

# The Interpolations in the *Histories* of Laonikos Chalkokondyles

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NO SYSTEMATIC STUDY exists of the interpolations (real or alleged) in the history of Laonikos Chalkokondyles. E. Darkó, the most recent editor of the text (almost a century ago), decided that two sections of Book 9, separated by about twenty pages, were later additions, and so he printed them in bracketed, single-spaced italics.<sup>1</sup> A brief response came from V. Grecu in 1946 (three pages in German, published in a Romanian bulletin) and a long footnote, also in German, by H. Ditten in 1964 (in the Acts of the Byzantine Congress of Belgrade), both of which have passed largely unnoticed by later scholars who generally still ascribe to ‘pseudo-Chalkokondyles’ the same passages that were marked off by Darkó. Those two passages concern key events in the history of the empire of Trebizond and are our sole witness for some of them. The first concerns the rebellion of Ioannes IV against his father Alexios IV in the 1420s and the failed attack by the Safavid sheikh Junayd on Trebizond. The second concerns the fall of Trebizond to Mehmed II in 1461 and the subsequent fate of the imperial family. Moreover, Ditten argued that the digression on Iberia (Georgia) that follows the first of these two passages is also an interpolation; and I believe that a fourth passage can be added to the list. A fresh look is warranted as some of these arguments have been contested among this group of scholars.

<sup>1</sup> E. Darkó, *Laonici Chalcocandylae Historiarum demonstrationes* I–II (Budapest 1922–1923), here II 219–222 and 246–249, with inadequate explanation in the preface, xi–xii. Bibliography on Laonikos will be cited below as appropriate.

First, it is worth noting that Book 9 is noticeably longer than the others in the *Histories*. Adjusting for the single-spaced print of the alleged interpolations, we have the following page lengths for the ten books:

I: 51; II: 50; III: 54; IV: 47; V: 56; VI: 42; VII: 45; VIII: 54; IX: 67; X: 40.

We can discount Book 10, as it seems to be unfinished (the narrative breaks off in an unsatisfying tangle of confusing sentences regarding Venetian activities on Lemnos and the Peloponnese in early 1464). I will first discuss each passage that has been proposed as an interpolation and then try to identify the interpolator(s). This will then enable us to form some preliminary conclusions regarding the initial circulation of Laonikos' *Histories*.

*Passage 1: II 219.12–222.21* (the rebellion of Ioannes IV and the attack of Junayd on Trebizond)

There can be no doubt that this is an interpolation. Its style is unlike that of Laonikos and its vocabulary deviates from his otherwise sparse and repetitive manner. It produces a jarring effect that was noted in marginal comments by the scribes in one line of the text's transmission—not that we need such comments to make the case for interpolation: scribal guesses are not necessarily better than our own. At the point where the passage begins, Darkó prints in his apparatus a series of related notes to the effect that “this seems to have been written by someone other than Laonikos.” And where the passage ends one marginal comment says “from here on it is Laonikos,” though the scribe of a different manuscript placed a note to this effect one paragraph later (at 223.4), effectively calling into question the account of Hızır's raid on Trebizond in 1456 which follows the interpolation.<sup>2</sup> But there is no reason to question the provenance of the account of Hızır's raid: it is by Laonikos (see below for the reasons why).

<sup>2</sup> For the raid see F. Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time* (Princeton 1978) 190.

Removing the interpolated passage does not disrupt narrative flow, but rather improves it dramatically. Before the passage, Laonikos mentions a tribute embassy in 1458 to Mehmed II by David, brother of the emperor of Trebizond Ioannes IV (and a future emperor himself), and pauses to give a brief account of the origin of the empire of Trebizond,<sup>3</sup> stressing its Greek cultural identity. This accords with Laonikos' idiosyncratic notion, derived from his teacher Plethon, that the Byzantines were not Romans but Greeks.<sup>4</sup> Then comes the interpolated passage on the revolt of Ioannes IV in the 1420s and Junayd's invasion that is probably to be dated to 1456 (see below). This first interpolation is then followed by the (authentic) account of Hızır's raid of 1456. Laonikos is prone to flashbacks, but this one would create disruptive seams, for he includes Hızır's raid in 1456 precisely to explain why David came to Mehmed bringing tribute in 1458. At the end of his account of the raid, Laonikos closes the circle by returning to David's embassy with the tribute (i.e., to 1458). The interpolated passage contributes nothing to what Laonikos is trying to accomplish between the first and second mentions of David.

We might also want to regard the linking sentence that Darkó used to resume Laonikos proper—καὶ ταῦτα μὲν γέγονεν ἐν Τραπεζοῦντι (222.22)—as part of the interpolation, for it refers back to the events recounted there, which took place in

<sup>3</sup> According to Darkó (ap. crit.), T. L. F. Tafel included this passage in the first interpolation, but there is no reason to suspect it.

<sup>4</sup> Laonikos explains this in the preface of his work, I 2–4. I intend to discuss his relationship with Plethon in a separate study. For the permutations of 'Greek' and 'Roman' in the final years of Byzantium, see e.g. H. Ditten, "Βάρβαροι, Ἕλληνες und Ῥωμαῖοι bei den letzten byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibern," in *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'études byzantines* II (Belgrade 1964) 273–299; and S. Vryonis, "Byzantine Cultural Self-Consciousness in the Fifteenth Century," in S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (eds.), *The Twilight of Byzantium: Aspects of Cultural and Religious History in the Late Byzantine Empire* (Princeton 1991) 5–14. For Laonikos as a student of Plethon see E. W. Bodnar (with C. Foss), *Cyriac of Ancona: Later Travels* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2003) 298–299.

the city. The last words that Laonikos wrote before the interruption concerned the empire's culture and dynastic strategies generally, not specific events that took place in the city.

What about the contents of the interpolated passage? Re-counting as it does events after the end of the Trapezuntine chronicle of Panaretos and his continuer (1426),<sup>5</sup> the passage is our sole witness to a number of important events, including the alleged adultery of Alexios IV's empress Theodora with an unnamed *protovestiaros* and her son Ioannes' desire to kill her; Ioannes' rebellion against and defeat of his father, who is killed by Ioannes' men, allegedly against the latter's wishes; and many aspects of the attack by Junayd. T. Ganchou (who does not seem to be aware that he is dealing with pseudo-Chalkokondyles here rather than the real thing) has defended Theodora on the charge of adultery, arguing that it contradicts contemporary evidence (Bessarion praised her precisely for conjugal fidelity at the time of her death in 1426) and that it is modeled on a prior incident of court intrigue at Trebizond that involved another *protovestiaros* and included many of the same characters, only thirty years earlier.<sup>6</sup> The account of Ioannes IV's attack on his father Alexios offers us a rare glimpse into the internal dynamics of Trapezuntine politics and shows that the interpolator had detailed first-hand knowledge of its coastal regions.<sup>7</sup> As for the invasion by sheikh Junayd (d. 1460), the

<sup>5</sup> O. Lampsides, *Μιχαήλ τοῦ Παναρέτου: Περὶ τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν* (Athens 1958).

