attaleia – or, in the view of some scholars, in Constantinople¹ – around 1020², he studied law and subsequently pursued a brilliant career in the imperial administration. A high court judge³ and member of the Senate, he was showered with honours and titles such as *patrikios*, *anthypatos* and, in 1079, *magistros* and *proedros*. In his capacity as *krites tou stratopedou*, he accompanied the emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071) on his campaigns in Asia Minor⁴. Later, during the reign of Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078-1081), he played a substantial role in drawing up new legislation and was almost certainly a key figure behind the

1. E. Th. Tsolakis, *Aus dem Leben des Michael Attaleiates (seine Heimatstadt, sein Geburts- und Todesjahr)*, *BZ* 58 (1965), 3-10, esp. 5ff. Tsolakis' view was rejected by P. Lemerle (*Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin*, Paris 1972, 76 n. 8, 94ff.) though not by H. Hunger, who, however, has some reservations: *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 1, Munich 1978, 382. P. Gautier remains unconvinced (*La Diataxis de Michel Attaliat*, *REB* 39 [1981], 5-143, esp. 12), as also, more recently, M. Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz*, Vienna 1999, 258 n. 408.

2. See Gautier, *Diataxis*, 12, who does not agree with the view of Tsolakis (*Aus dem Leben*, 7-9) and Hunger (*Profane Literatur*, 1, 382), of a date around 1030-1035. Lemerle (*Cinq études*, op. cit.) had elsewhere disagreed with Tsolakis' view. Scholars also disagree about the precise date of the author's death; some suggest 1079 (Lemerle, *ibid.*; Gautier, *Diataxis*, 14-15) while others propose c. 1085 (Tsolakis, *Aus dem Leben*, 10; Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 1, 383). Cf. also E. Tsolakis, *Κάποια προβλήματα της «Διατάξεως» του Μιχαήλ Ατταλειάτη*, in: *Αφιέρωμα στον Εμμανουήλ Κριαρά*, Thessaloniki 1988, 29-36, who attempts, not wholly convincingly, to disprove Lemerle's views on the subject.

3. He was president of the court *tou velou* and of the *epi tou hippodromiou*, and also composed an elegant summary of the *Basilica* of Leo VI, known as the "Ponema nomikon" (P. E. Pieler, *Byzantinische Rechtsliteratur*, in: Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 2, Munich 1978, 465; N. van der Wal - J. H. A. Lokin, *Historiae iuris graeco-romani delineatio: les sources du droit byzantin de 300 à 1453*, Groningen 1985, 102).

4. See below, p. 225-226.

chrysobull promulgated by the emperor in 1079⁵. He acquired very substantial property in Constantinople, Rhaidestos and Selymbria, whose total value amounted to more than a *κεντηράριον* (i.e. 7.200-10.800 gold νομίσματα)⁶, while in his post as *charistikarios* he was responsible for the administration of monastic properties. In his *Diataxis*, apart from the *typikon* of the monastery of Christ the All-Merciful, which he founded in the imperial capital, and an almshouse in Rhaidestos, he provides an extensive account of how he acquired his wealth and of how this wealth was to be distributed, under the exclusive supervision of his family⁷, to the various foundations he had established.

While the *Diataxis* is a document of immense interest, particularly on account of its many autobiographical details⁸, as well as being the object of an impressive number of modern studies⁹, there can be little doubt that Attaleiates' *History*, covering events from 1034 to 1079/80, is his most important work¹⁰.

5. L. Burgmann, A law for emperors: observations on a chrysobull of Nikephoros III Botaneiates, in: P. Magdalino (ed.), *New Constantines*, Aldershot 1994, 247-257, esp. 253, 256. See also Angeliki E. Laiou, Law, Justice and the Byzantine Historians: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries, in: Angeliki E. Laiou – D. Simon (eds.), *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, Washington, D.C. 1994, 151-185, esp. 176ff., 180ff. Also J.-Cl. Cheynet, L'aristocratie byzantine (VIIIe-XIIIe s.), *Journal des Savants*, juillet-décembre 2000, 281-322, esp. 305 n. 96.

6. N. Oikonomides, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)*, Athens 1996, 189.

7. Lemerle (*Cinq études*, 111) expressed admiration for the way Attaleiates dealt with the matter.

8. See Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen in Byzanz*, passim, esp. 258ff., where the subject is examined and exhaustive bibliographical data provided.

9. The key studies on the text remain to this day those of Lemerle (*Cinq études*, 67-112) and Gautier (*La Diataxis*).

10. See also Hunger, *Profane Literature*, 1, 382-389, with bibliography, to which we should also add two important studies by Ja. N. Ljubarskij, O sostave istoričeskogo sočinenija Michaila Attaliata, *Vspomogatelnye istoričeskie discipliny* 23 (1991), 112-119 [= *Vizantijskie Istoriki i Pisateli*, St. Petersburg 1999, 222-229], and Michail Attaliat i Michail Psell, *Antičnaya drevnost' i srednie veka* 26 (1992), 92-102 [= *Vizantijskie Istoriki i Pisateli*, 212-221]. A Spanish translation of these two articles is published in *Erytheia* 11-12 (1990-1991), 49-54 and 16 (1995), 85-95 respectively. See also Lia Raffaella Cresci, Note esegetiche a Michele Psello e Michele Attaliata, *Civiltà Classica e Cristiana* 8 (1987), 209-217; eadem, Cadenze narrative e interpretazione critica nell'opera storica di Michele Attaliata, *REB* 49 (1991), 197-218 and, most importantly, eadem, Anticipazione e possibilità: moduli interpretativi della Storia di Michele Attaliata, in: R. Maisano (ed.), *Storia e tradizione culturale a Bisanzio fra XI e XII secolo*, Naples 1993, 71-96. Cf. also A. K. (azhdan), *ODB* 1, 229. Particularly useful, especially as regards our discussion here, is Fr. H. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates*, Munich 1971, 135-152, and G. Weiß, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos*, Munich 1973, passim, esp. 126ff. Fuller bibliographical details on Attaleiates are given below.

