

2016

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Recommended Citation

Philippides, Marios, "Venice, Genoa, and John VIII Palaeologus' Renovation of the Fortifications of Constantinople" (2016). *Classics Faculty Publication Series*. 3.

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Venice, Genoa, and John VIII Palaeologus' Renovation of the Fortifications of Constantinople

Marios Philippides

Leslie S. B. MacCoull: In memoriam

AN INCIDENT involving Emperor John VIII Palaeologus and his Genoese neighbors at Pera, across Constantinople's Golden Horn, is briefly described by Laonikos [= Nikolaos] Khalkokondyles. Khalkokondyles furnishes no specific date for this incident, but its position in his narrative suggests that it took place early in the 1430s.¹ According to Khalkokondyles, a localized conflict arose between Constantinople and the Genoese settlement because of John's attempt to raise taxes on the Perenses (6.3):²

Ἰωάννης δ' οὖν ὁ τοῦ Βυζαντίου βασιλεὺς ἐπολέμει πρὸς τοὺς Ἰαννίους, διενεχθεὶς ἀπὸ αἰτίας τοιαύτης, τῆς ἀπὸ κουμερκίων τοῦ Γαλάτου ἕνεκα. ἐνταῦθα οἱ Ἰαννῖοι ναῦς πληρώσαντες μεγίστας δὴ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς καὶ τριῆρεις τρισκαίδεκα, καὶ ἐμβιβάσαντες ἐς τὰς ναῦς ὀπλίτας αὐτῶν ἀμφὶ τοὺς ὀκτακισχίλιους, ἐπέπλεον ἐπὶ Βυζάντιον, ἐξελεῖν βουλόμενοι.

¹ The incident occurred in 1434, as is correctly stated by the recent editor: A. Kaldellis, *The Histories: Laonikos Chalkokondyles* (Cambridge [Mass.]/London 2014) II 488 n.8.

² Khalkokondyles is the only contemporary historian, and our only source, to speak of this incident as a local "war" between Pera and Constantinople. Modern scholarship has not investigated this incident either, and the standard histories of the period neglect it altogether; the incident is presented in a rather obscure manner by Khalkokondyles.

John the king of Byzantium fought a war against the Genoese. The cause was his taxation of commerce profits from Galatas [= Pera]. At this point the Genoese equipped their largest ships and thirteen triremes and embarked about eighteen hundred of their hoplites [= armored men], and sailed against Byzantium intending to seize it.

This quarrel reached the stage of armed conflict because of John's decision to increase his revenues by imposing new taxes on Pera. John was indeed in need of funds for his treasury, which must have been depleted after his recent successful campaigns in the Morea against the local Italian lords. New funds were essential to finance his project of refortifying the walls of Constantinople, which had suffered serious damage during the siege by Murad II in the previous decade. A similar financial situation occurred later, early in the reign of John's successor Constantine XI Palaeologus, who also tried to raise capital to support his defense against the Ottomans' war preparations and mobilization to besiege Constantinople; in this later case Constantine was in violation of the existing treaty between the imperial court and the *Serenissima*, which John had concluded earlier with the Venetians, specifically by proposing to impose taxes on the Venetians over the sale of wine.³ While both Greek emperors, John and Constantine, may have violated articles of existing treaties, the fact was that they were in desperate need of funds and could not impose higher, or additional, taxes on their impoverished Greek subjects, as

³ The treaty had been negotiated and signed by John VIII and the Venetians on 19 September 1442; the article disregarded by Constantine reads, in its Latin version: *in quibus tabernis ordinatis sui Veneti possint vendere vinum cuiuscumque manierei ad minutum in quacumque quantitate, sine ulla gravitate* (S. P. Lampros, "Συνθήκη μεταξύ Ἰωάννου Η' Παλαιολόγου καὶ τοῦ δουκὸς τῆς Βενετίας Φραγκίσκου Φόσκαρη," *Νέος Ἑλληνομνημῶν* 12 [1915] 157). The questionable statement, *sine ulla gravitate*, which the Greek version of the treaty renders as *χωρὶς τινος βάρους*, seems to constitute the nucleus of the complaint. For the Greek and Latin texts and an English translation of the treaty see M. Philippides, *Constantine XI Dragaš Palaeologus: A Biography of the Last Greek Emperor* (forthcoming), Appendix IV.

Constantinople's wealth had gradually passed into the hands of the resident Italians.⁴ In addition, whatever wealth remained in Greek possession was in the hands of a very few enormously prosperous citizens of Constantinople, who, after the fall of 1453, were accused of denying their fair share to the defense of their homeland and of investing their fortunes in various banking institutions in Italy. Later authors suggested that the consequence was the conquest of the city by the Ottoman Turks. The following comments constitute a typical sample of this attitude, in the anonymous sixteenth-century *Barberini Chronicle*:⁵

⁴ That is the conclusion reached by D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge 1988) 391.