<sup>6</sup> T. Ganchou, "Théodôra Kantakouzênè Komnênè de Trébizonde (°~1382/†1426), ou la vertu calomniée," in S. Kolditz and R. C. Müller (eds.), *Geschehenes und Geschriebenes: Studien zu Ehren von Günther S. Henrich und Klaus-Peter Matschke* (Leipzig 2005) 337–350. The similarity between the two reports was also noted by A. Bryer, "The Faithless Kabazitai and Scholarioi," in A. Moffatt (ed.), *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine, and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning* (Canberra 1984) 309–328, here 316, who saw only history repeating itself.

<sup>7</sup> Bryer, in *Maistor*, esp. 319 for topography; prior discussion by V. Laurent, "L'assassinat d'Alexis IV, empereur de Trébizonde (†1429)," *Archéion Πόντου* 20 (1955) 138–143.

ancestor of the Iranian Safavid dynasty, Rustam Shukurov has dated it precisely to 1456 by comparing the testimony of the Greek and eastern sources.<sup>8</sup> It is possible, then, that Junayd retreated precisely because Hızır approached.

Shukurov suggests that the account of Hızır's raid may also be part of the interpolation, but this causes more problems than it solves. The prose style of the two passages is significantly different, with that about Hızır matching Laonikos' own style perfectly. Moreover, as we saw, the narrative links Hızır's raid back to the tribute brought by David, which was mentioned by Laonikos before his brief digression on Trebizond: Laonikos recounts Hızır's raid in order to explain why David was bringing tribute. Shukurov also confuses matters when he suggests that "Laonikos himself" may then have made corrections and additions to the interpolation. It is preferable to regard passages as authentic unless there is good reason to suspect them.

*Passage 2: II 246.19–249.31 (the fall of Trebizond and the fate of the Grand Komnenoi and their people)*

It is not at all obvious that the entirety of this passage, similarly marked off by Darkó, is an interpolation. Deep into the passage, in a context that I agree is inauthentic, one scribe noted that "this so far is not by Laonikos" (at 249.4), but he did not offer precise starting and end points. The scribe's opinion is too imprecise to be of use: by that point in the text we are clearly in a problematic context. But V. Grecu noted that there is no reason to question the first part of this passage, namely the account of the fall of Trebizond (246.19–248.22).<sup>9</sup> To his

<sup>8</sup> R. Shukurov, "The Campaign of Shaykh Djunayd Safawi against Trebizond," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 17 (1993) 127–140, discussing previous scholarship that had dated the attack to the 1430s or 1440s. I thank Scott Kennedy for this reference.

<sup>9</sup> V. Grecu, "Zu den Interpolationen im Geschichtswerke des Laonikos Chalkokondyles," *Bulletin de la section historique de l'Académie Roumaine* 27 (1946) 92–94. For the controversies surrounding the fall of Trebizond see O. Lampsides, "Πῶς ἠλώθη ἡ Τραπεζοῦς;" *Ἀρχεῖον Πόντου* 17 (1952) 15–54.

brief but unsupported observation, we can add that that account is marked by Laonikos' Hellenist view of Byzantium and Trebizond, especially in Mahmud's speech to Georgios Amiroutzes and in the author's own concluding remarks, which are vintage Laonikos (248.17–23):

Τραπεζοῦς μὲν οὖν οὕτως ἐάλω, καὶ ἡ τῆς Κόλχων χώρα σύμπασα ὑπὸ βασιλεῖ ἐγένετο, ἡγεμονία καὶ αὕτη Ἑλλήνων οὐσα καὶ ἐς τὰ ἦθη τε καὶ δίκαιταν τετραμμένη Ἑλλήνων, ὥστε ἀναστάτους γενέσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦδε τοῦ βασιλέως οὐ πολλῷ χρόνῳ τοὺς Ἑλληνάς τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων ἡγεμόνας, πρῶτα μὲν τὴν Βυζαντίου πόλιν, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα Πελοπόννησόν τε καὶ Τραπεζοῦντος βασιλέα καὶ χώραν αὐτήν. ταῦτα μὲν ἐς τοσοῦτον ἐγένετο.

That was how Trebizond fell and how the entire land of Kolchis came under the sultan's authority. This too had been a principality of the Greeks and its customs and lifestyle were also Greek, so that in a small amount of time all the Greeks and the rulers of the Greeks had been overturned by this sultan, starting with the city of Byzantium, after that the Peloponnese, and finally the emperor and land of Trebizond. That was how that transpired.

The indiscriminate use of *basileus* for both sultan and emperor, the classicizing reference to “Kolchis,” and the use of paired speeches to frame the surrender of a city to the Ottomans, all mark this passage as authentic. It is hard to believe that anyone could have imitated Laonikos so well. The author of the first interpolated passage does not exhibit any of these features or call anyone a Greek. Moreover, the passage ties in well with Laonikos' themes. When he introduces the empire of Trebizond, before the first interpolation, he explains its Hellenic cultural identity. Our passage now serves as the opposite book-end for that theme in Book 9. Also, in his speech to Amiroutzes, Mahmud refers back to events that Laonikos had just described in the conquest of the Peloponnese (II 237), strengthening the links between this passage and the main narrative. An even broader thematic view supports this conclusion. In the preface of the *Histories*, Laonikos promises to recount how the Greek people were conquered by the Turks (I 1–2).

The passage quoted above closes that overarching circle too.

Moreover, removing the fall of Trebizond would introduce a narrative gap. Unlike the events in the first interpolated passage, there is no question but that Laonikos was about to recount the fall of Trebizond at precisely the point where our text does. The alleged second interpolation comes right as Mehmed concludes an agreement with Uzun Hasan and marches on Trebizond with the intention of conquering it. If the account of its fall is inauthentic, we must then assume that someone removed the original account and replaced it with another that almost exactly mirrors what Laonikos would have written, or that Laonikos had left a gap in his text of unprecedented length.

The fall of Trebizond, then, is likely authentic. There is one problem with it, however, though I will briefly defer discussion of it.