Krumbacher, it may be recalled, whose view of the eleventh century was not entirely favourable, devoted only a small section of his history of Byzantine literature to Attaleiates; however, he expresses admiration for Attaleiates' critical acumen and sense of fair judgment that can be seen to run through his text. Indeed, Krumbacher points out that Attaleiates' virtues as a historian are superior to those displayed in the panegyrics of Michael Psellos' *Chronography*¹¹ – although, it should be admitted, Krumbacher's analysis of Psellos is far from thorough¹². Krumbacher, however, does not attempt to explore the structure of Attaleiates' *History* or his narrative techniques.

Since, primarily, the 1960s, scholarship has generally held Attaleiates in higher esteem, granting him an increasingly luminous position among the constellation of Byzantine historical writers. Moreover, the lengthy, though, from the point of view of contemporary critical trends, somewhat static analysis offered by Hunger also serves to enhance the favourable view of Krumbacher regarding the status of Attaleiates in the Byzantine literary and historical tradition. Certain questions, however, remain to be answered, particularly with regard to the stylistic texture of the *History*. Given that the main purpose of the *History*, as we shall see, is to give a portrait of a single historical figure, i.e. the emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates¹³, it is hardly surprising that literary historians have wavered between ranking it as a kind of memoir (the work's biographical details are frequently drawn into discussions)¹⁴ or as a βασιλικὸς λόγος, i.e. an *enkōmion* governed by rhetorical rules established in late antiquity¹⁵. I would

11. K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, Munich 1897², 271.

12. *Ibid.*, 437-438.

13. See below, p. 218ff. E. Th. Tsolakís (Das Geschichtswerk des Michael Attaleiates und die Zeit seiner Abfassung, *Byzantion* 2 [1970], 251-268) has demonstrated that Attaleiates gathered material for his *History* long before Botaneiates became the lead player. Tsolakís' contention that Attaleiates completed his historical work during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) is not convincingly argued, as the passages which he quotes in support of his view are open to several interpretations. Hunger (*Profane Literatur*, 1, 383) expresses reservations about this dating; Kazhdan (A. Kazhdan – G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, Washington, D.C. 1982, 156-157) perhaps somewhat uncritically embraced Tsolakís' hypothesis, and proceeded to a number of other hasty conjectures regarding the relationship of Attaleiates with Alexios Komnenos.

14. Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 1, 387. See below, p. 220-221.

15. K. (azhdan), *ODB* 1, 229: "The *History* is a rhetorical panegyric of Nikephoros III". Elsewhere Kazhdan (*People and Power in Byzantium*, 137) has dubbed the work as "half-historical half-panegyric". Cf. also Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 1, 385, and Ja. Ljubarskij, *Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism. Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writings, Symbolae Osloenses* 73 (1998), 5-22, esp. 12-13. A number of useful observations are made by Lia Raffaella Cresci, *Osserva-*

venture to say that the second assessment is probably the more accurate: both Kazhdan¹⁶ and Amande¹⁷ pointed out Attaleiates' debt to age-old rhetorical models (for instance, those established by Pseudo-Menander) as well as to historical works written in accordance with similar principles (such as the *Life of Basil*).

On taking a closer look at the way in which Attaleiates presents his "hero" Botaneiates¹⁸, as well as considering his sources (which have yet to be thoroughly examined¹⁹), it becomes evident that Attaleiates was well versed in rhetorical techniques and was fully aware of the affinities linking rhetoric and historiography to political practice and the encomium²⁰. What is more, he had studied the majority of biographical and eulogistic texts in existence in his day on the life of Basil I (867-886) and the Macedonian dynasty, and particularly on the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969) whose great military family he considered an ideal model for the later emperor and his family. It is for this reason that he includes in his narrative a lengthy biographical digression on Nikephoros Phokas and his family (217-229, Bonn), whose origins are traced to the Roman house of Fabius (this information, he tells us [218], he found in an "old" book). He does not hesitate to inform us, in somewhat exaggerated tones, that the Botaneiates family was related by blood to the Phokas family (217)²¹.

zioni sui rapporti tra *ιστορία* e *ἐγκώμιον* nella storiografia bizantina, in: M.-Gabr. Angeli Bertinelli – L. Piccirilli (eds.), *Serta Historica Antiqua* 2 (1989), 287-305.

16. A. Kazhdan, The social views of Michael Attaleiates, in: A. Kazhdan – S. Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Cambridge-Paris 1984, 23-86.

17. Carlotta Amande, L'encomio di Niceforo Botaniates nell'*Historia* di Attaleiates: modelli, fonti, suggestioni letterarie, *Serta Historica Antiqua* 2 (1989), 265-286. Cf. also Ljubarskij, O sostave istoričeskogo sočinenija Michaila Attaliata, 114ff.

18. The term "hero", as used by some scholars, is apt: Laiou, Law, Justice and the Byzantine Historians, 176. On the hero-antihero motif in historical writings see Kazhdan, *People and Power in Byzantium*, 106ff., and Ja. N. Ljubarskij, Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos, *DOP* 46 (1992), 177-186 [= *Vizantijskie Istoriki i Pisateli*, 318-337], esp. 184ff. See also below, p. 230.

19. Hunger (*Profane Literatur*, 1, 383) gives only a brief treatment of the subject.

20. *Ibid.*, 1, 385. Particularly useful here are P. Magdalino's observations on the twelfth century in *The empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge 1995, 20, 336ff., 425ff.

21. A. Markopoulos, Zu den Biographien des Nikephoros Phokas, *JÖB* 38 (1988), 225-233, esp. 228-229; idem, Constantine the Great in Macedonian historiography: models and approaches, in: *New Constantines*, op. cit., 159-170, esp. 167-168. There can be little doubt that Botaneiates' family was of ancient pedigree: see J.-Cl. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)*, Paris 1990, 217 and n. 70. See also below, p. 220 and n. 29.

In my opinion it is almost certain that Attaleiates was acquainted with the second version of Symeon Logothetes' *Chronography*, which is also marked by a distinctly pro-Phokas stance²². Indeed, in much the same fashion as Logothetes, who devoted considerable space to the early deeds of the Phokas family on the historical stage, highlighting the martial prowess of Nikephoros "the Old" (grandfather of the late emperor), the emperor's father and the emperor himself²³, so too Attaleiates eulogizes the successes on the battlefield of both the grandfather of Botaneiates (also named Nikephoros) and the emperor's father Michael (229ff.)²⁴.