⁵ G. T. Zoras, *Χρονικὸν περὶ τῶν Τούρκων Σουλτάνων (κατὰ τὸν Βαρβ. Ἑλληνικὸν Κώδικα 111)* (Athens 1956) 7.12: For a translation and commentary see M. Philippides, *Byzantium, Europe, and the Early Ottoman Sultans 1373–1513: An Anonymous Greek Chronicle of the Seventeenth Century* (New Rochelle 1990). Identical sentiments are expressed in the narrative of Languschi-Dolfin (whose text, in a colorful mixture of the Venetian *quattrocento* dialect and Latin, may be the immediate source of the *Barberini Chronicle*; Languschi-Dolfin's chronicle depends, to a large extent, on the Latin text of Bishop Leonardo's eyewitness report on the siege and fall of Constantinople): G. M. Thomas, "Die Eroberung Constantinopels im Jahre 1453 aus einer venetianischen Chronik," *SBMünchen* 2 (1868) 18, *Et fu grande impieta de quelli baroni greci auari direptori de la patria. De li qual piu uolte el pouero Imperator cum lachrime domandaua, prestasseno denari per condur prouisionati. Et quelli iurauano esser poueri disfatti, che dapoi presi el Signor Turcho quelli trouo richissimi.* Cf. *Barberini Chronicle* 7.33, which also depends on Languschi-Dolfin 31, *et tutti li absconditi perueniano in man de Turci, o Greci miseri et miserabili che fingeui esser poueri. Ecco che sono uenuti in luce li uostri tesori, li quali teneui, et negauu uoler dar per subsidio de la citade.* On the interdependence of these chronicles see M. Philippides, "The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Bishop Leonard and the Greek Accounts," *GRBS* 22 (1980) 287–300, and "The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Bishop Leonardo and his Italian Followers," *Viator* 29 (1998) 189–227; M. Philippides and Walter K. Hanak, *The Siege and Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies* (Farnham 2011) 139–193. On the wealthy class of the Greeks of Constantinople and the financial problems of the state see T. Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or Manager: Power and Political Ideology in Byzantium before 1453* (Geneva 2011), esp. 112 ff.;

ὦ Ῥωμαῖοι φιλάργυροι, δημηγέρτες, τραδιτόροι, ὅπου ἐτραδί-
 ρετε τὴν πατρίδα σας, ὅπου ὁ βασιλέας σας ἦτονε πτωχὸς καὶ
 σᾶς ἐπαρακάλειε μὲ τὰ δάκρυα ἔς τὰ μάτια νὰ τοῦ δανείσετε
 φλωρία διὰ νὰ δώση καὶ νὰ μαζώξη πολεμιστάδες ἀνθρώπους
 νὰ βοηθήσωσι καὶ νὰ πολεμήσουνε, καὶ ἐσεῖς ἀρνίεστε μεθ’
 ὄρκους πὼς δὲν ἔχετε καὶ εἶστε πτωχοί! ἀμμή ὑστέρου, ὅπου σᾶς
 ἐπῆρε ὁ Τοῦρκος, εὐρέθητε πλούσοι καὶ σᾶς τὸ πῆρε ὁ Τοῦρκος
 καὶ ἔκοψε καὶ τὸ κεφάλι σας.

O Romans! You were avaricious, rabble-rousers, and traitors. You handed over your homeland. Your emperor was poor; he begged you, with tears in his eyes, to lend him florins in order to hire and gather warriors to help in the war, but you refused, saying, with oaths, that you had no money and that you were poor. But later, after the Turk conquered you, you were found to be rich. The Turk deprived you of your wealth and cut your heads off.

Constantine XI did not prevail in this quarrel with the Venetians; their differences, nevertheless, did not advance from diplomatic negotiations to armed conflict.⁶ It is also possible that, in 1452, Constantine had also planned to tax the Genoese of Pera, but advisors with long memory could have brought up John’s earlier fruitless attempt; in 1453 the Venetians were an

for the wealth of one prominent individual and his family, whose fortunes had been invested in Italian banking institutions, see K. P. Matschke, “The Notaras Family and its Italian Connections,” *DOP* 49 (1995) 59–72; T. Ganchou, “Le rachat des Notaras après la chute de Constantinople ou les ‘étrangères’ de l’élite byzantine au XV^e siècle,” in M. Balard and A. Ducellier (eds.), *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (X^e–XVI^e siècles)* (Paris 2002) 149–229; E. Burke, “Surviving Exile: Byzantine Families and the Serenissima 1453–1600,” in I. Nilsson and P. Stephenson (eds.), *Wanted: Byzantium. The Desire for a Lost Empire* (Uppsala 2014) 109–131, esp. 115–118.

⁶ N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l’Histoire des Croisades au XV^e siècle VI* (Bucharest 1916) 67, 68; for the documents of the period 2–17 August 1450 see F. Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie III* (Paris/The Hague 1961) 157–158, nos. 2830 and 2831. Constantine explained that his tax was *pro utilitate urbis*, “for the welfare of the city.” John VIII must have used a similar reason to raise the rate of the *commercium* on the Genoese of Pera.

easier target, *prima facie*, as their quarter was in close proximity, within Constantinople and not across the Golden Horn.