What about the rest of this second passage bracketed by Darcó, from 248.24 to 249.31? This describes Mehmed's division of the population and the fate of the imperial family (namely, the execution of the emperor David and his sons).<sup>10</sup> There is little in either the style or the content of these pages that causes suspicion, except the use of vernacular terms that Laonikos otherwise carefully avoids. The *σιλικτάριδες* (*silahdar*: 248.26) he had mentioned and explained already (II 9 and 201), but the form *σπαχογλάνοι* (*sipahi-oglan*) is unique here. Previously (at II 9 and 201) Laonikos had referred to sipahis as *σπαχίδες* (calling them “the children of the lords,” which is in fact a translation of *sipahi-oglan*, though he does not use that term there).<sup>11</sup> Far more problematic is the use of *Ἰανιτζάριοι*

<sup>10</sup> For the arrest (26 March 1463) and execution (1 November 1463) of the last Grand Komnenoi, see E. Gamillscheg, “Der Kopist des Par.gr. 428 und das Ende der Grosskomnenen,” *JÖByz* 36 (1986) 287–300, here 297–300, for a note detailing the events, which we will discuss below. In general, see K. Barzos, “Ἡ μοίρα τῶν τελευταίων Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν τῆς Τραπεζούντας,” *Βυζαντινά* 12 (1983) 269–289, esp. 280–286.

<sup>11</sup> For these Ottoman military terms see P. Fodor, “Ottoman Warfare,

(248.29) in place of his usual νεήλυδες. Ἰανιτζάριοι is avoided throughout the history, though the passage in question here does subsequently twice revert to νεήλυδες (248.30, 249.26). The presence of the titles μέγας ἀυθέντης for Mehmed and πασίας for Mahmud (249.17–19), however, makes it almost certain that this is not Laonikos, but someone trying to imitate him.

There is another, structural aspect of the narrative which indicates that the account of the division of the population of Trebizond and the fate of David and his sons was added later to the original account of the fall of the city. The account of the fall concludes by noting the arrangements made for its administration by Mehmed, who then leaves and returns to Adrianople. Laonikos then adds his general concluding remarks about the end of Hellenic rule (quoted above), and ends with his usual ταῦτα μὲν ἐς τοσοῦτον ἐγένετο (a phrase that, again, should be removed from the start of the interpolated passage that follows and restored to the end of the authentic account of the fall). In short, the narrative of the fall has closure. The interpolation, however, begins by going back to when Mehmed was still in Trebizond, dividing up the population by enrolling part of it in his armies, giving others away to his men, keeping parts for his sexual pleasure, and so on. Books 9 and 10 contain many set-episodes in which cities surrender, whereupon Mehmed makes his demographic arrangements and departs. But in no case does Laonikos have Mehmed depart and then go back to explain his arrangements, certainly not after a ταῦτα μὲν ἐς τοσοῦτον ἐγένετο.<sup>12</sup> In no other case does he give us as much detail about the fate of the population and former ruling family as this passage does for the people and former rulers of Trebi-

1300–1453,” in K. Fleet (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey* I (Cambridge 2009) 192–226, with the glossary at 423–428. For Laonikos’ use of Turkish military terms, we have only A. Nimet, *Die türkische Prosopographie bei Laonikos Chalkokandyles* (Hamburg 1933) 15, which is incomplete.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Laonikos II 204–205, 211, 218, 228–231, 235–236, 273–274, 282–283, 284–285.



zond.

As Greco suggested, then, though without giving any reasons beyond a vague reference to a difference in style, only the section from 248.24 to 249.31 is probably an interpolation. It is the kind of material that Laonikos would have included, but he would not have written it up in this way.

Still, this does not mean that every word in the passage down to 248.24 (the fall of Trebizond) is necessarily authentic and that every word after that, until 249.31, is interpolated. The truth is probably more complex. Just as it is possible that the interpolated passage contains displaced authentic material, the account of the fall of Trebizond may have been tampered with. This brings us to the main problem in that account that I deferred discussing above, namely the use of the titles *protovestiaros* (247.6, for Georgios Amiroutzes) and *pansebastos* (248.10–11, for Alexandros Kabazites, who is not actually named).<sup>13</sup> These were Byzantine titles that Laonikos, unlike the author of the first interpolation, avoids as a rule. Ditten believed that they undermined the entire account of the fall of Trebizond,<sup>14</sup> but that reaction is too extreme. As we saw, the account of the city's fall contains so many authentic features that it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for someone else to imitate Laonikos' style and themes so perfectly. Moreover, Laonikos was not completely averse to using unclassical vocabulary, including many Turkish, Arabic, and even Hungarian vernacular and technical terms. Granted, he does not use Byzantine court terms, though on one occasion the term *mesazon* made it past him (II 141).

Yet we should not be making ad hoc exceptions here: the presence of a *protovestiaros* and a *pansebastos*, both mentioned without gloss, is problematic. Our unease should be increased

<sup>13</sup> For his identity, see Barzos, *Βυζαντινά* 12 (1983) 274.

<sup>14</sup> Ditten, in *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès* 296–297 n.161, and “Die Korruptel Χωρόβιον und die Unechtheit der Trapezunt und Georgien betreffenden Partien in Laonikos Chalkokondyles' Geschichtswerk,” in J. Irmscher (ed.), *Studia Byzantina* (Halle 1966) 57–70, here 61–62.

by the fact that Amiroutzes is regularly called “the *proto-vestiarios*” in the second part of this sequestered passage, which deals with the fall of David and his sons and is almost certainly interpolated. Moreover, the Trapezuntine title *pansebastos*, used by itself without a personal name, appears regularly in the first interpolated passage and nowhere else in Laonikos, which suggests that there is a link among all these passages. These terms are probably fingerprints left by the interpolator on an otherwise authentic account of the fall of Trebizond. It would be best to leave the matter there and not fine-tune the analysis further by trying to identify exactly which words were interpolated into the account of the fall of Trebizond. That account is mostly authentic.

*Passage 3: II 223.5–224.14 (the Iberian digression)*

We recall that the first interpolated passage (on the history of Trebizond) is followed by an (authentic) account of the raid of Hızır in 1456. That, in turn, is followed by a digression on Iberia (Georgia, i.e. Kartli, Kacheti, and Imereti), whose authenticity was rightly questioned by Ditten (though not by Darkó).

