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THEODORE II LASCARIS AS CO-EMPEROR: REALITY AND MISAPPREHENSIONS IN BYZANTINE HISTORIOGRAPHY*

This article consists of two main parts. The first part quotes, once again, relevant sources for Theodore II Lascaris' status as co-emperor and discusses some of Theodore II's activities as co-ruler. The second part deals with the testimonies of three Byzantine historians: George Acropolites, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras, who provide us with different information concerning Theodore II Lascaris as co-emperor. While Acropolites refers to Theodore II as *basileus* even before he actually came to the throne, Pachymeres and Gregoras claim that Theodore II was never his father's co-ruler. Thus, it is the aim of this study to offer an explanation for the differences in the testimonies of the mentioned historians.

Keywords: Theodore II Lascaris, George Acropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, co-emperor

The title of this paper points to the fact that an event, which in reality happened, can be omitted from a historian's work, in most cases, deliberately, which subsequently results in confusion in the works of his successors. A misapprehension created by the first author, whose aim was to, out of his own bias, move silently over certain facts, makes other historians his "partners in crime," who, on their own accord, reshape this lack of information and use it in the way that best suits their own stories. The case of Theodore II's title as co-emperor is one of the examples how reality can be concealed and later on, misinterpreted.

In order to better perceive all the problems concerning Theodore II's status as a co-ruler, we have divided the paper into two parts; first part analyzes the sources that undoubtedly point to Theodore's status, whereas the second part deals with misapprehensions in Byzantine historiography related to this matter.

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Although Byzantine historians differ concerning this matter (as will be shown in the second part of the article), some other sources from the period of John III Vatazes' reign (1221 – 1254)¹ refer to Theodore II as *basileuj* before 1254, which clearly points to his status as a co-ruler.² Thanks to the research of Ruth Macrides, who has already examined all of these sources, we can say with certainty that Theodore II was his father's co-ruler.³ This was by no means an exception, for it is known that the emperors of Nicea proclaimed co-emperors and that this practice was not abandoned during the period of "exile", as some scholars thought.⁴ Before we deal with the relevant sources concerning Theodore II's title, a brief survey of the proclamation of co-emperors in the Nicean Empire, before Theodore's accession, should be presented.⁵

According to the Tomos signed by the patriarch Michael Autoreianos (1206 – 1212) and his prelates and issued between 1208 and 1211, Theodore I Lascaris (1205–1221) had an official co-ruler, his son Nicholas.⁶ The text of the document points to that fact: "Whence we, the clergy, having found that first blood relatives of our mighty and holy emperor, than the magnates and the rest of the archons and after them all the officials and soldiers and all the inhabitants of cities and villages of the Roman Empire have confirmed with oaths their clear and pure faith and favorable disposition towards our mighty and holy emperor and towards the much-beloved son of his mighty and holy Empire, *emperor* kyr Nicholas (...kai. ton peripoqhton uion thj krataiaj kai. agiaj autou/ basileiaj, basileu ku' Niko|aon...), we have judged it necessary to produce in writing the goodwill and submission that we have towards our mighty and holy emperor and our holy empress and towards the heir and successor of their Empire, the much-beloved son of our holy emperor and empress, *emperor* kyr Nicholas (kai. ton klhronomon kai. diadocon thj basileiaj autwh, ton peripoqhton uion thj agiaj autwh basileiaj, ton basileu ku' Niko|aon...)." ⁷ There is no doubt

¹ On the year 1221 as the year of John's accession to the throne cf. George Acropolites, *The History*, translated with an introduction and commentary by R. Macrides, Oxford University Press 2007, 160, n. 1 (= Macrides, *The History*).

² According to the already established practice, co-emperors held the title of *basileuj* and they were referred to as such in the official documents. Cf. G. Ostrogorsky, *Urum-Despotes. Die Anfänge des Despoteswürde in Byzanz*, BZ 44 (1951) 459 (= Ostrogorsky, *Urum-Despotes*); G. Ostrogorski, *Sacarovanje u srednjovekovnoj Vizantiji*, Sabrana dela III, Beograd 1970, 180–191 (= Ostrogorski, *Sacarovanje*). In the time of the Palaiologan dynasty, co-emperors gained much more authority. B. Ferjančić, *Savladarstvo u doba Paleologa*, ŽRVI 24–25 (1986) 307–384 (= Ferjančić, *Savladarstvo*).

³ Cf. Macrides, *The History*, 39–40.

⁴ Ostrogorski, *Sacarovanje* 182. On the co-emperors in the Nicean period cf. A. Cristofilopoulou, *Eklogh, anagoreusij kai, steyij tou buzantinou, autokratoroj*, Aqna 1956, 169–185 (= Cristofilopoulou, *Eklogh*); P. I. Zavoronkov, *Izbranije i koronacija nikejskih imperatorov*, VV 49 (1988) 55–59 (= Zavoronkov, *Izbranije*).

⁵ The question of co-emperors in Byzantium has so far been thoroughly discussed by the scholars. Cf. F. Dölger, *Das byzantinische Mitkaisertum in den Urkunden*, BZ 36 (1936), 123–145; Cristofilopoulou, *Eklogh*; Ostrogorski, *Sacarovanje*, 180–191; A. Cristofilopoulou, *H antibasileia eij to Buzantio*, Aqna 1970. On this institution in the Palaiologan period cf. Ferjančić, *Savladarstvo*, 307–384.

⁶ It is the document by which the patriarch and the Church, as well as the magnates, military and people swore allegiance to the emperor Theodore I Lascaris, to his wife, the empress Anna, and to their son and successor, Nicholas. N. Oikonomides, *Cinque actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autoreianos*, REB 25 (1967) 121–124 (= Oikonomides, *Cinque actes*).

⁷ Oikonomides, *Cinque actes*, 123. 7–18.

that Nicholas, although still a child, was proclaimed co-emperor, since he is called *basileus*. His proclamation probably took place sometime before 1208.⁸ Since sources do not provide us with more information, not many things can be said about Nicholas. All we know is that he died young and never actually came to the throne.⁹

Theodore I was succeeded by his son-in-law, John III Doukas Vatatzes, of whose accession to the throne we read the following: "...he departed life (Theodore I – remark of the author), leaving his imperial office to his son-in-law, John Doukas, for he did not have a male child who had reached manhood."¹⁰ There is no mention in the sources that John III ever held the title of co-emperor. As it seems, John III was *protobestiarius*¹¹ and was never even honored with the title of *despotes*, which would be expected for the heir presumptive.¹² Theodore I himself was honored with that title by the emperor Alexios III Angelos, upon his marriage with the emperor's daughter Anna and upon the death of Alexios Palaiologos, husband of Alexios' eldest daughter, Eirene, who also held the same title.¹³

John III Vatatzes ruled for 33 years (1221–1254) and was succeeded by his only son, Theodore II Lascaris. As we have already mentioned, the question whether or not Theodore II held the title of co-emperor has brought to the discrepancy in the testimonies of the sources that give an account of the history of the Nicean Empire. Though Byzantine historiography has posed many problems to the modern scholars, we can conclude, thanks to some other sources of the period in question, that Theodore II was in reality his father's co-ruler.

The sources that undoubtedly point to this fact are the letters of Theodore II, Acropolites' verse introduction to Theodore's collection of letters, Acropolites' *epitafios* for John III Vatatzes,¹⁴ an oration of Jacob, the archbishop of Ochrid, written for the emperor John III Vatatzes and a testimony of Aubry of Three Fountains

⁸ *Ibidem*, 143–144.

⁹ Acropolites is very brief and inaccurate when it comes to Theodore I's offspring. He mentions just one son of Theodore I and Anna, not stating his name, when he explains why John III succeeded his father-in-law, Theodore I. For more information on Theodore's offspring cf. *Macrides*, *The History*, 157, 158–159, n. 7.