When we look more closely at the *History* it becomes increasingly clear that Attaleiates was concerned to write a text that was largely structured around a particular rhetorical mode, the *speculum principis*²⁵. The following passage is a good illustration of this, despite the fact that instead of the words ἀνδριᾶς or ἄγαλμα²⁶ our author uses the phrase ὑπόδειγμα κάλλιστον: τὸ δ' ἐπὶ τῷ Βοτανειᾷ-τῇ ἐν ταῖς τιμαῖς καὶ τοῖς τῶν δωρημάτων χαρίσμασι ... ἀνυποκρίτως ἐξαίρω, καὶ τοῦτο διὰ σπουδῆς πεποιῆμαι πᾶσι παραστήσαι κατὰδηλον, καὶ ταῖς μετέπειτα γενεαῖς δι' ἀναγνώσεως καὶ μνήμης ὡς ὑπόδειγμα κάλλιστον

22. This is the text edited by V. M. Istrin, *Khronika Georgija Amartola v drevnem slavjano-russkom perevod*, 2, Petrograd 1922, 1-65. See H. Grégoire, *La carrière du premier Nicéphore Phocas*, in: *Προσφορά εἰς Στυλωνα Π. Κυριακίδην*, Thessaloniki 1953, 232-254, esp. 240ff. Also A. Markopoulos, *Le témoignage du Vaticanus gr. 163 pour la période entre 945-963*, *Σύμμεικτα* 3 (1979), 83-119, and idem, *Sur les deux versions de la chronographie de Syméon Logothète*, *BZ* 76 (1983), 279-284, with relevant bibliography.

23. Istrin, *Khronika*, 20-22, 24, 28; Grégoire, *La carrière*, 250-252; cf. also Markopoulos, *Le témoignage*, 88, 94-100.

24. On Attaleiates' debt to Leo the Deacon see below, p. 221-223.

25. For a discussion of this genre of text see the extensive article of P. Hadot, *Fürstenspiegel*, *RAC* 8, col. 555-632; also Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 1, 157-165; I. Čičurov, *Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit in den byzantinischen Fürstenspiegel des 6.-9. Jahrhunderts*, in: L. Burgmann – Maria Theres Fögen – A. Schminck (eds.), *Cupido legum*, Frankfurt a.M. 1985, 33-45; idem, *Političeskaja ideologija srednevekov'ja. Vizantijska i Rus'*, Moscow 1990, passim, but esp. 67ff.; G. Prinzing, *Beobachtungen zur "integrierten" Fürstenspiegeln der Byzantiner*, *JÖB* 38 (1988), 1-31; P. A. Agapitos, *Ἡ εἰκόνα τοῦ αὐτοκράτορα Βασιλείου Α' στὴ φιλομακεδονικὴ γοημματολογία 867-959*, *Ἑλληνικά* 40 (1989), 285-322, esp. 311-312; A. Markopoulos, *Autour des Chapitres parénétiques de Basile Ier*, in: *Εὐψυχία. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, II, Paris 1998, 469-479. I remain unconvinced by the views recently put forward by G. Strano, *Considerazioni in merito alla datazione e all'attribuzione dei Capitoli Parenetici di Basilio I*, *Orpheus* 21 (2000), 141-163. Useful, though somewhat general, is the recent study by G. F. Dennis, *Imperial Panegyric: Rhetoric and Reality*, in: H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington, D.C. 1997, 131-140.

26. Cf. Agapitos, *Ἡ εἰκόνα*, 311.

ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι (282). This is a statement of intent on the part of the historian: Botaneiates will be held up as a model for emulation. A number of parallels are evident when we come to compare this passage with the observations of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (945-959) on his grandfather Basil I in the proemium of the *Life of Basil*²⁷, a work that is far from being a pure *speculum principis* (it has a distinctly historical texture – as in the case also of *Attaleiates*), in contrast to the laudatory chapters attributed to Basil I or the Letter of Photius to Boris/Michael, khan of the Bulgarians, which are characteristic examples of this rhetorical type. In the case of *Attaleiates*' text, the traditional motifs characteristic of the *speculum principis* can be seen to exist harmoniously alongside the rest of the narrative. Thus, beyond the model for emulation, *Attaleiates*' portrait of Botaneiates gives the reader the opportunity to follow, step by step, the regular techniques of the *encomiast*²⁸: the emperor is born of an illustrious family (229-230, 288)²⁹, he is a valiant warrior, compared even with Herakles (42, 56, 83-84, 235, 255-256 et al.)³⁰, benevolent and just (239, 293, 313, 314, 316 et al.), magnanimous (284, 304), charitable (294), pious (284, 319) and Christ-loving (320). He is also humble (236) and compassionate (305), generous (305)³¹ and mild (320, 321). In the historian's eyes, Botaneiates was divinely

27. ... καὶ τέως ἐνὸς βασιλέως (= Basil I) ... ἐξ ἀρχῆς καὶ μέχρις αὐτῆς τελευτῆς τὰς πράξεις καὶ τὴν ὅλην ἀγωγὴν διηγήσασθαι, ὥς ἂν καὶ τοῖς μετέπειτα μὴ ἀγνοῖται βασιλείου στελέχους ἐπὶ πολὺ τοῦ χρόνου παρεκταθέντος ἢ πρώτη πηγὴ καὶ ῥίζα, καὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις ἐκείνου οἴκοθεν εἴη ἀνεστῆκώς ὁ πρὸς ἀρετὴν κανὼν τε καὶ ἀνδριὰς καὶ τὸ ἀρχέτυπον τῆς μιμήσεως (*Life of Basil* 212, Bonn).

28. The list here supplements in large part the first attempt to set out the components of the encomium by Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 27-31. Kazhdan notes that *Attaleiates* idealizes Botaneiates. On this reading of the historian's attitude see below, p. 229-230. Kazhdan also wrote a shorter overview of *Attaleiates*, generally with regard to the encomium on Botaneiates: *The Aristocracy and the Imperial Ideal*, in: M. Angold (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy IX to XIII Centuries* [BAR International Series 221], (Oxford) 1984, 43-57, esp. 45-46.