Let us note, first, that Laonikos’ geographic and ethnographic digressions all have a ‘hook’ in the main body of the narrative, some mention of the people or place in question that triggers the digression. But in this case the references to Iberia both occur within the first interpolated passage: when Ioannes flees from Trebizond (219.19) and then when the lords flee during the siege by Junayd (222.18). If we remove the interpolation, there is no hook left on which to hang the digression, which now lacks an authentic relation to the text.

What troubled Ditten, by contrast, were the sudden terminological shifts in the digression (e.g., from Laonikos’ otherwise consistent ἡγεμῶν / ἡγεμονία to ἀυθέντης / ἀυθεντεία), the use of modern Greek genitives (e.g. Μαμία instead of Μαμίου), and expressions that deviated from his norms.<sup>15</sup> He also drew at-

<sup>15</sup> Ditten, in *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès* 295–297 n.161; *Studia Byzantina* 62–64;

tention to a more interesting aspect of the digression: unlike the rest of the history, which maintains a tone of strict classizing neutrality when it comes to religion, the Iberian digression adopts an openly Christian outlook and even invokes miracles and uses polemical language, especially in the account of St. Nino. Ditten did not elaborate on this point, but it is worth comparing what we have here with Laonikos' usage elsewhere. He says that the Iberians

κτησάμενοι καὶ πίστιν ἐκ Κωνσταντίνου πόλεως παρὰ μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἐκεῖσε διαφοιτώσης πίστεως εὐσεβοῦς ἕνεκα τῆς εὐσεβεστάτης· ἥτις καὶ θαυματουργίαις τοὺς Ἰβηρας καταπλήξασα μετηλλάξατο τῆς ἀσεβοῦς αὐτῶν πίστεως, καὶ Χριστιανοὺς ἀπεφήνατο τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ αὐτῶν.

received their faith from a most pious woman who came from the city of Constantine and spent time there because of her most pious faith. She astonished the Iberians with her miracles and converted them from their impious faith and made them Christians in their religion.

Laonikos does not elsewhere use the words *asebeia* and *eusebeia* and uses *pistis* and *homologia* only in their classical sense, even though he discusses many foreign non-Christian or ex-pagan peoples throughout his history. At one place he refers to pagans who believed in Apollo and Artemis as people who “follow the ancient Greek way of life and customs” (I 124, διαίτη δὲ χρῶνται τῇ πάλαι Ἑλληνικῇ καὶ ἤθεσι). The statement in the Iberian digression that the Alans (the neighbors of the Iberians) follow τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ θρησκείαν is also aberrant: Laonikos does elsewhere refer to the κύριος Ἰησοῦς (I 133, II 186), but crucially without the ἡμῶν. This “lord” is for him only the Christian analogue of the Muslim “hero” Mohammed (ἥρωας: *passim*). This is not the place to explore Laonikos' philosophy of religion, or what his Hellenism,

“Bemerkungen zu Laonikos Chalkokondyles' Nachrichten über die Länder und Völker an den europäischen Küsten des Schwarzen Meeres,” *Klio* 43–45 (1965) 185–246, here 240–245.

learned from Plethon, might have entailed in the religious sphere. Still, it is clear that he was not prone to such language, in a digression, moreover, that he had no reason to write. Also, he always calls Constantinople ‘Byzantion’ in the history, probably in accordance with his Hellenic outlook, not “the city of Constantine” (with one exception: II 60; II 293 is in a speech by a Venetian).

Therefore, the Iberian digression is out, even though its author made some effort to imitate Laonikos’ style, probably by lifting his expressions, such as 223.21–22 (οὐκ ἔχω διασημῆναι and ἐπὶ μέγα χωρήσαι δυνάμεως) and 224.13–14 (τοσόνδε ἐπιστάμενος ἐπιμνήσομαι περὶ αὐτῶν as a conclusion). Also, removing this entire digression again improves rather than disrupts the narrative flow. All this, then, removes 7–8 pages from Book 9, bringing its total length to 59–60, more in line with the other books.

*Passage 4:* II 275.1–7 (the fate of Anna Komnene)

Laonikos’ history was tampered with by an interpolator interested in Trapezuntine affairs. As it happens, there is one more passage that may come from his pen. It occurs in Book 10, following the fall of Lesbos in 1462. Laonikos explains what Mehmed did with its lord Niccolò Gattilusio and his sister Maria, who had married Alexandros (or Alexios, also known as Skantarios), a brother of Ioannes IV and David Komnenos of Trebizond. Maria had been captured a year earlier, when Trebizond fell in 1461. The author then explains what Mehmed did with Anna, the daughter of David:

τὴν μὲν οὖν θυγατέρα βασιλέως Τραπεζοῦντος, Ἄνναν λεγομένην καὶ Χριστιανήν, φυλαχθεῖσαν ὀρισμῶ τοῦ κρατοῦντος, ἠρμόσατο Ζαγάνῳ τῷ Μακεδονίας τῆς κάτω ὑπάρχῳ γενομένῳ, ἐξ ὅτου τὴν Πελοπόννησον αὐτὸν ἀφελόμενος ἐπέτρεπεν Ἀλβάνεω παιδί, τῷ Ἰυῶν λεγομένῳ, εἰ καὶ ὕστερον ἐχωρίσατο ταύτην ὁ κρατῶν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, ἀναγκάζοντι<sup>16</sup> ταύτην γενέσθαι ἐς τὴν θρησκείαν αὐτοῦ.

<sup>16</sup> The MSS. have ἀναγκάζοντι. Tafel proposed ἀναγκάζων, making Mehmed the one forcing her. It is more likely that this refers to Zaganos,

As for the daughter of the king of Trebizond, who was a Christian named Anna and who was being guarded according to the master's wishes, he married her to Zaganos, who had become the prefect of lower Macedonia ever since the king had stripped him of the command of the Peloponnese and entrusted it to the son of Elvan, who was named Iyon.<sup>17</sup> Still, the master later separated her from him, who was (?) forcing her to take on his religion.

Ditten drew attention to this passage, which he found otherwise utterly unobjectionable, because it is the only place in the history where Laonikos uses the term Χριστιανός to refer, apparently, to someone's religion—that is, anywhere outside the Iberian digression (which that usage helped to discredit). Ditten was untroubled by this anomaly here, however, because he believed, with Grecu, that 'Christiane' was part of her name: Anna Christiana. This interpretation does not seem persuasive, however.<sup>18</sup>

I propose that this passage too came from our Trapezuntine interpolator, for the following reasons. First, it uses Χριστιανός to refer to someone's religion. Laonikos does not elsewhere refer to anyone's religion this way. In fact, he never refers to Jesus as 'Christ' anywhere in the *Histories*: this appears only in the other interpolations. Second, the passage twice refers to Mehmed as ὁ κρατῶν ("the master, the one in power"), a usage never found in the history except in one place, namely the interpolation on the demise of the Komnenoi that follows the fall of Trebizond (249.2). This is damning linguistic evidence. Like the author of that interpolation and the Iberian digression, whoever wrote this was preoccupied with conversion to or from

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given what we know of him, so this is either bad grammar or should be ἀναγκάζοντος.