After mentioning the attack on Constantinople by the Genoese of Pera, Khalkokondyles interrupts his account of this “war” and describes an intervening armed conflict between the Genoese and the khan of Crimea, which prevented further hostile action against the Greek capital; the Greek historian then adds that, after their forces were released from duty in the Crimea, the Perenses turned their attention to Constantinople once more, held a public meeting to consider their military options, and launched an attack, with their naval forces, upon Constantinople’s sea walls along the Golden Horn (6.5):

οὕτω δὴ ἀπαλλαχθέντες τοῦ πρὸς Σκύθας τοὺς ἐν τῷ Βοσπόρῳ νομάδας, κατέπλεον ἐς Βυζάντιον, ἀφικόμενοι ἐς Γαλατίνην πόλιν τὴν κατανατικρὸν Βυζαντίου ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ, καὶ κοινῇ βουλευσάμενοι, ὃν τρόπον τὴν πόλιν μαχοῦμενοι ἐξέλωσι, τὰς τε ναῦς ἐπλήρωσαν, καὶ ἐξοπλισάμενοι κατὰ τὸν Βυζαντίου λιμένα προσέφερον τὰς ναῦς ἐπὶ τὸ τεῖχος ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν νεῶν τὴν πόλιν αἰρήσοντες.

So the ones who had gone against the Scythians in the Bosphorus sailed down to Byzantium and reached Galatas, the city across Byzantium in Europe; they held a general council in their effort to find a way to take the city; they manned their ships and, with full armament, they directed those ships to attack the walls of the harbor of Byzantium and capture the city with their fleet.

They failed to muster sufficient forces to attack the land walls, but they probably had been encouraged by the precedent of the Fourth Crusade, when westerners had been able to penetrate Constantinople’s sea walls, ignoring the land fortifications. The attack of the Perenses on Constantinople’s sea walls failed:

οἱ μὲν οὖν Βυζάντιοι παρεσκευάζοντο ἀμυνόμενοι, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους ἐμάχοντο πρὸς τοὺς Ἰανυίους ἀξίως λόγου· καὶ ὡς προσέβαλλον τῷ τείχει ἀπὸ τῶν νεῶν καὶ ἐπειρῶντο ἐλεῖν, οὐκ ἠδύναντο ἐπιβῆναι τοῦ τείχους, ἀμυνομένων τῶν Ἑλλήνων κατὰ τὸ καρτερόν. ἐνταῦθα, ὡς οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς προεχώρει, διέστησάν τε καὶ ἀπέπλεον ἐπὶ Ἰταλίας.

The inhabitants of Byzantium prepared their defense and resisted the Genoese from the walls bravely. The latter attacked the walls from their ships, but proved unable to mount the walls, as the Hellenes resisted mightily. Unable to achieve anything, they withdrew and sailed away to Italy.

The conflict went on for some time but there were no other direct attacks upon the land or the sea walls. Then the “siege” deteriorated to a stage of long-range bombardment between Pera and the city, but the Greeks then took the offensive: they blockaded Pera and the Genoese suburb, attacked its defenses, and prevented the settlement from receiving supplies. In addition, some ships of the Genoese were directly attacked⁷ and numerous Genoese sailors were captured to join other citizens of Pera who had been taken while defending the moat of Pera against the Greeks. In fact, their capture seems to have been the turning point in this “war.” Three hundred prisoners in chains were brought before John VIII in his residence and subsequently diplomacy took over, a truce was declared, and a compromise was reached on the commerce taxes and on other minor matters (6.6):

ἡ μὲν πόλις τῶν Ἰανυίων ἢ Γαλατίη ἐπολέμει ἐπὶ συχρὸν τινα χρόνον τῷ Βυζαντίῳ, καὶ τηλεβόλοις ἐξ ἀλλήλων οἱ τε Ἑλληνες καὶ οἱ ἐκ τοῦ Γαλάτου ἐνέβαλλον, ὁπότε καὶ ὁ Λεοντάρης Ἰωάννης τῷ τείχει τῆς Γαλατίης σφοδρῶς ἐπείσπεσῶν ἀπέκλεισε αὐτήν, στερηθεῖσαν παντὸς τροφίμου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων. καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν ἀπὸ τῶν νηῶν τῶν Ἰανυίων ἐπιδραμῶν οὗτος κατέσχε, καὶ μεθ’ ἀλύσεων τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἰωάννῃ ὄντι ἐν τῷ οἰκίματι τοῦ Ξυλλᾶ προσεκόμισεν ὡσεὶ τριακοσίου, προσευρῶν τούτους ἐν τῷ χάρακι τοῦ Γαλάτου.

Galatas, the city of the Genoese, fought a war against Byzantium for some time; the Hellenes and the Genoese Perenses bombarded each other from their stations; at this point John Leontares launched a strong attack upon the wall of Pera and

⁷ Khalkokondyles never mentions the activities of the Constantinopolitan Venetians at this time, a curious omission, given the traditional enmity between Venetians and Genoese.

enforced a blockade, which denied all supplies of food and other necessities. In raids he captured many of their men assigned to the ships. He brought them, about three hundred of them, in chains to King John who was residing in the Xyllalas palace; he had captured them in the vicinity of Pera's ditch.

In the compromise, Khalkokondyles specifies only that the Perenses agreed to the terms imposed by the emperor (without clarification on the commerce taxes, the origin of the dispute), adds that negotiations on taxes from Pera's vineyards were also discussed, and states that reparations were paid for the damages that had been inflicted during the bombardment:

μετὰ ταῦτα διαπρεσβευσάμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους περί τε τῶν ἔξω ἀμπελίων τοῦ Γαλάτου καὶ περὶ τῶν κουμερκίων αὐτῶν, ὅπως συγκατατεθῆ ὁ βασιλεύς, συγκατένευσαν οἱ Ἰανυῖοι, ἀποχαρίσαντες καὶ μᾶλλον τῷ βασιλεῖ χρυσίνους χιλίους φθορᾶς ἕνεκα τοῦ ἐν τῇ Βασιλικῇ πύργου, εἰς ὃν οἱ Ἰανυῖοι τηλεβόλοις ἐχρήσαντο, καὶ τῶν ἐργαστηρίων τῶν ἐν τῇ Μέσῃ, ἐξ ὧν ἐχαλάσθησαν, καὶ τὴν σημαίαν αἴρειν τοῦ βασιλέως Ἑλλήνων. ταῦτα μὲν ἐς τοσοῦτον τοῖς Ἑλλησι προσενήνεκται ἐς τοὺς Ἰανυῖους.