29. This was an essential qualification for the emperor, particularly from the 11th century onwards; see above, p. 218-219. Cf. A. P. Kazhdan – Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1985, 110ff., 112ff.; A. P. Kazhdan – M. McCormick, *The Social World of the Byzantine Court*, in: *Byzantine Court Culture*, 167-197, esp. 168, with relevant bibliography. Despite Kazhdan's claims, the desirability of noble descent for the emperor is of older origins; see Markopoulos, *Constantine the Great*, 163-164. Cf. also Bojana Krsmanović, *Usporn vojnog plemstva u Vizantiji XI veka*, Belgrade 2001, 14-24.

30. Cf. Kazhdan – Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 112ff. This virtue will be discussed at greater length below.

31. The historian is ruthless with those who failed to show due gratitude. Characteristic in this respect are his comments on the blinding of the emperor Michael V Kalaphates and the novelis-

chosen (292) and for that reason enjoyed divine protection (282, 292-293, 295-296 et al.)³², while at the same time he was ever vigilant to ensure the good of his land (311-312). Lastly, we may add to this extensive list of virtues the emperor's zeal for study – just as had been observed of Basil I³³ – for which the historian used the words πολυϊστοῦ (312) and σοφός (315)³⁴.

Attaleiates is one of those writers who follows, with remarkable consistency, the tendency found in Byzantine literature of the second half of the tenth century onwards to focus increasingly on individual characters and to disengage itself from the simple descriptive techniques of the past, by which events were merely recorded and strung out along the narrational hanging line³⁵. For instance, just like Leo the Deacon before him, though with yet greater boldness, Attaleiates likes to insert his own comments concerning the events and historical figures he is describing, even penning words about himself in the first person³⁶. Primarily, however, Attaleiates adopts a biographical-encomiastic for-

simus Konstantinos (April 1042): καὶ συναποβάλλουσι τὰς ὄψεις τῇ βασιλείᾳ, καὶ μοναχικῇ παραδίδονται βιοτῇ, διγῆγμια γενόμενοι συσθρωπὸν τοῖς μετέπειτα, καὶ πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἐπανόρθωσης τῶν ἀγνωμονεῖν ἐθελόντων πρὸς τοὺς εὐεργετήσαντας (17). An interesting article on this subject was written by Maria Dora Spadaro, *Interferenze politiche dei devoti laici e religiosi nel sec. XI (1041-1057)*, *Orpheus* (1988), 238-281, esp. 245-263.

32. Although Fortune is allowed its role (293). On this point see also the similar references contained in the *Life of Basil* (218-219, 221-223, 223-225 et al.). It is worth mentioning that Attaleiates also speaks of favourable oracular texts relating to Botaneiates, on the basis of specific letters of the alphabet (293). The similarities with the corresponding acrostic – BEKΛΑΣ – produced by Photius, which links the future of the Macedonian dynasty with the family of Basil I, is patent. See A. Markopoulos, *An Anonymous Laudatory Poem in Honor of Basil I*, *DOP* 46 (1992), 225-232, esp. 227 and n. 32, with bibliography relating to the BEKΛΑΣ acrostic.

33. *Life of Basil*, 314-315. Basil I was virtually illiterate. See Agapitos, *Ἡ εἰκόνα*, 316-317 and 318-322, giving a list of Basil's virtues, which resemble those of Botaneiates to a remarkable degree, even if this is to be expected in view of the demands of the *speculum principis* genre.

34. At other points in the work Attaleiates remarks that Botaneiates was particularly wealthy (185, 213). It should be borne in mind that the somewhat generalising account of the princely virtues outlined in Kazhdan – Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 110-119, are not entirely supported by the sources.

35. On this new tendency see A. Kazhdan, *Der Mensch in der byzantinischen Literaturgeschichte*, *JÖB* 28 (1979), 1-21 [= *Authors and Texts in Byzantium*, Aldershot 1993, II]; R. Scott, *The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography*, in: Margaret Mullett – R. Scott (eds.), *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, Birmingham 1981, 61-74; Kazhdan – Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 104ff., 220ff. See also below, p. 222.

36. See Ja. Ljubarskij, 'Writers intrusion' in early Byzantine Literature, *XVIIIe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Rapports pléniers*, Moscow 1991, 433-456, esp. 441ff. (= *Vizantijskie*

mat for his historical narrative, in similar fashion to the authors of the *Theophanes Continuatus*, Genesios and Leo the Deacon before him, as well as to his contemporary Michael Psellos³⁷. None of these writers follows a very rigidly applied technique in his historical work. However, there can be little doubt that the aim of these texts was both biographical and laudatory: the historical narrative is built around the person or persons that comprise the focus of the historian's interest.

In attempting to delineate this technique with greater precision it is useful to draw a structural contrast between Attaleiates and his contemporary Psellos³⁸. Psellos tends to present his protagonists, much like actors, as moving within the confines of the imperial palace, while he himself also co-stars in various scenes³⁹. Attaleiates, however, chooses a single individual, Botaneiates, and doggedly watches every step of his rise to the throne, virtually compelling the reader to embrace his own point of view.

The rhetorical and genre-based choices of Attaleiates are interesting for a further reason. The categorization that he tries to impose on his characters, the

Istoriki i Pisateli, 338-354). See also Ruth Macrides, *The Historian in the History, Φυλέλλην. Studies in Honour of Robert Browning*, Venice 1996, 205-224, esp. 206ff., 209-210.