<sup>17</sup> The name here may be a corruption of Isa: Elvan's sons were Isa and Sinan.

<sup>18</sup> Ditten, in *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès* 297 n.161. She is not so listed in the *PLP* no. 12057 (*Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* V 219); Barzos, *Βυζαντινά* 12 (1983) 275.

Christianity and with the fate of the imperial family of Trebizond. To be sure, Laonikos could well have noted such events too (and he does so just after the passage in question, when Niccolò Gattilusio tried to improve his lot by adopting τὰ πάτρια τὰ Τούρκων: 276.1–2). Still, the interpolator seems to have had a more personal Christian bias and interest in the fate and religious history of Komnenoi.

That concludes our survey of the interpolations.<sup>19</sup> We can now try to identify the interpolator(s).

*The role of Georgios Amiroutzes and Demetrios Angelos*

At the 2011 Byzantine Studies Conference (DePaul University) Marios Philippides confided in me his suspicion that it may have been Georgios Amiroutzes himself who wrote the Laonikos interpolations, referring, presumably, only to the two passages bracketed by Darkó. We were prevented from discussing this possibility further, and I was skeptical. But the idea has gained in plausibility the more I have thought about it. A case can be made. Amiroutzes the *protovestiaros* was a Trapezuntine scholar who had participated in the Orthodox delegation to the Council of Ferrara-Florence as one of the most learned men of his time, and he was a supporter of Union. He was close to the Komnenoi who ruled his land and was personally involved in their fortunes both before and after the fall of Trebizond.<sup>20</sup> He

<sup>19</sup> Ditten, in *Studia Byzantina*, also proposed that the reading Χωρόβιον in Laonikos' digression on Russia (I 122) was altered by the interpolator to match a place-name in the region of Trebizond.

<sup>20</sup> N. B. Tomadakis, "Ἐτούρκεψεν ὁ Γεώργιος Ἀμιρούτζης;" *EpetByz* 18 (1948) 99–143, cleared up many misconceptions about his life. See A. Argyriou and G. Lagarrigue, "George Amiroutzès et son 'Dialogue sur la Foi au Christ tenu avec le Sultan des Turcs,'" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 11 (1987) 29–221, esp. 29–49; B. Janssens and P. Van Deun, "George Amiroutzes and his Poetical Oeuvre," in *Philomathestatos: Studies in Greek and Byzantine Texts presented to Jacques Noret* (Leuven 2004) 297–324; J. Monfasani, *George Amiroutzes: The Philosopher and his Tractates* (Leuven 2011), esp. 5–12. For his relation to Mahmud see T. Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović* (Leiden 2001) 86–90,

had the local and inside knowledge that the interpolator brought to Laonikos' text and he may have had the opportunity to add the interpolations. One of the latter is about him. He was also interested in religious conversion, especially after the Ottoman conquest. If he is not our culprit, then it was someone close to him or very much like him in profile.

Before we look at the manuscript evidence, I offer a close reading of an episode included in the second interpolation. The star of the drama of the fall of the Komnenoi is none other than Georgios Amiroutzes. David Komnenos' niece Theodora, the wife of Mehmed's rival Uzun Hasan of the White Sheep, had apparently summoned some of her Komnenoi relatives to her side in 1463. But the letters fell into Mehmed's hands (II 249):

ἐνεχείρισε δὲ ταῦτα τὰ γράμματα ὁ πρωτοβεστιάριος Γεώργιος ἐπὶ τρόπῳ τάχα ἀγαθῷ, ὅπως φανήσεται ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς πίστωσιν ἴσως ἀγαθὴν, καὶ ἄλλως ἵνα μὴ ἀκουσθῆ καὶ παρ' ἄλλων, ὅπως ὁ πρωτοβεστιάριος ἔκρυψε τοῦτο, φοβούμενος τὸν τε αὐθέντη τὸν μέγαν καὶ τὸν πάσιαν Μαχουμούτη, καὶ πάθη κακῶς ὁ πρωτοβεστιάριος παρὰ τοῦ μεγάλου αὐθέντου. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο δέδωκε καὶ τὸν χάρτην πρὸς τὸν μέγαν αὐθέντη. τὰ μὲν οὖν γράμματα δεξάμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ νόφ λαβὼν καθίστατο ἐς ὑποψίαν, καὶ αὐτοὺς συλλαβὼν τὸν τε Δαβίδ βασιλέα καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ σὺν τῷ ἀνεψιῷ καθεῖρξε.

It was the *protovestiaros* Georgios who handed these letters over, probably with a benign intent, that is, in the hope that the sultan might be benevolently reassured and, anyway, lest it be said by others that the *protovestiaros* had concealed this matter, for he feared both the great efendi and the pasha Mahmud, in which case the *protovestiaros* would suffer great harm at the hands of the great efendi. For this reason he handed the papers over to the great efendi. The sultan received the letters and he became suspicious as he thought about it, and he arrested them, namely

who appears to be unaware that Darkó (wrongly) sequestered the passage on which he is relying.

the emperor David, his sons, and nephew, and imprisoned them.

Now, in later times Amiroutzes would become an evil figure, a man who betrayed his city to the Turks along with his master, his people, and his faith in order to curry favor with Mehmed. It has been proved, however, that these calumnies were spread many years after his death when his son Alexandros (Skender Bey), a Muslim, exposed tax fraud in high Church circles.<sup>21</sup> Amiroutzes certainly did not betray Trebizond or become a Muslim. We must also discount texts that were fraudulently attributed to him in later centuries, which make him look more conflicted than he was.<sup>22</sup> The villain Amiroutzes was an invention of later times and we must not read the above passage in light of those calumnies. As we shall see, the interpolations must have been added to the text within a few years after Laonikos finished working on it, so more or less close to the events of 1463. Therefore, we can infer from the interpolation itself (whether he wrote it or not) that his role in the demise of the Komnenoi was a topic of some debate in the mid to late 1460s. The passage quoted above reads like an attempt to exculpate Amiroutzes from blame in the affair. It was not a hostile addition that makes him ‘betray’ the former emperor.<sup>23</sup>

First of all, the narrative puts the spotlight on Amiroutzes himself, even though the events themselves did not obviously point to him as the protagonist. An author who was not preoccupied with his role might instead have emphasized the victims or the sultan, not a middle-man. Second, for all that he facilitated events that had an evil ending, he is here neither directly nor indirectly blamed for them, or even made to seem bad. There is no imputation of treachery. Third, the precise and circumspect definition of his motives and what he was

<sup>21</sup> Tomadakis, *EpetByz* 18 (1948), esp. 119.