Afterwards, embassies were exchanged and negotiated the vineyards outside Galatas and their taxation; both the king [John VIII] and the Genoese reached an agreement and they yielded to the king one thousand gold coins for the damages they had caused on the tower by the Basilike [Gate], which had been struck by the bombs of the Genoese, and for the destruction of the workshops in the Mese; they also agreed to fly the flag of the king of the Hellenes. This was the agreement between the Hellenes and the Genoese.

Thus this incident was brought to an end. Such is the account in Khalkokondyles' narrative, which, however, seems to simplify matters.⁸ The fact that he interrupts his narrative with

⁸ The narrow view of Khalkokondyles and the pressing financial needs of John are followed in a short account of this incident by N. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins: Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge 2009) 190, 191, without mention of the wider war between Venice and Genoa.

the offensive of the Genoese in the Crimea suggests that we are dealing with more intricate circumstances. It is also interesting that Khalkokondyles does not mention the Venetians of Constantinople in the entire affair, who had their own quarters within Constantinople and would have been involved in the incident one way or another. The plain fact is that this incident was not a localized “war” between Pera and Constantinople but took place during a more serious war between Genoa and Venice. In this matter Khalkokondyles was not well informed and seems to have simplified a complicated situation.

The actual nature of this conflict is treated, in its proper context, in a contemporary rhetorical piece,⁹ an encomium-panegyric in John’s honor, which has not been attributed to any specific author. This minor piece elucidates the circumstances involving Genoa and Venice, which included Constantinople. According to this author, during the course of a war between the two traditional Italian enemies, John VIII played a significant role as a mediator. Thus he was not direct the cause of the war by raising taxes on Pera, in spite of what Khalkokondyles would have us believe; if he did so, it was an attempt to take advantage of the war between his two “allies,” Genoa and Venice. The author of the panegyric first produces a fair paragraph on the status of Pera and its origins (III 301):

⁹ The *quattrocento* manuscript 34, fol. 105^r–116^v, in the patriarchal library of Cairo, was published in S. P. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά* III (Athens 1926) 292–308. In spite of the important historical information it contains, this *Ἐγκώμιον εἰς τὸν Αὐτοκράτορα* has never been translated into English and has been overlooked by scholars. Thus D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*² (Cambridge 1993), K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)* II (Philadelphia 1976), and the standard histories of late medieval Greece overlook the information embedded in this piece. According to the editors, who oversaw the publication of *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά* after the death of Lampros, the text is full of “παμπόλλων σολοικισμῶν καὶ βαρβαρισμῶν ... ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡ χρῆσις μετοχῆς ἀντὶ ὀριστικῆς” (III 292), which is perhaps an unfair and excessively pedantic charge; it is, after all, an informative, lucid piece that provides valuable historical information presented in competent Attic style.

οἱ Γαλάται, ἔθνος ὄν ἰταλικόν, τοῖς δόγμασι ἐπόμενον τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης, πρὸ πολλῶν ἐτῶν ἐνταῦθα παραγενόμενοι ἐξητήσαντο τόπον πλησίον τῆς πόλεως κατ' ἀντιπέραν τοῦ πορθμοῦ εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἄστεως παρά τῶν τηνικαῦτα βεβασιλευκότων τῆς Ἑώρας μέρη, καὶ τυχόντως οὐπὲρ ἤτοῦντο ὑποδόμησαν πόλιν ... ἐγγέγραπτο δὲ ἐν ταῖς συμβάσεσιν ὑποτελεῖς εἶναι διὰ παντὸς καὶ σύμμαχοι τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸν ἅπαντα ... ἔκτοτε οὖν καὶ μέχρι τῆς δεῦρο οὐδαμῶς τοὺς ὅρους κεκινήκασι τοὺς παλαιούς, ἀλλ' ἦσαν μεμνηκότες καὶ τὰ πιστὰ διατηροῦντες.

The Galatans are an Italian nation, which follows the dogmas of the elder Rome. Many years ago they came here and they requested, from the those who were the emperors of the eastern parts, a place near the city across the straits [= Golden Horn] to build a city; their request was granted ... it was specified in a written agreement that they would be subjects and allies of the emperors through all eternity ... Since then to the present day they have never violated the old terms; they were always mindful of them and they kept the faith.