¹⁰ Translation by *Macrides*, *The History*, 157. Cf. Georgii Acropolitae, *Opera I*, ed. *A. Heisenberg*, repr. with corrections P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978, 31. 10–13 (=Acropolites, *Opera I*); Theodore Skoutariotes, *Sunoyij cronikh*, ed. *K. N. Sathas*, *Messaiwnikh. Bibl iohqkh* 7, Paris 1894, 465. 27–30 (=Skoutariotes, *Sunoyij cronikh*).

¹¹ *Macrides*, *The History*, 148, 150, n. 4. Acropolites, *Opera I*, 26. 20–22; *R. Guiland*, *Fonctions et dignités des Eunuques*, *REB* 2 (1944) 213.

¹² On the title of John III cf. *Macrides*, *The History*, 150, n. 4, 158, n. 6. It seems that John III was the only Nicean emperor who wasn't a co-ruler, since it is supposed that John IV Lascaris was also proclaimed co-emperor. Cf. *Macrides*, *The History*, 338, n. 11. On the title of despots cf. *Ostrogorsky*, *Urum-Despotes*, 449–460; *R. Guiland*, *Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin*, *REB* 17 (1959) 52–80; *B. Ferjančić*, *Despoti u Vizantiji i južnoslovenskim zemljama*, Beograd 1960; *A. Failler*, *Les insignes et la signature de despote*, *REB* 40 (1982) 171–186.

¹³ Acropolites, *Opera I*, 10.17; *Macrides*, *The History*, 118, n. 3; *Ostrogorsky*, *Urum-Despotes*, 458–459. On Alexios Palaiologos' title of despot cf. Acropolites, *Opera I*, 9.1–2; *Macrides*, *The History*, 116, n. 5.

¹⁴ This source will be analyzed in the second part of the article.

that the Latins of Constantinople made a contract with Kaliman, as well as John III and Theodore II.¹⁵

The letters of Theodore II represent an important source for his co-imperial title. In some of the letters he wrote before his accession to the throne, Theodore II used the expression *h̄ basilēia mou*, employed by the emperors, co-emperors, and despots in the official documents.¹⁶ In a letter to the metropolitan of Ephesos, Nikephoros, for example, Theodore used the expression *h̄ basilēia mou*, saying that: “My Majesty (*h̄ basilēia mou*) foresaw your letter to my mighty and holy lord and emperor...”¹⁷ It is clear from this passage that the emperor John, “mighty and holy lord and emperor” was still alive at the time when Theodore wrote this letter, so it can be concluded that, since there is no evidence in the sources that Theodore II held the title of despot, he used this phrase as a co-ruler of his father.

Another of Theodore’s letters to the metropolitan Nikephoros is especially interesting. In short, the letter deals with the request of Nikephoros Blemmydes to restore certain property to the monastery of Saint George Thaumaturgos, near Ephesos, whose hegoumenos Blemmydes was from 1241 to 1248.¹⁸ For this reason Blemmydes turned to Theodore II, who, in return, wrote to the metropolitan of Ephesos, concerning this matter. At the end of the letter, Theodore writes that his Majesty’s *prostagma* should be issued for the monastery, so the monastery would have confirmation of his just decision of the matter.¹⁹

As can be seen from the text, Theodore II issued a *prostagma* concerning this request of Blemmydes. In the *regesta* of imperial documents made by F. Dölger, we also find the description of this document of Theodore’s, which hasn’t been preserved as such, but only in the form of the mentioned letter.²⁰ As is known, co-emperors could issue some documents of lesser value (like *prostagma*), always referring to the charters of the official emperors concerning the same matter, which would precede the issuance of their own documents. In this letter, however, Theodore II does not refer to the document of John III Vatatzes, which, according to this practice, should have preceded Theodore II’s *prostagma*. In Dölger’s *regesta* there is no description of any such document of John III Vatatzes, which could be associated with Theodore’s letter. Thus, it can be discussed whether the charter of John III for the Monastery of Saint George Thaumaturgos has been lost or has never even existed, which would point to the fact that Theodore II acted on his own in this case. Whether or not this may suggest

¹⁵ R. Macrides has already pointed out all the relevant sources that speak in favor of Theodore’s status, but we shall also pay attention to them in this paper. Cf. *Macrides, The History*, 39–40. Cf. also *D. Angelov, Imperial ideology and political thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330*, Cambridge University Press 2007, 117, n. 7 (= *Angelov, Imperial ideology*).

¹⁶ Cf. Theodori Ducae Lascaris *Epistulae* CCXVII, ed. *N. Festa*, Firenze 1898, XXV, 35. 4; CVI, 146. 21 (= *Festa, Epistulae*).

¹⁷ *Festa, Epistulae*, CVII, 148.17–149.1.

¹⁸ On the dating of the letter cf. *F. Dölger, Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches*, 3. Teil, *Regesten von 1204–1282*, München und Berlin 1932, No 1823, 25 (= *Dölger, Regesten*, III).

¹⁹ *Festa, Epistulae*, CVII, 147–148.

²⁰ *Dölger, Regesten*, III, No 1823, 25.

greater authority of the co-emperor, even before the period of the Palaiologoi, remains open for further research and discussion.²¹

Another letter of Theodore II, which can be brought in connection to Dölger's regesta was written to the metropolitan of Philadelphia, Phocas, in 1254.²² Theodore II is writing to Phocas, for the latter has not given his consent for the establishment of the monk Antonios at the head of the monastery of the venerable Virgin tou/ Kouzina/ As it seems, Theodore II once again acted as emperor, replacing his father, who was very ill at that time.²³ As is the case with the previous letter, there are no details that can throw some light on Theodore II's authorities and his activities as co-emperor. Byzantine historiography is silent on these particular issues, especially George Acropolites, of whom we might expect more details concerning these matters, for it is usually in the historiographical genre that stories of emperor's gifts and patronage over certain monasteries and churches are recorded.²⁴

Among the remaining sources that mention Theodore II as basileuj one finds the verse introduction of Theodore's letters, written by Acropolites between 1246 and 1254.²⁵ Acropolites praises Theodore and his writings: "...the letters... of the emperor and lord Theodore Lascaris, son of the all-famous John..."²⁶ Apart from this, one also finds an oration of the archbishop of Ochrid, Jacob, written for the emperor John III Vatatzes.²⁷ The oration was produced shortly after emperor's victory on Rhodes in 1249/1250 and it mentions his son as co-emperor. While praising the emperor John's virtues, Jacob states that emperor's biggest fortune was that he was blessed in his goodly race of children (...proj toutoij eupaidia, thj eudaimonij o kolofwn...). Continuing his comparison of John III as sunlight beneath which shines a perfect, bright light,²⁸ Jacob calls Theodore: "...a God given good (to qeodwrhton agaon), of father-teeming beauty, an image similar to his archetype, great Theodore grown in purple, a proclaimed emperor (o basileuj anakhrucqejj) among the greatest of the Romans, who truly holds the scepter."²⁹ Jacob's logoj proswfhhtikoj is actually

²¹ It is known that, in the epoch of the Palaiologoi, co-emperors obtained much more authority than they had in the earlier periods. Cf. *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo*, 307–383; *Dölger*, *Regesten*, III, No 1994, 60–61. However, the issuance of the documents in which the co-emperors acted independently has not been recorded before the time of Michael IX Palaiologos. Cf. *B. Ferjančić*, *Mihajlo IX Paleolog (1277–1320)*, *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta XII-1 (1974)* 354 (= *Ferjančić*, *Mihajlo IX*).

²² *Festa*, *Epistulae*, CXVI, 162–163; *Dölger*, *Regesten*, III, No 1823a, 25.