37. On the new structure of historical narrative that emerged in this period see P. J. Alexander, *Secular Biography at Byzantium*, *Speculum* 15 (1940), 194-209 [= *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire*, London 1978, I]; R. J. H. Jenkins, *The Classical Background of the Scriptores post Theophanem*, *DOP* 8 (1954), 13-30 [= *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th Centuries*, London 1970, IV]; Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, I, 339ff., 351ff.; Markopoulos, *Sur les deux versions*, passim; idem, *Constantine the Great*, 159-170; Agapitos, 'Η εἰκόνα, passim; Ja. N. Ljubarskij, *Prodolžatel' Feofana, Zizneopisanie vizantijskih čarej*, St. Petersburg 1992, 201-265; idem, *Man in Byzantine Historiography from John Malalas to Michael Psellos*, *DOP* 46 (1992), 177-186 [= *Vizantijskie Istoriki i Pisateli*, 318-337]; cf. also idem, *New Trends in the Study of Byzantine Historiography*, *DOP* 47 (1993), 131-138 [= *Vizantijskie Istoriki i Pisateli*, 308-317]. Useful in parts is the article by G. Strano, *Alcune notazioni su retorica e politica nel mito della dinastia Macedone*, *RSBN* 33 (1996) [= 1997], 31-44. See also Nike-Catherine Koutrakou, *La propagande impériale byzantine. Persuasion et réaction (VIIIe-Xe siècles)*, Athens 1994, 157-159 and passim. On Leo the Deacon see A. Markopoulos, *Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου στὸν Λέοντα τὸν Διάκονο*, in: *Ενθύμησις Νικολάου Μ. Παναγιωτόκη*, Heraklio 2000, 475-493, and on Psellos (with regard to our subject here) Ja. N. Ljubarskij, *Michail Psell. Ličnost i tvorčestvo*, Moscow 1978.

38. See Ja. N. Ljubarskij, *Istoričeskij geroj v "Hronografii" Mihaila Psella*, *Viz. Vrem.* 33 (1972), 92-114. These views are repeated in large part in idem, *Michail Psell*, 175ff. Particularly useful is also idem, *Writers intrusion*, 442ff.

39. See, for instance, the scene of the blinding of Michael V, which has been analysed perceptively by A. Dyck, *Psellus tragicus: Observations on Chronographia* 5, 26ff., *BF* 20 (1994), 269-290.

vast majority of whom are male⁴⁰ – women make an appearance only five or six times throughout the entire work and the historian either declines to subject them to any kind of judgment at all, or merely scoffs at them⁴¹ –, enables us to consider the *History* from the point of view of gender⁴². Attaleiates' choice of subject – much along the same lines as Leo the Deacon⁴³ – consists almost exclusively of the martial exploits of the key military figures whose ultimate aim is to seize the throne. The reader, of course, has already been alerted in the prologue to the fact that Botaneiates is by far the most eminent of the contenders, and that he will be the one to prevail in the end. However, this does not seem to deter the author, who succeeds in constructing his narrative in such a way that the various threads linking the characters in his historical drama are stitched tightly together, though his final intentions are never hidden from sight. Throughout, Attaleiates remains true to a basic notion of masculinity⁴⁴, i.e. soldiering, above and beyond all other aspects of the male gender⁴⁵. It is no

40. Kazhdan (Der Mensch, 11) first formulated the axiom that Byzantine literature was written "vor Menschen, für Menschen und über Menschen". On the male presence in Byzantine historiography see Ljubarskij, *Man in Byzantine Historiography*, which, unfortunately, does not examine the case of Attaleiates. Ljubarskij's debt to Kazdan's theory of the "homo byzantinus" are clear to detect. See below, n. 45. The theoretical text of Karen Hagemann – S. Dudink (Masculinity as Practice and Representation, in: *Proceedings. 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences*, Oslo 2000, 283-298, esp. 283-286) offers a present-day approach to the issue.

41. Kazhdan's opinion (*People and Power in Byzantium*, 112) that woman is only a "shadowy figure" in the historical writings of the 10th century, is highly appropriate in the case of Attaleiates. For a brief treatment of the Byzantine family in the period in question, and the low status of women in the family, see Kazhdan – Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 99ff., which discusses a significant passage from the historian. Attitudes appear to have been similar in the West at this time; see, for instance, Vern L. Bullough, *On Being a Male in the Middle Ages*, in: Clare A. Lees et alii (eds.), *Medieval Masculinities*, Minneapolis-London 1994, 31-45, esp. 42.

42. The secondary literature on the subject of gender in Byzantium is somewhat limited in quantity; see the note in my article Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου, 481 n. 18. The collective work published recently by Liz James (ed.), *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, London-New York 1997, includes interesting material. The latest article by E. N. Papaioannou, Michael Psellos' rhetorical gender, *BMGS* 24 (2000), 133-146, looks at the issue from a different angle. The best introduction to the subject remains J. Scott, *Gender: a useful category of historical analysis*, *American Historical Review* 91 (1986), 1053-1075.

43. Markopoulos, Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου, 481-482.

44. Note the adverb ἀνδρικώτερον used by Attaleiates (14, 225).

45. Elsewhere (Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου, 487 n. 31 [488]) I have noted that the secondary literature on the male sex in Byzantine studies is virtually non-existent. Ch. Barber (*Homo Byzantinus? Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, 185-199) is particularly interesting,

accident therefore that the characters who are the prime players in the action of the *History* are all military figures: George Maniakes, Leo Tornikes, Vatatzes, Michael IV Stratiotikos, Nikephoros Bryennios, the family of Botaneiates⁴⁶, the Armenian Khataturios, Romanos IV Diogenes, Isaac and Constantine Komnenos, and others besides. It is significant also that the author's criticism of the leadership of the Empire focuses principally on the handling of military affairs (such as indifference for the proper equipping of the military forces, the payment of soldiers wages, and the organization of the upper ranks of the army). Emperors who were originally associated with the military, such as Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055) who defeated the Russians, but later chose to abandon the life of the battlefield in order to devote themselves to civil administration did not always meet with the unqualified approval of Attaleiates⁴⁷, despite Michael Angold's assertions⁴⁸. This is a point we shall come back to.

Hegemonic masculinity⁴⁹, as portrayed in Attaleiates' writings, appears in a variety of forms. He sets out a package of criteria against which his leading characters can be judged: principally, of course, military expertise, though also conduct during peacetime⁵⁰, including administrative ability, family background (in the case of the emperor: Botaneiates' forebears are compared with those of Bryennios, with a clear verdict in favour of the former [288])⁵¹, his sense of

although many of its conclusions do not conform with the earlier views of Kazhdan (*People and Power in Byzantium*, passim) on the essence of the term *homo byzantinus*. The introduction by Lees to *Medieval Masculinities*, xv-xxv, is especially useful. The underlying meaning of masculinity and its military paraphernalia in Western Europe, which frequently presents parallels with the Byzantine phenomenon as examined here is dealt with in detail by M. Bennet, *Military Masculinity in England and Northern France c. 1050 – c. 1225*, in: D. M. Hadley (ed.), *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, London-New York 1999, 71-88. The same work contains an excellent bibliographical essay on the subject of masculinity by Hadley, 256-272. The article by Bullough (*On Being a Male in the Middle Ages*, passim) is also very useful. For a general treatment of the subject see D. Vance Smith, *Body Doubles: Producing the Masculine Corpus*, in: J. J. Cohen – B. Wheeler (eds.), *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, New York-London 2000, 3-19. See below, p. 224-225.