As the anonymous author notes, the situation changed when the doge of Venice, Francesco Foscari, disapproved of a treaty that had been negotiated between Genoa and Milan; hostilities broke out,¹⁰ and Venice attacked Genoese possessions in the Levant, the primary target being Chios, held by the Genoese.¹¹

¹⁰ The duke of Milan attacked the Venetians, according to the author, and a war broke out (III 301): τοῖς Βενετίκοις μάλιστα ἐμπεπολεμηθεῖς [the duke of Milan] ἐγείρει πρὸς αὐτοὺς πόλεμον ἄσπονδον. The author was well informed as to the circumstances in Italy and certainly knew more details about the conflict between Venice and Genoa than Khalkokondyles. For the western sources on this war, its course in Italy, and the repercussions in the Levant (without any discussion of Constantinople or John VIII's role) see P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese and their Administration of the Island 1346–1566 I* (Cambridge 1958) 174–191.

¹¹ III 301–302: ἀλγήσαντες τοιγαροῦν τὸ τῶν Βενετίκων ἔθνος ὁμοίως τῷ δουκὶ καὶ κατ' αὐτῶν [the Genoese] ἐφέροντο. εἶθ' οὕτως ἐκπλεύσαντες ναυσὶ πεντεκαίδεκα ἐπὶ τὴν Χίον. The antiquarian traveller Cyriacus of Ancona, who had acquired various Greek codices in the Levant (*et ibi* [Chios] *Kyriacus per dies ... lectitando Graecos quos ... e Thessalonica libros miserat*),

Twenty-one Venetian galleys, probably a separate contingent from the fleet dispatched to Chios, eagerly proceeded to Pera itself; the Genoese of Pera were not prepared to defend themselves, so they shut the gates of their suburb and attempted to protect their ships in the harbor. Then the anonymous author suggests that John VIII took it upon himself to play the role of a mediator. He gave the Venetian contingent a fine reception, honored its leaders with gifts, and sent a message to the Perenses pleading with them to refrain from overt hostilities in order to avoid an attack by the Venetian fleet. Nevertheless, the Genoese fired a cannon, whose projectile struck a Venetian galley and killed two sailors. The author states that only respect for the Greek emperor prevented the Venetians from attacking Pera at this point (III 302–303):

ἔξαιφνης ὑφίστανται τοῦ πελάγους τῆς Προποντίδος τριήρεις τῶν Βενετῶν εἴκοσι καὶ μία ... οἱ τε μὴν Γαλάται ... οὐ παρεσκευάσαντο πρὸς παράταξιν ... καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀποσκευασάμενοι εἴσω τείχους γέγονασιν, ὁμοῦ μὲν τὰ σώματα ἀβλαβῆ τηρήσοντες, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ τὰς ναῦς ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς διασώσουσι. ἀλλ' ἦν μὲν ἅπαντα φροῦδα τὰ σφῶν αὐτῶν βουλευόμενα, εἰ τοῦ σοφωτάτου βασιλέως μὴ παρῆν ἐπιχείρησις ... πρῶτον μὲν φιλοφρονεῖται τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ ἄσμενος δέχεται καὶ δώροις τιμᾶ,

was detained in Chios, as the Genoese authorities were aware of the Venetian contingent making its way to the east to attack their island, and had prohibited the departure of all ships. After intense negotiations, Cyriacus and his ship were allowed to leave, but later he was stopped and was interrogated as a possible collaborator of the Genoese by the Venetian authorities at Corfu, which the Venetian armada, on its way to the Levant, had reached, before he was allowed to depart. The incident is recounted in Francesco Scalamonti's *Vita clarissimi et famosissimi viri Kyriaci Anconitani*: C. Mitchell, E. W. Bodnar, and C. Foss (eds.), *Cyriac of Ancona: Life and Early Travels* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2015) 83–85, with the following conclusion: *Kyriacus ipse ... et apud Cassiopeum Corcirae insulae portum in Venetianam classem incidit. Sed Andreae Mucenigo praefecto oblatis Genuensium litteris, expedita navis per Illyricum tandem Anconitatum ad portum applicuit* (also published *TAPhS* 86.4 [Philadelphia 1966]). In addition, see the brief comments of M. Belozerskaya, *To Wake the Dead: A Renaissance Merchant and the Birth of Archaeology* (New York/London 2009) 125–126.

ἴν' ἐλκύση πρὸς ἑαυτὸν τὴν γε μὴν συμβουλὴν παραδέξονται καὶ μὴ ἀπὸ πρώτης ἀφετηρίας ἀποστατοῦντες ἔσονται. κακείνοις μὲν ὡσαύτως μηνύει καὶ συμβουλεύει μηδεμίαν καθ' οἰονδήτινα τρόπον πρόφασιν δοῦναι ... οὕτω τοίνυν τὸν λόγον δεξαμένοις, ταῖς ναυσὶν ἔτι περιπλεύσασαι τὸν πορθμὸν ἐπαφίησί τις ἀπὸ σκευῆς μηχανημάτων λίθον, καὶ τοῦ σκοποῦ οὐχ ἤμαρτεν, ἀλλ' ἐνίοις τῶν πολεμίων βαλὼν ἐν τῇ τριήρει διέθραυσεν ἄνδρας δύο, καί, εἰ μὴ αἰδῶς τοῦ κρατοῦντος τὴν ὁρμὴν τούτων συνέστειλεν, ὥρμησαν ἂν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὡσπερ λέων εἰς θήραν.

suddenly twenty-one Venetian triremes appeared from the Sea of Propontis ... the Galatans [= Genoese Perenses] ... had not made preparations for a battle ... and for that reason they moved within their walls, to avoid bodily injuries and protect their ships from fire. Yet all their precautions would have been in vain, if the wisest emperor had not intervened ... First he entertained the men [Venetians] and honored them with gifts, in order to befriend them, so they would accept his counsel and keep away from their original intention. He sent a message to the others [Perenses] and advised them to abstain from all provocation ... Yet before they received his advice, with the ships still in the straits, someone fired a stone projectile from a cannon against the enemy, which did not miss its target but fell on a trireme and dismembered two men. It was only respect for the emperor that checked [the Venetians'] anger; otherwise they would have attacked with united spirit against them, like a lion upon prey.