²³ On the illness of John III cf. Acropolites, *Opera* I, 101–103; Nicephori Gregorae, *Byzantina Historia*, cura *L. Schopeni*, Vol. I, Bonnae 1829, 49–51 (= Gregoras, I). It is also known that Theodore II replaced his father when he received the envoy from the Hohenstaufen court, which shall be discussed in the second part of the article.

²⁴ The character of Acropolites' historical work will be discussed further on in the text.

²⁵ On the dating of Acropolites' introduction cf. *Macrides*, *The History*, 9–10, n. 40 and 41.

²⁶ Georgii Acropolitae, *Opera* II, ed. *A Heisenberg*, with corrections by P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978, 8. 1–4. (= Acropolites, *Opera* II).

²⁷ *Tou/ autou/ logoj proswfhhtikoj ejj ton autokratora ton agion himw/ auqenthn kai. basilea ku{rin} iwannhn ton Doukan* published in: *G. Mercati*, *Collectanea byzantina*, Vol. I, Bari 1970, 81–93 (= *Mercati*, *Collectanea* I). On Jacob, the archbishop of Ochrid cf. *Ibidem*, 99–113.

²⁸ On the comparison of the Nicean emperors with the Sun cf. *Angelov*, *Imperial ideology*, 80. For the rhetoric on the Nicean emperors in general cf. *N. Radošević*, *Nikejski carevi u savremenom im retorici*, *ZRVI* 26 (1987) 69–86.

²⁹ *Mercati*, *Collectanea* I, 91. 9–16.

the only source that uses the word *anakhrušsw*, which is an undoubted proof of Theodore's status as co-emperor.

The already mentioned testimony of Aubry of Three Fountains about the contract between the Latins of Constantinople and Kaliman, John III and Theodore II also testifies to the fact that Theodore II was considered to be co-emperor; otherwise he would not have been mentioned as one of the persons with whom an official contract was concluded.³⁰

All of the sources here mentioned testify without a doubt that John III proclaimed his son co-emperor.³¹ It is, however, in the historical works of George Acropolites, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras that we find opposing information that have created real confusion in the modern historiography.

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Historical works of George Acropolites, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras have left us (Pachymeres less than the other two historians) information on Theodore II's reign, though the judgment they've passed on the emperor and his rule differed greatly.³² This has also led to the differences in testimonies of the three historians concerning some important aspects of Theodore's rule – Theodore II's status as co-emperor. Whereas George Acropolites refers to Theodore II as *basileuj* even before he actually came to the throne, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras, on the other hand, explicitly say that Theodore II wasn't a co-emperor. Three historians, however, do not differ in one regard – not one of them mentions the actual event of Theodore II's proclamation, which could explain why Pachymeres and Gregoras, who relied on Acropolites' work, missed the fact that Theodore II occupied this position.

The historical work of George Acropolites, *Cronikh. suggrafh*, provides us information concerning Theodore's imperial title, which, as it seems, was closely connected to his marriage with the daughter of John II Asan. Acropolites relates the episode of the treaty between John III Vatatzes and the Bulgarian emperor, John II Asan, which was sealed by the betrothal and later marriage of the two imperial children,³³

³⁰ The text of this source has not been available for this paper. Cf. *Macrides*, *The History*, 39.

³¹ M. Angold has expressed an opinion that Theodore II was never officially proclaimed co-emperor, but was referred to as such and was given certain imperial authority by his father. Cf. *M. Angold*, *A Byzantine Government in exile. Government and Society under the Lascaris of Nicea (1204 – 1261)*, Oxford University Press 1975, 42.

³² Acropolites, *Opera* I, 104–154; Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, édition, traduction et notes par *A. Failler*, traduction française par *V. Laurent*, Paris 1984, 36–62 (= Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I); Gregoras, I, 52–75. In his *Chronicle*, Theodore Skoutariotes also described Theodore II's reign, passing a positive judgment on the emperor, unlike G. Acropolites, whose historical work Skoutariotes relied on. Cf. Skoutariotes, *Sunoyij crōnikh*, 506–534. For secondary literature on Theodore II cf. *J. B. Pappadopoulos*, *Théodore II Lascaris, empereur de Nicée*, Paris 1908 (= *Pappadopoulos*, *Théodore II Lascaris*); *A. Gardner*, *The Lascaris of Nicea. The story of an empire in exile*, Amsterdam 1964; *Angelov*, *Imperial ideology*, 204–252.

³³ According to Acropolites, both Theodore and Helen were very young when they were married to each other. Theodore was 11 and Helen only 9 years old. Acropolites, *Opera* I, 48. 21–24, 52. 11.

set in the year 1234/1235.³⁴ After the treaty had been made, the two rulers met at Kallipolis and: “The emperor John took Asan’s wife and daughter Helen, and made the crossing to Lampsakos, where empress Eirene was, and they concluded the union of the children with the patriarch Germanos officiating at the holy service.”³⁵ Acropolites continues his story about Theodore and Helen in the following chapter: “Since his son Theodore was not yet of age (for he had completed his eleventh year, as we said, when he was joined to the *empress* Helen in the communion of marriage),³⁶ the union remained unconsummated, but they were raised and educated by the empress Eirene as she had a good nature and was of a kindly disposition.”³⁷ Discussing the affairs of the Latins, whose actions were reduced, which, according to John II, made the treaty between the two emperors no longer important, Acropolites continues his narrative: “Asan, regretting his treaty with the emperor John, it seems, sought a way to separate his daughter from her husband the *emperor* Theodore and to marry her to another.”³⁸ This is the first mention of Theodore II as emperor in Acropolites’ work. According to this, as well as to the fact that Acropolites referred to Helen as *basilij*, the title which was used to designate the co-empress,³⁹ one can say without a doubt that Acropolites knew Theodore was a co-emperor. Acropolites, as we have already mentioned, does not describe the actual ceremony of his proclamation, as though it was of no interest to him. However, since he refers to Theodore II as emperor, Acropolites informs his readers that this was the case.

If we examine the type of information Acropolites provides in his work, we find that it is mostly matters of war that interest him.⁴⁰ Though a historian, of whom we might expect more information concerning this type of events (since historians usually include stories of proclamation and coronation of young emperor’s in their work), Acropolites is not very informative about these issues. That is also the case with Theodore I’s son, Nicholas, who, as we have mentioned, was proclaimed emperor. Acropolites does not mention his proclamation at all, nor does he even mention his name, when he relates why John III succeeded his father-in-law.⁴¹ This

³⁴ On the treaty between the two rulers cf. *G. Cankova-Petkova*, Griechisch-bulgarsiche Bündnisse in den Jahren 1235 und 1246, BB 3 (1969) 54–61 (= *Cankova-Petkova*, Griechisch-bulgarsiche Bündnisse). On the joint actions of the two emperors cf. *J. S. Langdon*, The Forgotten Byzantino – Bulgarian Assault and Siege of Constantinople, 1235 – 1236, and the Breakup of the *entente cordiale* between John III Ducas Vatatzes and John II Asen in 1236 as Background to the Genesis of the Hohenstaufen – Vatatzes Alliance of 1242, *Byzantine Studies in Honor of Milton V. Anastos*, Buzantina kai, Metabuzantina 4, ed. by S. Vryonis, Malibu 1985, 105–135.

³⁵ Acropolites, Opera I, 50. 21–25; translation by *Macrides*, The History, 194. Whether it was just the betrothal and not exactly a marriage union Acropolites referred to was discussed by *Macrides*, The History, 196, n. 6.

³⁶ ...”hnikā th| basilidi Elenh| proj gamou koinwnian øzeugnuto...” Acropolites, Opera I, 52. 11–12.