<sup>22</sup> Noted by Monfasani, *George Amiroutzes* 7 n.15.

<sup>23</sup> As Monfasani held, *George Amiroutzes* 10–11.



thinking at the time makes him the likely source for this passage. And what is it that he alleges? Primarily that he was terrified of both the sultan and Mahmud Pasha and could not afford to be regarded as someone who had concealed potentially treasonous material; also, that his intentions were noble (ἀγαθός is used twice) and he wanted to instill trust in the sultan, hoping that the whole thing might blow over as a misunderstanding. In short, this is a personal apologia cast cleverly as an impersonal, third-person narrative (note the subtle τάχα). But why did he write this at all? Why not omit his role and cover up the affair? The answer is probably that his role was too well known at the time (David was executed in late 1463). The best that Amiroutzes could do under the circumstances was to make his side of the story into history. But what opportunity might Amiroutzes have had to do so?

Paleographically, the most salient fact about the interpolations is that they occur in all manuscripts of Laonikos, which means that they were introduced before the earliest one that survives. According to the stemma proposed by H. Wurm, the two earliest manuscripts are *Paris.gr.* 1780 and 1781, which were both copied from a common lost original (called ω).<sup>24</sup> From the evidence of the watermarks, Wurm argues that *Paris.gr.* 1780 was the earlier, copied in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, possibly the 1460s.<sup>25</sup> He also argued from the handwriting that it was copied by Amiroutzes himself. After the fall of Trebizond, Amiroutzes, a cousin of the Grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha, was taken up at the court of Mehmed and

<sup>24</sup> H. Wurm, “Die Handschriftliche Überlieferung der ΑΠΟΔΕΙΞΕΙΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΩΝ des Laonikos Chalkokondyles,” *JÖByz* 45 (1995) 223–232, here 232. Wurm points the way to a new edition of Laonikos that prioritizes *Paris.gr.* 1780.

<sup>25</sup> For 1781, which was copied in the later fifteenth century by Georgios Moschos, a Corfiot, see B. Mondrain, “Les Éparque, une famille de médecins collectionneurs de manuscrits aux XV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles,” in S. Patoura (ed.), *Η ελληνική γραφή κατά τους 15<sup>ο</sup> και 16<sup>ο</sup> αιώνες* (Athens 2000) 145–163, here 158–159.

died soon after 1469 (there does not appear to be any evidence for the view that he died in 1475). Now, Laonikos finished working on the history between 1464–1468.<sup>26</sup> If Amiroutzes was the copyist of *Paris.gr.* 1780, that would leave a narrow window for the introduction of the interpolations, five years at most. At the minimum, they were introduced as soon as Laonikos ceased working on the text.

However, a more recent study by B. Mondrain has argued that all the manuscripts which Gamillscheg had previously attributed to Amiroutzes (including *Paris.gr.* 1780) were actually copied by Demetrios Angelos. This man was a student of Ioannes Argyropoulos in Constantinople in the mid to late 1440s, but was already active as a scholar at that time. During the course of his career he copied a very large number of medical and philosophical works (including Galen and Aristotle), and had an interest in current events, as shown by notes that he made in his manuscripts referring to the fall of the Hexamilion in 1446, to an expedition of the sultan against the Albanians, and to the ownership history of some books of Trapezuntine origin. He also made copies of historical works including Thucydides, the memoirs of Syropoulos about the Council of Ferrara-Florence, and Laonikos (namely *Paris.gr.* 1780), and he knew Kritoboulos, the historian of Mehmed.<sup>27</sup> According to Mondrain, he is last attested in 1476 and may have lived as late as 1479.<sup>28</sup> In sum, Laonikos stopped writing in 1464 at the

<sup>26</sup> A. Kaldellis, “The Date of Laonikos’ *Histories*,” *GRBS* 52 (2012) 111–136, establishes that window. The long-held consensus that Laonikos was writing in the late 1480s was brought down to 1469–1470 by H. Wurm and E. Gamillscheg, “Bemerkungen zu Laonikos Chalkokondyles,” *JÖByz* 42 (1992) 213–219, but they too misunderstood his references to Bohemia.

<sup>27</sup> B. Mondrain, “Jean Argyropoulos professeur à Constantinople et ses auditeurs médecins, d’Andronic Éparque à Démétrios Angelos,” in C. Scholz and G. Makris (eds.), *ΠΟΛΥΠΛΑΕΥΡΟΣ ΝΟΥΣ: Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner* (Munich 2000) 223–250, esp. 237–242.

<sup>28</sup> B. Mondrain, “Démétrios Angelos et la médecine: contribution nouvelle au dossier,” in V. Boudon-Millot et al. (eds.), *Storia della tradizione e edizione dei medici greci* (Naples 2010) 293–322, here 299, 304.

earliest, Amiroutzes died ca. 1470, while *Paris.gr.* 1780 (our first manuscript of the *Histories*) was copied by Angelos by the mid to late 1470s at the latest, but probably in the 1460s (considering also the evidence of the watermarks provided by Wurm).

We must remember that Angelos, the copyist of *Paris.gr.* 1780, was not necessarily himself the interpolator, unless he was also the copyist of whatever manuscript the interpolations were first introduced to, possibly the lost  $\omega$ . At any rate, we are dealing with a well-defined Constantinopolitan milieu during a fairly narrow time frame. Amiroutzes was active in Constantinople and in the sultan's favor in the mid to late 1460s, and he knew Angelos, for Angelos copied a philosophical work by Amiroutzes into one of his Aristotle manuscripts (*Laur.* 87.17, f. 139<sup>v</sup>),<sup>29</sup> which suggests that they were on close terms.<sup>30</sup> Both of them, moreover, were on good terms with the historian Kritoboulos, who finished working on his *History* of Mehmed in 1467. Angelos filled in the gaps in an epigram (*Anth.Gr.* 9.83) written by Kritoboulos on a manuscript of Thucydides, and noted that the words had been written by Kritoboulos.<sup>31</sup> Amiroutzes and Kritoboulos corresponded in the later 1460s regarding intellectual matters and Kritoboulos included a passage of praise for Amiroutzes the philosopher in his *History*, a unique reference in that work to a contemporary man of

<sup>29</sup> Mondrain, in *ΠΟΛΥΠΛΑΕΥΡΟΣ* 248; C. Macé and P. Van Deun, "L'intellect n'est pas commun à tous les hommes: l'*Opuscule philosophique* de George Amiroutzès," *Medioevo Greco* 9 (2009) 225–230.