The author does not cite any further hostilities but concentrates on the advice that the emperor offered in order to bring the two sides together and end their differences (III 304):

ταῦτα τοῦ βασιλέως ... μάλα σοφῶς συμβουλεύσαντος, ἀποστήναι μὲν τούτους τοῦ πολέμου κατέπεισε καὶ τὴν ἀναχώρησιν ἐλέσθαι, καὶ οὕτω τοῖς πολιορκηθεῖσιν οὐ τὴν τυχοῦσαν παρέσχον ἄδειαν ἀπηλλάγησαν.

These words of the emperor ... who offered wise advice persuaded them to end the war and [the Venetians] chose to depart. So they did and the besieged [Perenses] were free to enjoy their liberty.

Thus we seem to have two different accounts of the same incident. The modern historian may be tempted to combine the two different narratives and suggest that the emperor and his diplomatic corps played a role in ending this conflict between the two Italian states in the vicinity of his capital. Nevertheless, one may observe that John probably used the hostilities between the two rival Italian states to his own advantage, as would be expected. For services rendered, he may have attempted to raise capital by trying to extort funds from the Perenses, whose bombardment may have inadvertently damaged some of his fortifications and some workshops. Taking advantage of the presence and the intentions of the Venetians, he may have felt strong enough to make demands, which he backed with some military force.¹²

John was already occupied with a pressing problem that demanded a great deal of attention. The fortifications of Constantinople erected at the end of antiquity and supplemented with extensions in subsequent periods had fallen into serious disrepair; the siege by Sultan Murad II in 1422 had demonstrated that they needed immediate attention, especially at the most vulnerable spot, the *Mesoteikhion*, or Middle Wall, where the stream Lykos penetrated the walls and entered the city, whose course had seriously eroded the ancient foundations.¹³ The

¹² In 1431 John had finally renewed his treaty, variously styled as *τρέβα* [= *tregua*], *συνθήκαι*, *συμφωνία*, *συμβόλαιον*, *στοίχημα*, apparently in the form of a chrysobull (*χρυσῆ βούλη ἀπηρωρημένη*) with Venice; his mediating role in this incident would have raised his prestige among the warring alien residents in the city and across the Golden Horn in 1434. The text of the treaty has survived: Miklosich/Müller III 177–186 (the original document in Greek and Latin is in the State Archives of Venice, *busta* 35, no. 1047), with the following *incipit* in Greek and Latin: ἐπεὶ ὁ ἐπιφανής ... κῦρ Φραντζέσκος Φούσκαρις, θεοῦ χάριτι δοῦξ Βενετίας / *cum illustris et magnificus dominus Franciscus Foscari, dei gratia dux Venetiarum*. Cf. F. Dölger and P. Wirth, *Regesten der Kaiserkunden des oströmischen Reiches* V (Munich/Berlin 1965) 115–116, no. 3433. See too the comments of Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice* 373.

¹³ For the moat and the neighboring fortifications see Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 309–311. For the topography of the area and its defenses

moat also needed attention.¹⁴

So the emperor, hard pressed as he was for funds and for qualified builders and masons,¹⁵ had no choice but to proceed. He must have employed numerous untrained workers also, some of whom may have volunteered their services *pro utilitate urbis*, for the general welfare. Thus the author of the encomium to John testifies that, while laborers received wages, some clerics and monks offered their services *gratis* (III 298):

οὐδ' ἀμισθί, ἀλλὰ πάντας δουλεύειν μισθῷ μετὰ γε τῶν ὑποζυγίων ἄνευ τῶν τὴν ἱερὰν τάξιν λαχόντων ἱερέων τε καὶ διακόνων· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ μοναχῶν οὐκ ὀλίγη μερίς συνεισηλθεν ἀπὸ τε τῶν ἐντὸς σεμνείων καὶ προαστείων. ὅ γε μὴν ἅπας κλῆρος περὶ τὸν ποιμένα παρήν, μετὰ τοῦ ποιμένος σχεδὸν ἅπαντες εἰς τοῦτον διαπονοῦντες πλὴν ἐνίων, καὶ τούτων τοῦ πλήθους ἐπιστατούντων· οἱ δὲ ἦσαν οἱ πρόκριτοι, διατεταγμένοι πρὸς βασιλεύω.

cf., among others, the still valuable works of A. Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjoining Historical Sites* (London 1899), and A. G. Paspates, *Βυζαντινὰ Μελέται Τοπογραφικαὶ καὶ Ἱστορικαί* (Constantinople 1877); the rather superficial account by G. Baker, *The Wall of Constantinople* (London 1910); B. C. P. Tsangadas, *The Fortifications and Defense of Constantinople* (New York 1980), who discusses the subject as far as the ninth century (and whose text is unfortunately marred by countless misprints); and the modern standard account by R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*² (Paris 1964.). Additional topographical material can be found in the various travelers' reports collected in G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington 1984). Further details of topographical interest are also provided in accounts by western travelers: J. P. A. Van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople: Ancient Monuments and Old Traditions in Medieval Travellers' Tales I-II* (Leiden 1980). On medieval Greek fortifications in general see C. Foss and D. Winfield, *Byzantine Fortifications: An Introduction* (Pretoria 1985), esp. 56–59.