³⁷ Acropolites, Opera I, 52. 12–15; translation by *Macrides*, The History, 197.

³⁸ Acropolites, Opera I, 52. 20–24; translation by *Macrides*, The History, 197.

³⁹ *Ferjančić*, Savladarstvo, 311.

⁴⁰ Even though Acropolites mostly relates about the campaigns of the emperors, when it comes to some joint actions of John III Vatatzes and John II Asan against the Latins in Constantinople, Acropolites is once again silent. There is no doubt that his bias and undoubted preference of the Palaiologoi are at work in this case. On these actions of John III Vatatzes and John II Asan cf. Langdon’s text quoted in n. 34.

⁴¹ Acropolites, Opera I, 31. 11–17. Acropolites is not precise when it comes to the children of Theodore I, as we have already mentioned.

may be explained by the simple fact that Acropolites came to Nicea in 1233,⁴² during the reign of John III, when both Theodore I and his son Nicholas were long dead, so he might have easily missed the fact that was of no special interest either to him or to his narrative. However, when it comes to the omission of Theodore II's proclamation as co-emperor, we cannot be satisfied with the explanation that would suggest a simple, non-deliberate omission of the fact, as could have been the case with Nicholas Lascaris. Acropolites' *ēpitaḑioj* for John III Vatatzes proves that he knew Theodore II had the imperial title. The reason for the omission of Theodore II's proclamation should, thus, be sought in the character of the work and the purpose of its author. If one takes into account that Acropolites' historical work is the history of Michael VIII Palaiologos' rise to power, written to eulogize him and thus, abase the Lascarids, especially Theodore II, it becomes clear that none of the information which could have exalted the Lascarids and which could have, therefore, hurt the image of Michael VIII as a rightful emperor, were to be provided in his historical work.⁴³ It must also be born in mind that Acropolites wrote his work after the recapture of Constantinople, probably in the 1260s,⁴⁴ at which time Michael VIII was working on the elimination of the rightful claimant to the throne, Theodore II's son, John IV Lascaris, and on the proclamation of his eldest son, Andronikos II Palaiologos, as co-emperor.⁴⁵

One of the questions that poses itself is when Theodore II actually became *basileuj*? The mention of Theodore II with this title in Acropolites' historical work indicates that the event took place in 1234/1235 the latest. If we look at Acropolites' narrative again, we can come to the conclusion that Theodore II's union with Helen preceded his actual proclamation as co-emperor. The course of the narrative, as it seems, points to that fact – Theodore is first mentioned without the imperial title, and then, after the story of his union with Helen, Acropolites mentions him with the imperial title.⁴⁶ However, Acropolites' *ēpitaḑioj* for John III Vatatzes might point to a different conclusion.⁴⁷

While lamenting over the dead emperor, Acropolites asks the crowd: “Do you not see, spectators, that same emperor (Theodore II – remark of the author), son of that one (John III – remark of the author)? Isn't he this one over here? Is he not at all like him in bodily figure and spiritually? Isn't he his living image, isn't he his original figure? Has he not ruled with his father *from birth* (*οὐ τῷ πατρὶ. συνῆρκεν ἐκ γενεθῆς*),

⁴² *Macrides*, *The History*, 35.

⁴³ On Acropolites' historical work cf. *H. Hunger*, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, erster Band, München 1978, 442–447 (= *Hunger*, *Die Literatur*, I); *R. Macrides*, *The thirteenth century in Byzantine historical writing, Porphyrogenita. Essays on the history and literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in honor of Julian Chrysostomides*, eds. C. Dendrinos et alii, Aldershot 2003, 63–76; *R. Macrides*, *George Acropolites' rhetoric, Rhetoric in Byzantium*, ed. E. Jeffreys, Aldershot 2003, 201–211; *Macrides*, *The History*, 5–34.

⁴⁴ *Macrides*, *The History*, 31–34.

⁴⁵ *R. Macrides*, *The New Constantines and the New Constantinople – 1261?*, *BMGS* 6 (1980) 13–41; *A. Failler*, *La proclamation impériale de Michel VIII et d'Andronic II*, *REB* 44 (1986) 237–251 (= *Failler*, *La proclamation*); *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo*, 314–315.

⁴⁶ A similar thing occurred with the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos, whose ceremony of coronation as co-emperor was celebrated one year after his marriage to Anna of Hungary. Cf. *Georges Pachymères*, *Relations historiques*, II, édition et notes par *A. Failler*, traduction française par *V. Laurent*, Paris 1984, 413 (= *Pachymères*, *Relations historiques*, II); *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo*, 316.

⁴⁷ Acropolites, *Opera* II, 12–29.

did he not hold the helms together with the commander of this worldly ship...?⁴⁸ If, according to this account of Acropolites, Theodore II ruled jointly with his father from birth, when could his proclamation as co-emperor have taken place?

If we go back to the beginning of John III Vatatzes' reign, more precisely, to the battle of Poimananon (1223/1224) we might find the political reason that could have instigated John III to show to his subjects that it was his lineage of the Lascaris family, and that of his son, that would continue ruling the Empire and not the one of his enemies. Beside the Latin threat, John III had to deal with the rebellious brothers of Theodore I Lascaris, Alexios and Isaac, who thought themselves more worthy of throne for they were the late emperor's brothers. They took part in the battle on the side of the Latins. The Latins were defeated and the Lascarid brothers were captured and blinded.⁴⁹ Thus, after a successful clash with his enemies, John III might have proclaimed Theodore II co-emperor in order to secure the throne for himself and his son.⁵⁰ Theodore II would then have been only two years old, since it is known that he was born in the same year in which his father came to the throne (1221).⁵¹

However, none of the sources here mentioned can provide us with an argument that would support our thesis. Acropolites' historical work does not tell us anything about the actual event of proclamation of Theodore II, nor does his *ἑπιτάφιοι*, which mentions John's battle at Poimananon and the rebellion of the two Lascarid brothers.⁵² Thus, we can only hypothesize, without any actual proof, whether it was after that event that Theodore II obtained his title. Since John's son is introduced into Acropolites' *Cronikh. suggrafh*, as *basileuj* at the time of his union with Helen we can conclude that the year 1234/1235 is the latest chronological point for Theodore's proclamation. The ceremony of his proclamation might well have succeeded the marriage ceremony, but, unfortunately, we do not possess any information that would act as a definite argument concerning this matter.⁵³ There can be no question about the coronation ceremony of Theodore II as a co-ruler, since sources do not point to otherwise.⁵⁴

Acropolites' *Cronikh. suggrafh*, does not mention Theodore II very often before his actual coming to the throne. Thus, we possess very little information concerning his activities as co-emperor. We learn from Acropolites, for example, that Theodore was left to reside in the region of Pegai, on the Sea of Marmara, when John

⁴⁸ Acropolites, *Opera* II, 26. 9–15.

⁴⁹ Acropolites, *Opera* I, 34–35; Skoutariotes, *Sunoyij cronikh*, 469.

⁵⁰ As we have already mentioned, John III Vatatzes was not proclaimed co-emperor, nor was he even a despot, during the reign of Theodore I. Acropolites says that Theodore I designated him as his heir, as it seems, not much before his death. Cf. p. 11, n. 3; *Žavoronkov*, *Izbranije*, 56.

⁵¹ Acropolites, *Opera* I, 104. 22–23; *Macrides*, *The History*, 276, n. 24.

⁵² Acropolites, *Opera* II, 16. We could pose a similar question when it comes to yet another plot against the emperor John in 1224/1225, which was led by the member of one of the most prominent Byzantine families, Andronikos Nestongos. On the plot cf. Acropolites, *Opera* I, 36–38; *Macrides*, *The History*, 169–170.