46. Attaleiates shows little admiration for the military families, with the exception of course of that of Botaneiates and the Phokas clan (Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 66).

47. Kazhdan (*ibid.*, 32-33) assesses this differently in part. See below, p. 229-230.

48. M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204. A Political History*, London 1984, 36ff.

49. The term was coined by R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Cambridge, 1995. Cf. also J. Tosh, *What should historians do with masculinity?*, *History Workshop Journal* 38 (1994), 179-202.

50. Cf. also Bennet, *Military Masculinity*, 73ff., 79-80 and passim.

51. Cresci (Cadenze narrative, 200-218) gives a detailed analysis of the differences marking Attaleiates' account of Botaneiates and Bryennios.

justice, which will be looked at below⁵², or even the simple appearance or presence of the character on the historical stage. Attaleiates moves carefully within this evaluative framework, as confirmed by the two male figures to whom he grants pride of place in his narrative: Nikephoros Botaneiates and Romanos Diogenes. He stresses the aristocratic pedigree of both⁵³ and, following in the footsteps of Leo the Deacon⁵⁴, gives an impressive description of their physical and moral qualities (282 and 320-321 in the case of the former⁵⁵ and 99 in the case of the latter⁵⁶, plus a superb critical note at another point [179]), thus making them stand apart from the other historical characters in the narrative, although he is careful to make it clear that the two emperors are not on entirely the same levels⁵⁷. In the case of Botaneiates, whose only failing in the eyes of the historian (and judge) seems to be a degree of avarice (322)⁵⁸ – this, however, can hardly be seen as very serious in the face of the weaknesses and vices of the other characters in his narrative – the course of events seems only to point to success and the author takes pains to make sure that the “awkward” moments that crop up in various phases of Botaneiates’ career are explained to the emperor’s best advantage (39-43, 83, 238, 266-267 et al.), while some of his actions, which could be interpreted unfavourably, are quietly suppressed⁵⁹.

Attaleiates greatly admired the efforts of Romanos Diogenes to rebuild the Byzantine army of, principally, Asia Minor, and his exemplary valour, which he demonstrated on the battlefield on many occasions, as well as at the Battle of Mantzikert⁶⁰ when he was abandoned by his generals Joseph Trachaniotes (who

52. See below, p. 226ff.

53. On Botaneiates see above, p. 220-221. Attaleiates is very discrete when it comes to Romanos, as pointed out by Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 36.

54. Markopoulos, *Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου*, 482 and n. 20.

55. Botaneiates was by divine creation (*ἐκ θείας πλαστοουργίας*) endowed with an impressive physique (282). The other virtues are chiefly of a moral kind.

56. Beautiful eyes combined with a dark and ruddy colour, a sweet expression and other, spiritual virtues.

57. Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 31, 36.

58. Cf. Tsolakis, *Das Geschichtswerk des Michael Attaleiates*, 264.

59. For instance, his third marriage, with Maria Alane. See Angeliki Laiou, *Imperial Marriages and Their Critics in the Eleventh Century: The Case of Skylitzes*, *DOP* 46 (1992), 165-176, esp. 173-175.

60. Attaleiates account is by far the best source that we possess for this battle. For a recent analysis, see Sp. Vryonis, Jr., *A Personal History of the History of the Battle of Mantzikert*, in: St. Lampakis (ed.), *Η βυζαντινή Μικρά Ασία (6ος-12ος αι.)*, Athens 1998, 225-244, esp. 230ff.

fled the field “basely”[158]) and Andronikos Doukas⁶¹. On the other hand, he does not fail to stress the emperor’s administrative failings by suggesting that Romanos made the wrong choices with regard to his closest aides, who constantly undermined his authority (160, 167-168). Attaleiates criticises the emperor for failing to take into account the unfavourable omens, particularly before the Battle of Mantzikert (143, 144-145, 153 et al.), while Romanos is also found guilty of having been slow to make certain crucial decisions, as well as being unstable⁶². Despite this, however, the historian’s respect for Romanos is manifested by means of an impressively crafted character-description (ἡθοιοῦτα) – an unusual rhetorical feature for a historical text –, which introduces the reader to the tragic scene (loaded with many classical references) of the emperor’s blinding (178)⁶³. Romanos’ blinding, it should be recalled, was not carried out by a regular executioner (Attaleiates mentions a variety of such characters in his work), but rather by a “coarse” Jew, or so the historian informs us⁶⁴.

Attaleiates has been praised by virtually all commentators for the judicial fairness of his historical account⁶⁵. In language that is strongly coloured by his

61. The study by E. Th. Tsolakīs (‘Ο Μιχαὴλ Ἀταλειάτης ὡς κριτικὸς τῶν ἐπιχειρήσεων καὶ τῆς τακτικῆς τοῦ πολέμου, *Βυζαντινά* 1 [1969], 187-204) is particularly useful with regard to this subject.

62. Cf. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 139-140; Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 36. Modern commentators do not agree wholly with the somewhat severe assessment of Attaleiates; see J. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1204*, London 1999, 222. Attaleiates himself has his reservations about attributing the outcome of the battle to the ineffable will of God (150). On this subject see Lia Raffaella Cresci, “Strategia” umana e intervento divino nella storiografia bizantina, *Civiltà Classica e Cristiana* 11 (1990), 183-202, esp. 197 and passim.

63. Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 1, 384.