¹⁴ In all likelihood, in the *quattrocento* the moat did not extend as far north and as far uphill as the location of the Adrianople/Edirne Gate.

¹⁵ K.-P. Matschke, "Builders and Buildings in Late Byzantine Constantinople," in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden 2001) 315–328, emphasizes the acute shortage of appropriate building materials and the inadequate training of construction workers.

They did not do it for free, but all received wages for their work, together with the draft animals, except for sacred order of priests and deacons; indeed large groups of monks gathered from the sacred precincts and suburbs. The entire clergy stood around its pastor, and together with the pastor they labored, except for a handful, who were overseeing the large numbers, as they had been chosen and instructed by the emperor.

Those appointed by the emperor must have been contractors, with contacts in the imperial court. One such family stands out, as John and then Constantine seem to have frequently availed themselves of the services of the Iagros/Iagaris family in this area. In time the contractors were accused of misappropriating the imperial funds assigned for the restoration of the defenses for their own private profit and shamelessly enriching themselves to the detriment of the walls. One such contractor was Manuel Iagaris.¹⁶ After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, he was singled out and explicitly blamed for the sad condition of the walls by one of the most authoritative eyewitnesses of the siege, Bishop Leonardo.¹⁷ One wonders whether Iagaris and

¹⁶ His name is in fact recorded on an inscription on the wall, Paspates, *Βυζαντιναὶ Μελέται* 45, no. 17: ΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ ΤΟΥ ΙΑΓΑΡΙ. Clearly, John VIII made extensive use of the services of the Iagaris/Iagros family, whose members often undertook diplomatic missions as well as contracts in the renovation of the fortifications. For some surviving inscriptions associated with John's program see the Appendix.

¹⁷ Bishop Leonardo named another contractor associated with Iagaris, the anti-unionist hieromonk Neophytos of Rhodes. Leonardo includes a sardonic observation in his text, that their illicit profits eventually fell into the hands of the Turks (*PG* 159.936): *At quid dicam? arguamne principem ... an potius eos qui ex officio muros reficere debuissent? O quorum animae forte damnantur, Manuelis Iagari dudum inopis, et Neophyti hieromonaci Rhodii, si audeo dicere, praedonum, non conservatorum reipublicae, quibus veluti reipublicae tutoribus, aut ex aviis intestatisque bona relicta, muris ascribi debebant, privatis potius commodis impedeabant. Primus viginti prope millium florenorum servus proditoris monachus, quos posthac reconditos urna septuaginta millium gazam reliquunt Teucris. Idcirco urbs praedonum incuria in tanta tempestate perit.* Identical statements are repeated in the chronicle by Languschi-Dolfín, which provides, for the most part, a translation or paraphrase of Leonardo's Latin: Languschi-Dolfín 1–38, esp. 22: *Ma per questo non e, da impropere lo Imperator, perche quello sempre haue bona fede in la*

his fellow contractors were to blame for the shoddy repairs or for employing unskilled laborers to carry out the work.

Exactly when the project began to be implemented and how long it went on remain problematic questions, as our sources provide only vague chronologies. Thus the anonymous panegyric states that the program was initiated after “John’s victories in the Morea and his return to the capital.”¹⁸ The program was not finished in the reign of John, and work continued until the fall of Constantinople in 1453. While our sources do not provide specific dates, the program initiated by John was accented by several embedded inscriptions which mention his renovation and, most of the time, also provide dates for the completion of respective sections. Thus the epigraphical evidence from the fortifications themselves supplies a few hints about the work that was carried out. Some of those inscriptions are still in situ on the walls; others have disappeared, and we would not be wrong to assume that numerous inscriptions have vanished over the centuries.

In the nineteenth century a scholar noted, studied, and recorded those inscriptions that were still in evidence.¹⁹ Thus

romana chiesa, ma era uinto da pusillanimita, ma alcuni Greci, Manuel Jagari, et Neophyto Jeronaco Rodiani, ladri corsari non curauano conseruar el publico, hauendo gran richeze de auo quelle tegniua a suo priuati commodi. El primo hauea 70 millia ascosti in Zara lassati a Gazan Turcho. Et per poca cura de questi tali in tanti affani lassono perir la citade.

¹⁸ III 296: ἐπαναζεύξαντος τοίνυν τοῦ θειοτάτου βασιλέως μετὰ γε τῆς νίκης καὶ τῶν τροπαίων ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Πέλοπος.

¹⁹ Paspates (*Βυζαντιναὶ Μελέται* 35–61) personally examined the circuit of the walls and meticulously recorded forty-one inscriptions that he could identify by visual inspection. Paspates was born in Chios in 1814, survived the massacre committed there by Ottoman troops during the Greek war of independence in 1822, and fled to Malta. Through the efforts of several American philhellenes he was sent to Boston, was adopted by the family of Marshall P. Wilder at the harbor, and was brought up and educated in the U.S. He graduated from Boston’s Latin School and from Amherst College in 1831, continued his studies in Italy, England, and France, and eventually established himself in Constantinople as a successful physician. He was one of the first scholars to examine Constantinople’s medieval remains from the

according to his collection, eight inscriptions were observed and recorded that are definitely associated with John's program of renovations; they bear the following dates (and cf. the Appendix): 1433, May 1433, June 1433, April 1434, October 1438, January 1439, August 1441, and 1444. Most include the month and year of the renovation, two record the year only, and one bears the emperor's name without supplying a date. From that slender record, it looks as if the renovation program started as early as 1433 and continued throughout the decade, without reaching completion.