⁵³ Compared to the period of the Palaiologoi, for which we have a very detailed description of the ceremony of proclamation and coronation of an emperor, we are left in the dark on this particular issue for the Nicean period.

⁵⁴ A view has been expressed by *Žavoronkov* that there was no coronation ceremony for co-emperors in the Nicean Empire. Cf. *Žavoronkov*, *Izbranije*, 59.

III went on an expedition to try to conquer Thessaloniki in 1241.⁵⁵ We learn, on the other hand, nothing about his activities concerning the issuance of the documents we have mentioned above. Acropolites also omits an important episode concerning the mission of marquis Berthold von Hohenburg, who came to the Nicean court in the spring of 1254 to discuss the renewal of the alliance between John III and the Hohenstaufen family.⁵⁶ As Emperor John III was very ill at that time, it was Theodore II who negotiated with the marquis, which we learn from some of Theodore's letters.⁵⁷ Taking this into consideration, as well as the fact that Acropolites' work is the history of Michael VIII, it can be said that Acropolites' account of the reign of the Lascarids has been carefully structured and presented in the way that suited its author and "his" emperor the most. The omission of any mention of Theodore's proclamation as co-emperor can therefore be understood as a deliberate lapse of the author, who, out of his personal animosity towards Theodore II, as well as out of the purpose of his work, passed silently over an important event for the Lascarid dynasty.⁵⁸

Contrary to Acropolites' negative depiction of the Lascarids, historian George Pachymeres portrays these emperors positively and writes about them with great respect.⁵⁹

The historical work of George Pachymeres begins with a short exposé in which he mentions that the rulers, who have reigned before his time managed the affairs of the state steadfastly and with great prudence.⁶⁰ He does not narrate about the rules of Theodore I, John III and Theodore II for his own ignorance of the exact details of their reigns and for the fact that the others have already done it before him.⁶¹ However, Pachymeres continues his story criticizing the policy of Michael VIII (though he does not mention him explicitly) which resulted in abandoning and thus, weakening the Eastern frontier.⁶² Finishing his account on the Eastern frontier with the incursion of the Persians into the Byzantine territory, Pachymeres begins his actual narrative with Theodore II Lascaris and the affairs of Michael Palaiologos, who was suspected of aspiring to the throne.⁶³ Pachymeres does not say that Michael was guilty of

⁵⁵ Acropolites, *Opera* I, 65–67; *Macrides*, *The History*, 215–220.

⁵⁶ It is a well-known fact that John III had very good relations with the emperor Frederic II Hohenstaufen, and that he was married to his illegitimate daughter, Constance, in Byzantium known as Anna. After Frederic's death, Conrad IV succeeded the throne, but his brother, Manfred, the king of Sicily, wanted to seize the power for himself, trying to win the help of the Nicean Empire. It was Conrad IV, however, who sent his envoys, led by Berthold von Hohenburg, in order to win the confidence of John III for his cause and to renew the alliance with the Lascarids. Cf. *Pappadopoulos*, *Théodore II Lascaris*, 50–53.

⁵⁷ *Festa*, *Epistulae*, CLXXX, 230–231.

⁵⁸ It should be mentioned that Acropolites, unlike Pachymeres who refers to John IV Lascaris as emperor when he introduces him in the narrative, which could mean that he was also a co-emperor, does not refer to him like that at all. Cf. *Macrides*, *The History*, 338, n. 11.

⁵⁹ On Pachymeres' praise of the Lascarids and his criticism of the Palaiologoi cf. *Angelov*, *Imperial ideology*, 269–280.

⁶⁰ Pachymèrès, *Relations historiques*, I, 25. 23–24.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 27. 14–17. *Ibidem*, 26, n. 1.

⁶² *Ibidem*, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35. For Pachymeres and his historical work cf. *Hunger*, *Die Literatur*, I, 447–453. Cf. also *A. Failler*, *Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère*, *REB* 38 (1980) 5–103; *A. Failler*, *Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymère*, *REB* 39 (1981) 145–249.

⁶³ Cf. *G. Prinzing*, *Ein Mann tyrannidos aksios. Zur Darstellung der rebellischen Vergangenheit Michaels VIII. Palaiologos, Lesarten. Festschrift für Athanasios Kambylis zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. I.

charge but he does not seem very convinced of the latter's innocence either.⁶⁴ More importantly, when he comes to the point of Theodore's death and Michael's rise to power, Pachymeres shows another angle of the story, stressing that it might well have been Michael himself who handled all of the things concerning his advancement to the position of Grand Duke⁶⁵ and later, his establishment on the imperial throne.⁶⁶

As opposed to the emperor Michael VIII and his policy, Pachymeres praises the management of the Lascarid emperors and gives a very positive account of the emperor Theodore II. This is what Pachymeres says about Theodore: "And this is what holds a man who was begotten and brought up in an imperial manner, and who was lifted up and educated in the imperial manner, and if he does not resemble his father in profoundness and intelligence in all of the things he would say and do, and in the firmness and immutability of judgment, he then has his grandfather's keenness for everything, his generosity and his male courage, and he has his mother's openhandedness..."⁶⁷ The historian continues praising Theodore's intellectual work and his education, as well as his choice of associates, who: "...were chosen not according to the nobility of birth or connection to the Emperor, but according to merit..."⁶⁸ Pachymeres states that Theodore was feared by those who did not behave in proper manner, for they were punished by the ruler for their misconduct, whereas those who acted properly were rewarded.⁶⁹ The historian finishes his description of the emperor in the following way: "Just how then was he not destined to manage the state in the proper manner, he who, under such a father, *without the imperial name* (μηδ' ὄνομα βασιλείας ἔχων), though his only son, was taught beforehand to drive out the pollution with steadfastness?"⁷⁰

Why is it that George Pachymeres stated that Theodore II did not have the imperial title? A view has been expressed that, while referring to the imperial title, Pachymeres actually had in mind the title of *αὐτοκράτωρ* and the coronation of a co-emperor, and not the event of proclamation.⁷¹ It is a well-known fact that the Palaiologan emperors not only proclaimed, but crowned their sons co-emperors, who also issued official documents in which they employed the title of *autocrator*. This

Vassis, et alii, Berlin 1998, 180–197.

⁶⁴ For Michael's escape to the Ikonion sultanate, as well as his later arrest and confinement cf. Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, 42–52.

⁶⁵ "Παρεῖσι δὲ καὶ τοῖς εἰκοσι ἑννοεῖσι ἡ κακείῃσι τοῖς πράγμασι μετεχειρίζετο..." Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, 95, 29; *Ibidem*, 97, 1–2.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 104–114, 136–138, 140–146.

⁶⁷ Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, 59, 6–11. On the empress Eirene Lascaris cf. A. Mh̄tsiou, *Η αυτοκρατορία τῆς Νικαίας* Εἰρήνη Δουκaina Κομνηνή, ἡ ἀρρενωπότερον τοῦ ἡαῶν ἔκουσα, Filotimia. Festschrift für A. Stavridou-Zaphraka, eds. T. Korres, P. Katsoni, I. Leontiadis, A. Gutziukostas, Thessaloniki 2011, 447–463.

⁶⁸ Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, 61, 6–7. Cf. also *Angelov*, *Imperial ideology*, 207–252.

⁶⁹ It is known that Theodore II exercised severe punishments over those who opposed him. Pachymeres attributed his changes in behavior to the epilepsy Theodore was said to have suffered from. Cf. Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, 52–57.

⁷⁰ Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, I, 61, 19–22.