64. We should not fail to mention at this point the captivity of Romanos Diogenes in the camp of Alp Arslan after his defeat at Mantzikert. The behaviour and discussions of the two men, as reconstructed by Attaleiates (164-166), serve to highlight principally the personality of Alp Arslan, who appears to behave in exemplary fashion as a victorious ruler towards his vanquished royal adversary, particularly when one reads Romanos, rather than the ruler of the Seljuks, is the one who favours the use of torture. Again, Attaleiates at this point appears to be following in the footsteps of Leo the Deacon, who eulogized Svjatoslav, prince of the Rus (Markopoulos, *Ζητήματα κοινωνικοῦ φύλου*, 486-487). See also the most recent study by Sp. Vryonis, Jr., *The Greek and Arabic Sources on the Eight Day Captivity of the Emperor Romanos IV in the Camp of the Sultan Alp Arslan after the Battle of Mantzikert*, in: Claudia Sode – Sarolta Takács (eds.), *Novum Millenium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck*, Aldershot 2001, 439-450.

65. See Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 41-43 (the summary assessment of Kazhdan that, for Attaleiates, “justice is above all the protection of private property” [43] is surely an exaggeration), and above all Laiou (Law, Justice and the Byzantine Historians, 176-181) who

legal background⁶⁶, he expresses the opinion that justice is a supreme virtue in a prince, especially when combined with an efficient administration, provided, of course, that it is dispensed in accordance with the law⁶⁷. It is no coincidence that the reign of Michael VII (1071-1078)⁶⁸, the successor of Romanos Diogenes, is presented in such a way that while the historian describes the dire consequences of an unjust act and the tragic development of the Empire's affairs he is also preparing us, even through the device of prophecy (211), for the arrival of the person who was to deliver the Empire of its incompetent leadership (212-213)⁶⁹. The arrival of Botaneiates on the scene, which is strongly reminiscent of the rise to power of Basil I as described in the *Life of Basil* (253ff.) and *Genesios* (76ff. Lesmueller-Werner/Thurn), enjoys the protection of the Holy Trinity (274, 292-293) and is greeted jubilantly by marked visual imagery (the procession from Nicaea to Constantinople [271-273] and his reception by a host of ships on the Bosphorus: ἡ δὲ θάλαττα πᾶσα κατεδενδροῦτο τοῖς πλοίοις, καὶ ἔμμεῖτο ἀγρὸν παντοίοις δένδροις συνηρεφῇ κατάκομον [273])⁷⁰. It is worth pointing out that according to Attaleiates the transfer of power from Michael VII to Botaneiates was conducted smoothly ὥστε μὴδὲ ῥίνα τινὸς αἵματος γενέσθαι διάβροχον (271); the hint here at what had occurred a few years earlier with Romanos Diogenes and Michael VII is more than clear⁷¹.

Attaleiates' narrative attachment to two imperial personages carries a cost when it comes to treatment of other male figures that played a role in events during this period. George Maniakes holds a relatively high place in the cast list of the *History* and Attaleiates is not shy to lavish words of praise on him (18-19), stressing that his death was the work of the divine will (19)⁷². He is also favou-

looks at the subject from a broad perspective, tending to maintain a distance from the views of Kazhdan. Cf. P. Magdalino, *Die Jurisprudenz als Komponente der byzantinischen Gelehrtenkultur des 12. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Cupido legum*, 169-177, esp. 176.

66. Laiou, *Law, Justice and the Byzantine Historians*, 177.

67. *Ibid.*, 176, 178 and *passim*, giving a careful analysis of the last chapters of the *History* (312ff.), where Botaneiates as legislator is presented and even compared favourably with the earlier Leo VI "the Wise" (312).

68. Michael was characterised aptly by Kazhdan (*The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 36) as the real anti-hero of the *History*.

69. *Ibid.*, 36-37.

70. See Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 84-85.

71. Cf. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 140ff.

72. Cf. Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 63. Also Cresci, *Anticipazione e possibilità*, 72-73. On Maniakes see the recent study by Bojana Krsmanović – Al. Loma, Georgije Manijakis, ime Γουδέλιος i Pselova "skitska autonomija", *ZRVI* 36 (1997), 233-263.

rable in his assessment of Isaac I Komnenos (1057-1059) (55 et seq., 60 et al.)⁷³, the Norman mercenary Rousselios (i.e. Roussel de Bailleul), described as *τηλικούτον στρατιώτην καὶ στρατηγόν* (207)⁷⁴, and the two brothers and members of the Komnenos family, Isaac (183-184) and Alexios (later emperor Alexios I, 1081-1118), who stamped out the rebellion led by Nikephoros Bryennios (junior)⁷⁵ and Nikephoros Basilakes (199, 289 et seq.) against Botaneiates. At the other extreme are certain military figures whose distinguishing qualities were principally arrogance: Leo Tornikes, who receives no praise (23, 24, 27 et al.)⁷⁶, Nikephoros Bryennios (events after his blinding present a number of similarities with the description of Romanos Diogenes, although pity is plainly absent (292)⁷⁷, as also in the case of the blinding of Nikephoros Basilakes [300])⁷⁸, and the Doukas family whose members are rated as worthless generals and incompetent rulers (76, 86-87, 180 et seq., 209 et seq., et al.).

It should come as little surprise that Attaleiates, a historian of the eleventh century with unswerving masculine values and a conservative social outlook, should view eunuchs with distaste⁷⁹. His disparaging remarks on eunuchs are neither frequent nor especially virulent, and he makes no comments regarding the sexual inferiority of such individuals, in contrast to Leo the Deacon⁸⁰. Attaleiates' negative stance towards them is embodied above all in his conviction – widely held in his day – that one cannot possibly trust eunuchs (38), and that any particular aptitude they may display, if acknowledged at all, constitutes an exception to the rule⁸¹. It follows that the governance of the Empire by eunuchs,

73. I share the view of Laiou (Law, Justice and the Byzantine Historians, 177 and n. 77) as regards Kazhdan's interpretation (The social views of Michael Attaleiates, 33-34) of Attaleiates' criticism of Isaac.

74. Tinnefeld (*Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 142-143) has researched the encomium.

75. Attaleiates also portrays the older Bryennios in a somewhat unfavourable light (53-54).

76. This did not prevent him from giving a favourable assessment of Ioannes Vatatzes, who accompanied Tornikes. See also Kazhdan, The social views of Michael Attaleiates, 63.