<sup>30</sup> Though this would help my argument, there is apparently no proof that Amiroutzes had been, like Demetrios Angelos, a fellow student of Ioannes Argyropoulos: Monfasani, *George Amiroutzes* 11, *pace* scholars to whom Mondrain (in *ΠΟΛΥΠΛΑΕΥΡΟΣ* 237) should be added. Nor is there reason to think that Angelos was a student of Amiroutzes, as M. Rashed has it: *Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der aristotelischen Schrift De generatione et corruptione* (Wiesbaden 2001) 105.

<sup>31</sup> D. R. Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae* (Berlin/New York 1983) 68\*–69\*; Mondrain, in *ΠΟΛΥΠΛΑΕΥΡΟΣ* 240–241.

letters.<sup>32</sup> D. R. Reinsch, moreover, has argued on internal grounds that Laonikos himself was writing the *Histories* in Constantinople and may have used the *History* of Kritoboulos.<sup>33</sup> We cannot be certain about the latter, however, until we know more about the history of the two works' composition. The relationship may well have been in the other direction, as Laonikos is likely to have finished first. It is difficult to believe under these circumstances that Amiroutzes-Angelos would have access to the text of Laonikos in the mid to late 1460s, while Kritoboulos was working on his own *History*, and not have given it to him.

Admittedly there is a gap in our knowledge of some thirteen years at most, or a few months at least, between the point when Laonikos ceased to work on his *Histories* and the appearance of Angelos' copy of it, replete with interpolations. We do not know what happened to the text during that time-gap, but the dramatis personae of its history during those years are likely to have been the circle of Amiroutzes, Angelos, and Kritoboulos. We are looking for someone who had an intimate knowledge of the empire of Trebizond, the geography of Iberia, and the fate of the Komnenoi in and after 1461, who had an interest in explaining the role that Amiroutzes played in the events of 1463, who had access to the text of Laonikos in Constantinople, and who could write a passable imitation of Laonikos when he wanted to. We cannot catch Amiroutzes in the act, but we can come close.

Moreover, it is not only in the account of the arrest and execution of the Komnenoi that Amiroutzes appears in the interpolations in Laonikos but also in the preceding account of the fall of Trebizond, which I argued above is probably authentic except for the title *protovestiaros* that it gives to Ami-

<sup>32</sup> Letter: Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae* 81\*–83\*. Kritoboulos, *History* 4.9.2–3.

<sup>33</sup> Reinsch, *Critobuli Imbriotae Historiae* 84\*–85\*, and “Η θεώρηση της πολιτικής και πολιτιστικής φυσιογνωμίας των Ελλήνων στους ιστορικούς της Άλωσης,” *Études balkaniques* 6 (1999) 69–86, here 79–80.

rouazes and the mention of the *pansebastos* on the next page. We can, however, easily imagine Amiroutzes adding his own title to Laonikos' account of the siege or even, in the case that Laonikos had not originally mentioned Amiroutzes at all in his account of the city's surrender, adding himself as the intermediary between Mahmud and David. He may well have actually played that role, being Mahmud's cousin, and may have wanted to highlight his historical importance while also making himself seem cooperative in Turkish eyes (the charge that he betrayed Trebizond was, as we saw, a later invention and is not suggested here; at the time when the interpolations were written Amiroutzes would have had no reason to counter such a charge). This explains one of the two anomalies (the titles) in the otherwise unobjectionable passage on the fall of Trebizond.

Amiroutzes had in fact already written a sorrowful eyewitness account of the siege in a letter to Bessarion dated 11 December 1461. He recounts there how the imperial family was placed on ships and taken first to Constantinople and then to Adrianople. He calls Mehmed *ὁ πάντα κρατῶν ... ὁ κρατῶν* in connection with the sultan's treatment of captives (in this case, Amiroutzes' captive son).<sup>34</sup> We recall that the interpolator likewise calls the sultan *ὁ κρατῶν* in connection with his treatment of captives, the first time immediately after the end of the account of the siege in Laonikos and then again in the passage about Anna. The fact that Amiroutzes' son Basileios was taken captive and that he himself was also displaced to Adrianople explains why he might have wanted to add such detail regarding the fate of the population to Laonikos' narrative, and why he was so interested in the religious choices facing the displaced royalty (we note again that after his death his own sons would convert to Islam).

In support of this strand of the argument, John Monfasani

<sup>34</sup> *PG* 161.723–728, here at 727. The date was provided by S. Lambros from another manuscript of the letter than that used by *PG*: “Ἡ περὶ ἀλώσεως Τραπεζοῦντος ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ Ἀμηρούτζη,” *Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων* 12 (1915) 476–479.

has kindly informed me that “in the original Greek text of his *Dialogus de fide* (MS Toledo, Archivio y Biblioteca Capitolares, 96–37)”—of which he is currently preparing a critical edition<sup>35</sup>—“Amiroutzes consistently uses ὁ κρατῶν to mark the parts where Mehmed speaks, even though the translation of Zanobi Acciaiuoli has *rex*, which would lead one mistakenly to think that the Greek was *basileus*.”

There is one more text that links the interpolator to Demetrios Angelos and, through him, possibly to Amiroutzes (in fact, this text was among those previously attributed to Amiroutzes that have now been reassigned to Angelos). A note in *Lond. Med. Soc.* 52 describes the arrest and execution of the Grand Komnenoi.<sup>36</sup> This account tallies closely with that in the interpolation. Both are in agreement that David, three of his sons, and one nephew were arrested and imprisoned in Adrianople and that they were soon conveyed to Constantinople and executed. The author uses the term ἀυθέντης twice, which the interpolator, as we have seen, also favors. Both pay special attention to Georgios, whom they both know to be the youngest of the three sons. Specifically, both draw attention to his conversion to Islam, and use similar language:

Ps.-Chalkokondyles (249.3–7): ὁ μέντοι βασιλέως παῖς ὁ νεώτερος, Γεώργιος τοῦνομα, ὡς ἐς τὴν Ἀδριανούπολιν παρών, ἐτράπετο ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ Μεχμέτεω θρησκείαν, καὶ ἐς τὰ ἦθη γενόμενος τὰ ἐκείνων οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον συνελήφθη ἅμα τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὑπὸ βασιλέως.