⁷¹ R. *Macrides*, J. A. *Munitiz*, D. *Angelov*, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*, *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies*, Vol. 15, Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham 2013, 422, n. 169 (= *Macrides*, *Munitiz*, *Angelov*, *Pseudo-Kodinos*).

practice was especially prevalent from the time Michael IX was crowned co-emperor in 1294.⁷² Since George Pachymeres wrote his work in 1290s,⁷³ in the time in which co-rule became an institution, one can easily suppose that this was so. However, if one examines the historical work of Pachymeres and looks at his accounts of coronations of Andronikos II and Michael IX and the exact terms employed by the historian when referring to their statuses and titles, one is faced with certain confusion. On the one hand, co-ruler Andronikos II is never referred to as *autocrator* in Pachymeres' work, whereas, Michael IX is referred to as such only once.

When describing Andronikos' coronation as co-emperor, Pachymeres states that he could sign the documents as an emperor, though without the use of menologem.⁷⁴ If this was so, one would expect Pachymeres to use the well-known formula, when referring to Andronikos' title: Ν [the name of the emperor] εν Cristw| tw| Qew| pistoj basileuj kai. *autokratwr* Rwmaiwn Ν [last name of the emperor].⁷⁵ Instead, Pachymeres used another one, which did not correspond to the formula one finds in the official documents of the period in question: “Ανδρονικοj Cristou| cariti basileuj Rwmaiwn”⁷⁶ This difference between the two may be attributed to the fact that Pachymeres was not writing an official document, so the precision in expression was not required of the author. However, the omission of the *autocrator* title in the historian's work may also be explained by the confusion Michael VIII created concerning the authorities he bestowed on his son, the co-emperor Andronikos.⁷⁷ The prostagma of Michael VIII, issued in 1272 in order to regulate the rights of Andronikos II as a co-ruler, does not explicitly mention that Andronikos was given the right to sign himself with the title of *autocrator*.⁷⁸ It is in the documents issued by Andronikos II that we find the assertion that he possessed this title.⁷⁹ The change Michael VIII introduced into the imperial system was a precedent and was in contradiction with the traditional idea of one emperor ruling the Christian *oikoumenē*. The problem was not in the institution of co-emperor itself, for it was not a new thing in Byzantium. The problem was in the employment of the *autocrator* title and in the accumulation of power in the hands of a co-emperor.⁸⁰ This imperial policy of the Palaiologan

⁷² On Michael IX as a co-emperor cf. *Ferjančić*, Mihajlo IX, 333–356; *Ferjančić*, Savladarstvo, 324–326.

⁷³ S. *Lampakhj*, *Gewrgioj Pacumerhj. Prwtekdikoj kai, dikaiofulax. Eisagwgiko, dokimio, Aqhna* 2004, 42–44.

⁷⁴ “Edoqh de. kai. prostassein kai. upografein basilikw|j, plhn ouw mhnologeih...” Georges Pachymérés, *Relations historiques*, II, 415. 3–4.

⁷⁵ This type of imperial signature was especially common for the 12th–15th centuries. Cf. *F. Dölger, J. Karayannopoulos*, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre, erster Abschnitt, die Kaiserurkunden*, München 1968, 56, n. 3.

⁷⁶ Pachymérés, *Relations historiques*, II, 415. 5–6.

⁷⁷ Such was the case, for example, with the right of a co-emperor to hold the imperial scepter, which was first allowed, but was shortly afterwards abolished. Pachymérés, *Relations historiques*, II, 413. 21–23, 415. 1–3.

⁷⁸ *Dölger*, *Regesten*, III, No 1994, No 1995, 60–61. Pachymeres also writes about the rights of Andronikos II. Cf. Pachymérés, *Relations historiques*, II, 412–415.

⁷⁹ *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo*, 322–324.

⁸⁰ It is known, however, that certain co-emperors used this title in the earlier centuries, though, most probably, in the widest sense of the word. Cf. *G. Ostrogorski*, *Avtokrator i samodržac. Prilog za istoriju vladalačke titulature u Vizantiji i u južnih Slovena*, Glas Srpske kraljevske akademije 154, Beograd 1935, 107–108 (= *Ostrogorski*, *Avtokrator i samodržac*).

emperors was not favored but was rather strongly criticized, as will be shown further on in the text.

When it comes to Michael IX,⁸¹ Pachymeres employs the term *autocrator* for the young emperor, while narrating about the proclamation of John Palaiologos, the son of Andronikos II and empress Irene of Montferrat, to the dignity of despotes. Pachymeres stresses that it was Michael IX, young emperor and *autocrator*, who participated in the ceremony by holding the crown of the despot.⁸² This is especially important when one takes into account that the story of proclamation of John Palaiologos to the dignity of despotes comes right after the chapter in which Michael IX's coronation as co-emperor was described. However, Pachymeres does not use the title of *autocrator* later on in the text when he mentions Michael IX. Andronikos II and Michael IX were referred to as βασιλεῖς, even though after their coronations as co-emperors they were αυτοκράτορες as well. This may in fact serve as an argument for the thesis that it was the *autocrator* title Pachymeres thought of when he stated that Theodore II did not have the imperial name. Still, there is one more thing that needs to be mentioned. In his history, at the beginning of his XIIIth book, Pachymeres mentioned that, Andronikos II was in his 23rd and Michael IX in his 12th year of αυτοκρατορία.⁸³ Since he describes the events of the year 1305, it seems as if Pachymeres thought Andronikos II *autocrator* only after he actually succeeded his father in 1282, whereas the autocratic years of Michael IX were counted from the day of his coronation as co-emperor in 1294.

It is clear that we cannot conclude anything definite from Pachymeres work concerning his employment of the *autocrator* title. As it seems, the historian applied double standards when referring to the αυτοκρατορία of Andronikos II and Michael IX. Thus, we cannot claim with certainty that it was the event of coronation and the *autocrator* title Pachymeres had in mind when he stated that Theodore II didn't have the imperial name. That is why another explanation of the problem should also be taken into consideration.

The answer to the question why Pachymeres stated that Theodore II did not have the imperial title may be attributed to Pachymeres' relation to the historical work of his predecessor, George Acropolites. Historian's aim was not to give an account of the past events (which he makes very clear at the beginning of his history), so the question is in what measure and in what way Pachymeres actually used Acropolites' historical work as his source. Since Acropolites never explicitly stated that Theodore II was proclaimed co-emperor, Pachymeres might have simply made a mistake in relying on his source, not actually being acquainted with the fact that the event happened. Pachymeres was born in 1242 and Theodore's proclamation took place probably in 1234/35, so the historian could not have been an eyewitness of the ceremony itself. As his aim was not to narrate of the past events, but of the present state of affairs, he

⁸¹ Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, III, édition, traduction française et notes par A. Failler, Paris 1999, 218–220 (=Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, III).

⁸² Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, III, 221. 21–24.

⁸³ Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, IV, édition, traduction française et notes par A. Failler, Paris 1999, 615. 1–2; Failler, *La proclamation*, 247–248.

might well have not been acquainted with all the sources relevant for the period of the Lascarids, but has rather limited himself to the historical work of Acropolites.

We must ask ourselves though, why did Pachymeres include this statement in his historical work in the first place? Why was the information of Theodore II's title important for his narrative? If we look at the time when Pachymeres wrote his work, probably after 1291, what can we conclude concerning this episode in his narrative?