77. See Cresci, *Anticipazione e possibilità*, 82-83; and Kazhdan, *ibid.*, 65.

78. Kazhdan (*ibid.*) considers that Attaleiates takes a more critical view of Bryennios than of Basilakes. A careful reading of the *History*, however, provides little evidence for this opinion.

79. Hunger, *Profane Literatur*, 1, 385.

80. See Markopoulos, *Ζητήματα κοινωνικού φύλου*, 490ff., with up-to-date bibliography on eunuchs, to which we should also add Kazhdan – Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 67, 69-70.

81. As, for instance, in the case of Ioannes, bishop of Side: *ὑπὲρ εὐνοῦχον (εἶχε) τὴν ἀγαθότητα καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ τὸ μελίχρον καὶ τὸ σωστικόν καὶ τὸ εὐπρόσωπον* (180). Attaleiates subtly places the appearance Nikephorizes immediately after this (*δεινὸς ἐπινοῆσαι καὶ ῥάψαι πράγματα*

a phenomenon observed during the period of the empress Theodora (1055-1056), deserved little commendation (51-52). In the case of the eunuch Nikephoritzes, he was unfortunate in that he administered the state's affairs during the reign of Michael VII (180 et seq., et passim): the historian, therefore, had reasons in plenty to be particularly critical of him⁸².

To conclude: Attaleiates' *History*, a carefully wrought account stamped by literary and rhetorical learning, appears almost to overstate the role of the male figure in the second half of the eleventh century: Nikephoros Botaneiates, an emperor of considerable stature and military ability, is the key personality, though surrounded by a multitude of other able men such as Romanos Diogenes, as well as less able men such as Michael VII Doukas. In seeking to explain the reasons for this somewhat one-sided approach to the personalities of his age I think we need to turn our attention to the period of Constantine Monomachos. We are well informed, particularly thanks to the ebullient assessment of Ioannes Mauropous, of the radical changes that took place in the state machinery of the day, as Monomachos doffed his martial dress to take on the garb of administrator and – somewhat contrary to constitutional practice and tradition – worked reform through his bureaucracy rather than via his military structures⁸³. In part thanks to his thorough knowledge of the judiciary, Attaleiates was well acquainted with the workings of the imperial administrative machinery: nevertheless, he appears to have never resigned himself to the model of statecraft that was largely followed by the successors of Monomachos, whereby the military and the lands of Asia Minor gradually took second place to the needs of the central administration⁸⁴. The return to the soldier-emperor – a constant

... σκαῖός ... διαβολεύς καὶ σοφιστής, 180-181), so that the reader understands immediately that Ioannes is an exceptional character among eunuchs.

82. Cf. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 140-142, and Kazhdan, *The social views of Michael Attaleiates*, 55-57.

83. See J. Lefort, *Rhétorique et politique: trois discours de Jean Mauropous en 1047*, *TM* 6 (1976), 265-303, whose conclusions with regard to the subject have received wide acceptance from scholars. Cf. A. Karpozilos, *Συμβολή στη μελέτη τοῦ βίου καὶ τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ Ἰωάννη Μαυρόποδος*, Ioannina 1982, 28ff. and Krsmanović, *Uspon vojnog plemstva u Vizantiji XI veka*, 245-250 and passim.

84. There is a passage in the *History* that is particularly illuminating in this respect, which gives a negative assessment of the reign of Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067): ἐπώθησε δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπέκεινα τήν τε τῶν δημοσίων χρημάτων ἐπαύξῃσιν ... καὶ τοῦτοις τὴν μείζονα φροντίδα κατεκένου τῆς βασιλείας, τῶν ἄλλων ἦττον βασιλικῶν ἀντεχόμενος, στρατιωτικῶν φημί καὶ στρατηγικῶν πλεονεκτημάτων καὶ τῆς ἐντεῦθεν εὐδοξίας, τοῖς εἰρημίοις πολιτικοῖς εὐδοκμεῖν προαφρούμενος. διὰ δὲ ταῦτα καὶ συσκοφαντικαῖς ἐπιθρειαῖς καὶ σοφιστικαῖς μεθόδοις καὶ δικανικῶν προ-

Roman ideal through the ages⁸⁵ – was for Attaleiates a matter of paramount importance founded on an ideological basis⁸⁶, and should not be seen as motivated by purely personal economic interest, as Kazhdan would have us believe in describing Attaleiates as an unpredictable encomiast of Botaneiates⁸⁷. This may explain the high regard that Attaleiates had for military figures such as George Maniakes and Romanos Diogenes, who, it may be noted, did not take measures to protect individual property (an observation that seems to contradict the system of values that Kazhdan outlined) and attempted to restructure the state along the lines favoured by Attaleiates, as well as, of course, for the emperor Botaneiates in whose care the historian believed the Byzantine state would flourish. The *History*, sporting the literary garb of a *speculum principis*, underlines the great expectations that the historian had for the new emperor, who would lead the Byzantine state away from the standards of the Doukas dynasty, bringing new life to the political landscape of the country. Quite how justified these highly subjective views⁸⁸ in fact turned out to be is another matter.

βλημάτων ἐσιμῶ καὶ σεκρετικῶν ζητημάτων ἐπιπολαῖς τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν ἐκλονεῖτο, καὶ κοινὴ μελέτη τοῖς ἅπασιν τὸ κατορθῶσαι τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐγένετο ... (76). See P. Magdalino, *Justice and Finance in the Byzantine State, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries*, in: *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, 93-115, esp. 94ff.

85. Cf. Cheynet, *L'aristocratie byzantine*, 284-285, 288-289 and *passim*.

86. It may be noted that Psellos also approved of the soldier-emperor. See A. Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*, Leiden-Boston-Cologne 1999, 183 n. 369.

87. The social views of Michael Attaleiates, *passim*, esp. 84-86.

88. On subjectivity in historical writing see A. Kazhdan, *L'Histoire de Cantacuzène en tant qu'œuvre littéraire*, *Byz* 50 (1980), 279-335, esp. 323ff. [= *Authors and Texts in Byzantium*, Aldershot 1993, XVI]. A special study devoted to the subject would be most welcome.