*Lond. Med. Soc.* 52: ἐκρατήθη ἐν Ἀδριανόπολει ὁ ἅγιος μοὶ ἀυθέντης καὶ βασιλεὺς Τραπεζοῦντος ὁ Μέγας Κομνηνὸς κῦρ Δα(υ)ιδὸς σὺν τοῖς τριῶν υἱοῖς τῷ τε κῦρ Βασιλείῳ καὶ κῦρ Μανουήλ, καὶ κῦρ Γεωργίῳ, τῷ καὶ ὕστερον χρηματίσαντι μουλσουμάνῳ διὰ τῶν ἀθλίῳν Καβαζίτων, γενομένων καὶ αὐτῶν Τούρκων.

I am not postulating a direct relationship between the two

<sup>35</sup> Monfasani, *George Amiroutzes* 12–23.

<sup>36</sup> For the text and commentary see Gamillscheg, *JÖByz* 36 (1986) 297–300.

texts, only that they are likely traceable to the same author(s), perhaps a few years apart.

The interpolator's preoccupation with religion is matched by the author of this note, who comments, as does the interpolator, on the aborted conversion to Islam of Alexios (Skantarios), David's nephew. This man, incidentally, is called Skantarios in the first interpolation in Laonikos (219.21), which spells the name (its Turkish form) in the exact same way as does the note.<sup>37</sup> The hostile portrayal of the Kabazitai family in the manuscript note, which calls them ἄθλιοι who led Skantarios to apostasy, is matched by the first interpolator, who depicts them as betraying his father Alexios IV when he was overthrown by Ioannes IV (προδεδόκασιν: 220.9).<sup>38</sup> So we have the same facts, the same preoccupation with the religious history of the Komnenoi in their captivity, and the same bias against the Kabazitai.

Gamillscheg's argument that this note was written by Amirutzes himself would have suited my argument regarding the interpolations better than Mondrain's attribution of it to Demetrios Angelos. Of course, if Amirutzes was our interpolator he would have known exactly the same facts about the fate of the Komnenoi, probably better than Angelos did. Moreover, it is still possible that he wrote or supplied the information for the note that Angelos copied into *Lond. Med. Soc.* 52. The note refers to David Komnenos in a personal way as ὁ ἅγιος μοὶ ἀυθέντης καὶ βασιλεύς, which is more appropriate for a former servant of that emperor than a Constantinopolitan scribe with no known connection to the Trapezuntine royal family. Angelos is known to have copied into his manuscripts at least one other brief text composed by Amirutzes: why not this one too? This note takes up three quarters of a page after the end of the main text.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, if Angelos was closely enough con-

<sup>37</sup> He is *PLP* no. 12085 (V 224–225).

<sup>38</sup> For the Kabazitai / Kabasitanoi, see Barzos, *Βυζαντινά* 12 (1983) 274.

<sup>39</sup> Gamillscheg, *ἸὸΒυζ* 36 (1986) 289 n.13.

nected to the Komnenoi to write such a detailed and personal note himself, then he would likely have been even more closely associated with Amiroutzes than we suspected originally.

Be that as it may, we have narrowed the time, place, and identity of the interpolator to 1460–1470s Constantinople and the circle of Amiroutzes-Angelos. We do not know how information flowed between the two men or how it was then made into textual knowledge, but I suspect that Amiroutzes is the most likely candidate to be our interpolator. This cannot be proved conclusively, and the identification remains circumstantial. Further research into this intellectual milieu may turn up alternate candidates.

In this light we can look back at the interpolations as a group. It seems clear that they were added after Laonikos finished working on the history. In 1909, K. Güterbock suggested that they had been prepared as a kind of dossier by Laonikos himself, only he forgot or was unable to integrate them fully into the narrative.<sup>40</sup> Darkó, Grecu, and Ditten, by contrast, believed correctly that they are later interpolations, as some disrupt Laonikos' narrative, or are not in his style, or seem to have been written by someone trying to imitate him.<sup>41</sup> This raises a final problem, that I cannot at present solve. This concerns the difference in style between the first interpolation, which does not imitate Laonikos, and the later ones that do, which is striking. Why the switch, if we are dealing with only one interpolator? We can answer only by conjecture. Perhaps Amiroutzes was using another written source when he wrote about the rebellion of Ioannes IV and the invasion by Junayd. When he turned to write about Iberia and, later, the fate of the Komnenoi, he did his own best Laonikos imitation. Or else,

<sup>40</sup> K. Güterbock, "Laonikos Chalkondyles," *Zeitschrift für Völkerrecht und Bundesstaatsrecht* 4 (1909) 72–102, here 94–96.

<sup>41</sup> Darkó, "Zum Leben des Laonikos Chalkondyles," *BZ* 24 (1923–1924) 29–39, here 37–39; Grecu, *Bulletin de la section historique de l'Académie Roumaine* 27 (1946) 92–94; Ditten, in *Actes du XII<sup>e</sup> Congrès*, who assesses the arguments at 295–297 n.161.



when he wrote the first interpolation, about matters remote in time, he had not yet decided to disguise his interventions.

What about the politics of the earlier interpolations? The first presents the empress Theodora (d. 1426) as an adultress, though, as we saw above, forty years after the event this may have been due to ignorance or confusion. It is also not friendly to Ioannes IV, given his overreaction to his mother's affair and his own rebellion against his father, yet later he holds his ground against Junayd with only fifty men while his nobles flee to Iberia. The end of that story was clearly meant to humiliate the aristocracy ("they were reproached by the emperor, who called them effeminate cowards and traitors of their country," II 222.19–21). Unfortunately, we do not know enough about internal Trapezuntine politics to evaluate these passages, and thereby situate Amiroutzes within a spectrum of opinion. The Iberian digression has a Christian bias, but that tells us little (other than that it was not written by Laonikos).

If the argument presented here is correct, Amiroutzes played a critical role in the transmission of Laonikos' history, possibly in the archetype that lay behind the extant copy made by Angelos. Only that line of transmission survived, so two men stand between us and Laonikos. Further study of that decade might yield more insights about the circumstances of the text's composition and its initial reception.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The complexity of the literary scene in the post-conquest years, where various interests were pushing different views of recent events, is revealed now in M. Philippides and W. Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies* (Ashgate 2011).