The period of 1290s witnessed an even greater rise of the authority of a co-emperor.⁸⁴ By that time Michael VIII had proclaimed and crowned his son, Andronikos II, co-ruler, providing him with greater authorities than was usual for previous periods. He also proclaimed his grandson, Michael IX, co-emperor, who was crowned his father's co-ruler in 1294. The proclamation and coronation of co-emperors had, as we have already mentioned, in the period of the Palaiologoi become a usual thing, the co-rule had become an institution, and co-emperors were becoming more and more independent. Ceremonies of proclamation and coronation of young co-emperors have been recorded in Pachymeres' work.⁸⁵ Thus, if the historian had known of Theodore II's proclamation, he would have probably included it in his work as well. However, he probably knew nothing about it, since Acropolites did not record the event. Pachymeres' employment of the claim that Theodore II was not given the title of *basileus* might have been used as Pachymeres' criticism of the policy of Michael VIII and his usurpation of the Lascarid throne.⁸⁶ As is obvious, Pachymeres thought highly of Theodore II and his predecessors, who were able rulers and whose reign was prosperous. Pachymeres was, on the contrary, an eyewitness of the loss of Asia Minor and constant decline of the Empire's former power. Most of the criticism for this state of affairs goes to the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty, who abandoned the Eastern frontier and engaged himself in other activities. Pachymeres' negative account of the policy of Michael VIII and therefore, his praise of the Lascarids, comes also from the fact that the historian was born in Nicea in 1242, during the prosperous reign of John III, so it is not surprising that he criticizes Palaiologos for having abandoned the Eastern provinces, which were the source of the Empire's economic and military power.⁸⁷

The passage George Pachymeres gives to Theodore II should therefore be understood as a sort of an imperial panegyric.⁸⁸ Though not a true *basilikos logos*, Theodore II is praised for his good deeds and virtues, his education and literary work and what is more, his ancestors are also praised through him for their intelligence and prudence, strength, stability of character and generosity. Theodore's abilities to rule were seen even before his accession to the throne, for the young prince was instructed, by constant advice of his father, in the management of the Empire.⁸⁹ It might have been that Pachymeres tried to point out that, although without an official

⁸⁴ *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo*, 307–383.

⁸⁵ *Pachymères*, *Relations historiques*, II, 412–414; *Ibidem*, *Relations historiques*, III, 98–99; *Ibidem*, 218–221.

⁸⁶ One sees this very clearly when Pachymeres writes about John IV and his unfortunate destiny. Cf. *Pachymères*, *Relations historiques*, I, 254–259.

⁸⁷ *Angelov*, *Imperial ideology*, 269–281.

⁸⁸ For the rhetoric of this period and imperial ideology cf. *Angelov*, *Imperial ideology*, 98–135.

⁸⁹ *Pachymères*, *Relations historiques*, I, 60–63.

title, Theodore II was well prepared for the imperial office. Thus, it was through his eulogy of the Lascarids, that Pachymeres, in fact, criticized the founder of the new dynasty, his imperial policy,⁹⁰ and the institution of the co-emperors in general.

Similar things can be said for the testimony of Nikephoros Gregoras, who strongly relied on his two predecessors, concerning the reign of the Lascarids. As in the case of Pachymeres, two explanations are possible. The first one deals with the meaning of the verb *anagoreuō*. It has been argued that Gregoras employed it in the sense of coronation and not proclamation of Theodore II, which would mean that he also referred to his status as *autocrator* and not a simple *basileus*.⁹¹ The second explanation could be that Gregoras also made a mistake, since he relied on the historical works of Acropolites and Pachymeres for the history of the Lascarids. However, Gregoras' use of this information is most interesting. The historian develops an entire story concerning this question, giving the reasons for John III's decision. He begins his third book with the reign of Theodore II: "Since Theodore Lascaris, his son, was destined to be the heir of his father's legacy, (he was not proclaimed emperor by his father while he was still alive)⁹² he was proclaimed emperor upon his death by the mutual concession of the army and as many of dignitaries and nobles there were. Since John did not want to leave the Empire to anyone other than his son, it was clear to everyone, that he (quite) loved his child, and that he would never leave the Empire to anyone else. He did not want to proclaim him emperor while he was alive, for the free will of subjects and choice was held in secret. He said that time knows to change a lot of things once it would find that the state of affairs is not to everyone's reckoning. The youth is unstable and stubborn by nature and moves quickly without reason towards everything as much as its will leads it. And if this young spirit is given the royal hope and repute, then a bunch of spoiled young men who fill its ears with all the wrong words, follows this hope, and then it looks like as if some drunkard, behaving and showing himself, as much as in reasoning and in thought as well as in his posture, and always moving to and fro, was destined to be elected helmsman of a great ship; neither is the election of the voters right, nor does the one, who was elected, know where the ship should go, nor what needs to be done. Because of that he judged it was necessary not to appoint his son emperor while he lived, punishing the unstableness of youth by taking away his hope (of being appointed emperor – remark of the author), and because many are grieved, out of their own meanness of spirit and by yearning for the inheritance, at the longevity of their fathers. Therefore, not waiting for fate, they cut their fathers' lives in the middle of their course, having done that they depart from life. And often plenty of people call this man a tyrant, who had come to power and whom they had not chosen willingly; and indeed they first give way to envy and insults secretly and then, at last, they drive headlong into schemes

⁹⁰ F. Dölger, Die dynastische Familienpolitik des Kaisers Michael VIII. Palaiologos (1258–1282), PARASPORA. Ettal, 1961, 178–188.

⁹¹ For the usage of this term cf. *Macrides, Munitiz, Angelov*, Pseudo-Kodinos, 422, n. 169; *Ibidem*, 424, n. 180.

⁹² "...para. de tou patroj eti zwhtoj ouk anhgoreuto basileuj..." Gregoras, I, 53.2–3. Even though it has been discussed whether Gregoras used the term *anagoreuō* to designate coronation and not proclamation, we have used it in the latter sense of the word.

and murder. For all these reasons Theodore was not proclaimed emperor, while his father remained alive.”⁹³

Gregoras’ long excursus, which begins with the statement that Theodore II was not his father’s co-ruler, turns into an important message for his audience. The historian clearly did not support the proclamation of young princes to the dignity of co-emperors due to the instability of youth and their eagerness to seize power.⁹⁴ That this was so, Gregoras showed to his readers at the beginning of his eighth book, which he begins with the portrayal of a young man of restless spirit, who was very eager to come to the throne – emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos.

As Gregoras informs us, Andronikos III was adored by his grandfather, Andronikos II, who put him always first before his other children.⁹⁵ He thought it necessary to provide his grandson with a royal education and to have him by his side day and night, so that he could enjoy at the mere sight of him.⁹⁶ However, Andronikos III’s nature changed with age. Gregoras narrates: “When young Andronikos came into adolescent age, the age in which pleasures rise up against nature more vigorously and desire for unrestrained liberty (and that’s indeed the case when young man has imperial dignity and is in the bloom of youth), so then power is at his comrades to always guide him towards desire, which their minds always measure according to their own will and they ward off all the restraints of shame and attempt political changes.”⁹⁷

This passage, that gives an introduction into the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, confirms Gregoras’ statement about a wise decision of John III’s not to proclaim his son co-emperor, thus, avoiding to feed his imperial ambitions too soon. As is known, Andronikos III had already been proclaimed co emperor between 1308 and 1313⁹⁸, but he was not the only one to bear this title. His father, Michael IX, was also Andronikos II’s co-ruler since 1281.⁹⁹ Not being able to wait, for his grandfather’s reign was long, and his father stood next in line for the imperial throne, Andronikos gave up hope that he would ever rule the Empire and started thinking of another territory he might occupy and rule on his own. All of these things did not remain unknown to his father and grandfather.¹⁰⁰ Apart from that, Gregoras mentions

⁹³ Gregoras, I, 53–55.

⁹⁴ On Gregoras’ criticism of the institution of co-rulers cf. *Angelov*, Imperial ideology, 281–285.

⁹⁵ Gregoras, I, 283. 13–18.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, 283–284. 21–23.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, 284. 1–8.

⁹⁸ *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo* 330–331; *Lj. Maksimović*, O vremenu proglašenja Andronika III Paleologa za cara, *ZRVI* 16 (1975) 119–122.

⁹⁹ Michael IX was proclaimed co-emperor in 1281, which was later followed by his coronation as co-ruler in 1294. *Ferjančić*, *Savladarstvo*, 324.

¹⁰⁰ Gregoras, I, 284. 17–23, 285. 1–12. It is familiar that Gregoras strongly criticized anyone who had thought about dividing the sole rule over the Empire, taking one part of it for himself and turning it into his own dominion. That was the case with the empress Irene of Montferrat, who wanted to persuade her husband, emperor Andronikos II, to give certain parts of the Empire to their sons. Cf. Gregoras, I, 233–237. Gregoras also informs us of the wishes of emperor Michael VIII to give certain parts of the Empire to his second son, Constantine Porphyrogenetos, to rule. Cf. Gregoras, I, 186–191. On Constantine Porphyrogenetos cf. *F. Barišić*, Konstantin Porfirogenit Paleolog, *ZRVI* 22 (1983) 43–58.

Andronikos' comrades who, like in the passage related to Theodore II, have filled the youth's mind with all sorts of improper things.¹⁰¹

However, things that caused the most grief in the house of the Palaiologoi at that time were the deaths of Andronikos III's brother, despot Manuel, and that of his father, Michael IX, which were all caused by Andronikos III's improper behavior. Filled with jealousy, Andronikos III sought to kill the lover of his *ἑταίρα*, but instead, by a terrible mistake, his companions killed his brother. Michael IX died of grief for his late son.¹⁰² It is clear that Andronikos III, though by mistake, "cut his father's life in the middle of its course," making him depart sooner than might otherwise have been the case.

According to the quoted passages, Gregoras' story of Theodore II's imperial title has served its purpose. It can be understood as a message of its author to point out to his audience the things that should be avoided and that can lead to grave troubles. It can be explained by the historian's allusion to his own time and to the events that have shaken the Empire greatly.

In conclusion, the following can be said. There is no doubt that Theodore II Lascaris was his father's co-ruler. The question of the time of his proclamation remains unanswered, though Acropolites' *ἐπιτάφιοι* for John III points to the early years of his life. The statements of Pachymeres and Gregoras, who claim that Theodore was not his father's co-ruler, may be explained in two ways. On the one hand, the two historians might actually have meant that Theodore II was not crowned co-emperor and was, thus, not an *autocrator*. On the other hand, their statements may also be explained by the fact that they made a mistake while relying on George Acropolites, who did not mention the actual event of Theodore's proclamation in his historical work. Pachymeres and Gregoras might have both used the silence of their source to create their own stories concerning Theodore II and his title, in order to send their own messages and express their own attitudes towards the events that had marked their time. Thus, their false information has no actual meaning for the reign of Theodore II. It in fact shows how an event that actually happened, but was not explicitly recorded in one historical work, was misinterpreted by other historians that relied on their predecessor, who have used the silence of their source to create a story for the purpose of their own works. Thus, it is in the character of a work itself, its composition and its narrative that one should try to find the answer for misapprehensions in the sources.

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¹⁰¹ Gregoras points in his narrative to young men (Syrgiannes, John Kantakouzenos, Theodore Synadenos and Alexios Apokaukos) who instigated Andronikos III to start the war with his grandfather. Gregoras, I, 296–302.

¹⁰² Gregoras, I, 285. 12–23, 286. 1–12.

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ТЕОДОР II ЛАСКАРИС КАО САВЛАДАР: СТВАРНОСТ И ЗАБЛУДЕ У ВИЗАНТИЈСКОЈ ИСТОРИОГРАФИЈИ

Циљ рада је покушај указивања на чињеницу да догађај који се заиста одиграо може бити изостављен из дела историчара, у већини случајева намерно, што касније доводи до забуне у делима његових наследника. Заблуда коју је тиме створио први аутор, чији је циљ био да се, због сопствене пристрасности, ћутке пређе преко неких чињеница, чини друге историчаре његовим „партнерима у злочину,“ који, по њиховој сопственој вољи, преобликују недостатак информација, користећи га тако на начин који најбоље одговара њиховој причи. Случај Теодора II Ласкариса као савладара послужио је као један од примера за илустрацију наведеног исказа.

Рад је подељен у две целине. У првој целини се разматрају извори који несумњиво сведоче о чињеници да је Теодор II био очев савладар. У питању су посмртно слово Георгија Акрополита писано за цара Јована III Ватаца, увод у колекцију Теодорових писама, коју је Акрополит саставио, похвално слово Јовану III, састављено од стране охридског архиепископа Јакова, као и неколико писама Теодора II, у којима он себе назива царем и у којима се могу пратити неке његове активности као савладара. Осим тога, сачувано је и сведочанство једне западне хронике да су Латини из Цариграда склопили уговор са Јованом III, у коме, поред имена званичног цара, стоји и име његовог сина и савладара. У овој целини разматрају се и нека Теодорова овлашћења, која су, како се чини, превазилазила овлашћења ранијих савладара, што се до сада са сигурношћу везивало само за епоху Палеолога.

Друга целина рада има за циљ да размотри различите исказе византијских историчара о питању Теодоровог савладарства. Проблем настаје због чињенице да Георгије Акрополит у свом историјском спису помиње Теодора II као цара, у време док је његов отац био званични владар, али не помиње сам чин његовог проглашења. С обзиром на карактер Акрополитовог дела и чињенице да он пише похвалу Михајлу VIII Палеологу, Акрополит је непомињањем овог чина могао вешто избећи важно питање династичког легитимитета Ласкариса, које је појавом Михајла VIII било угрожено и, касније, узурпирано.

Георије Пахимер и Нићифор Григора, који се непосредно настављају на Акрополитово дело, изричито тврде да Теодор II није имао царску титулу за очева живота. Њихова тврдња се може објаснити на два начина. На првом месту би се могло рећи да и Пахимер и Григора, када наводе да Теодор II није имао царску титулу (Пахимер), односно, да није био проглашен за очевог савладара (Григора), у ствари мисле на чин Теодоровог крунисања за савладара и на добијање титуле автократора, праксе која је била распрострањена у доба Палеолога, дакле, у време када су живела и писала двојица историчара. Друго објашњење би било да Пахимеров и Григорин исказ проистиче из чињенице да ни сам Акрополит, као што је већ напоменуто, не помиње Теодорово проглашење,

те су двојица историчара, који нису били сведоци тог догађаја, једноставно про- тумачили Акрополитово ћутање као негацију догађаја у целости. Међутим, важно је напоменути да ни Пахимер ни Григора не прелазе ћутке преко тога, већ питање Теодорове титуле умећу у своја историјска дела са одређеним циљем. Исказе двојице историчара треба повезати са њиховом намером да својој публици пренесу одређену поруку. Кроз похвалу Теодору II у свом историјском спису, Пахимер је критиковао оснивача нове династије, Михајла VIII Палеолога, империјалну политику коју је он водио, али и институцију савладарства. Када је у питању исказ Нићифора Григоре, који развија читаву причу и наводи конкретне разлоге због чега Јован III није прогласио свог сина за савладара, његова порука, која се односи на немирни и нестални дух младих и амбициозних наследника престола, који врло често не могу да дочекају крај очеве владе па су принуђени да њихов животни пут скрате, може се повезати са немирним духом младог Андроника III и његовом побуном против деде, Андроника II Палеолога. Григорин опис Андроника III и невоља које је изазвао у царској породици, умногоне подсећа на Григорин опис разлога због којих младог човека не треба одликовати царским достојанством (у питању је одељак о разлозима који су нагнали Јована III да не прогласи свог сина за савладара).

Може се закључити да тврдње Пахимера и Григоре немају реалног значаја за саму владавину Теодора II, колико имају значај за епоху двојице историчара. Оне садрже поруке њихових аутора, те стога у намени самих дела, њиховој композицији и наративу треба тражити разлоге за различите тврдње византијских писаца.