Other inscriptions testify that the program was partly aided by funds provided by Despot George Branković of Serbia as well, as late as 1448.²⁰ Thus one inscription, on the sea walls on a tower between "Koum Kapoussi and Yeni Kapoussi," displayed the following text, which bears a date: "This tower and curtain wall were restored by George, Despot of Serbia, in the year 6956 [*anno mundi* = 1448]."²¹ According to this inscription, the Serbian despot was responsible for the renovations of a tower by the Gate of Adrianople/Edirne.²²

archaeological point of view and published numerous studies on medieval Constantinople.

²⁰ Exactly when George supplied funds is not known; it may have been as late as the reign of John's successor. His contribution may be recorded in an inscription by the Fourth Military Gate; cf. discussion (with scholarly literature) in Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege* 333–335. On George of Serbia and John VIII see Nicol, *The Last Centuries* 383–385, 394–395, and 402 for the despot's contribution to the repairs. See also K.-P. Matschke, "Die Stadt Konstantinopel und die Dynastie der Palaiologen," in *Das spätbyzantinische Konstantinopel. Alte und Neue Beiträge zur Stadtgeschichte zwischen 1261 und 1453* (Hamburg 2008) 65–66.

²¹ Van Millingen, *Byzantine Constantinople* 193: †ANEKENIC/ΘΗΝΟΥΤΟC/ΟΠΥΡΓΟCΚΑΙ/ΚΟΡΤΙΝΑΥ/ΠΙΟΓΕΩΡΓΙ/ΟΥΔΕCΠΙΟΤΟΥ/CΕΡΒΙΑCΕΝΕΤΕΙC ΔΕC, ἀνεκενίσθην οὗτος ὁ πύργος καὶ κορτίνα ὑπὸ Γεωργίου δεσπότης Σερβίας ἐν ἔτει ς,ϣεϛ'.

²² J. Kalić, "Ἡ Σερβία καὶ ἡ Πτώση τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως," in E. Khrysos (ed.), *Ἡ Ἄλωση τῆς Πόλης* (Athens 1994) 193–208, esp. 198. Intense inspection of the existing remains in this area by W. K. Hanak and M. Philippides in the summers of 2000, 2001, and 2003 did not reveal the

Moreover, even in the reign of John there were private volunteers in Constantinople who paid for some renovations. It is also possible that Constantine, while he was despot of Morea, also contributed funds, if an inscription embedded at the Rhegion Gate recording a “Despot Constantine” in fact refers to him.²³ There is one inscription, which presents the longest surviving text, stating that the restoration at this spot was paid for by the donation of Manuel Bryennios; it mentions John and his queen, Maria, and is dated early on in the project, 1433.²⁴ Clearly private funds donated by individuals were also sought and used in the renovation program. At least two inscriptions indicate that it continued well into the reign of Constantine XI.²⁵ One section of the fortifications was being repaired just

presence of this inscription in the location cited by Van Millingen; perhaps it has been transferred elsewhere. This sector of the fortifications has undergone a great deal of renovation lately and large sections of the old walls are missing. The inscription is no longer embedded in the walls; and Kalic cites no literature or scholarship on inscription or its present location. Furthermore, Paspates, *Βυζαντιναὶ Μελέται*, does not list it in his catalogue. Thus its existence and fate present a mystery.

²³ Paspates, *Βυζαντιναὶ Μελέται* 46, no. 18: ΝΙΚΑΗΤΥΧΗ/ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΤΟΥΘΕΟ/ΦΥΛΑΚΤΟΥΗΜΩΝΔΕΣΠΟΤΟΥ, νικῆ ἡ Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ θεοφυλάκτου ἡμῶν δεσπότη. Paspates did not assign it to Constantine XI, the brother of John VIII, and only expressed his inability to identify the individual behind this name: “Ἀδύνατον εἶναι νὰ εικάσωμεν, τίνα Κωνσταντίνον μνημονεύει ἡ ἐπιγραφή αὕτη.” For a photograph see Philippides and Hanak, *The Siege*, pl. 19.

²⁴ Paspates 54–55, no. 30: ἀνεκαινίσθη ἡ θεόσωστος πύλη αὕτη τῆς Ζωοδόχου Πηγῆς διὰ συνδρομῆς καὶ ἐξόδου Μανουὴλ Βρυεννίου τοῦ Λέοντος ἐπὶ βασιλείας τῶν εὐσεβῶν βασιλέων Ἰωάννου καὶ Μαρίας τῶν Παλαιολόγων ἐν μηνὶ Μαΐῳ , ς ςμα’.

²⁵ Paspates 56–57, no. 34: Κωνσταντίνου Παλαιολόγου αὐτοκράτορος. It does not bear a date. Paspates suggests that this inscription could not refer to Constantine XI, the brother of John VIII, who, as Paspates was well aware (57: δὲν ἐστέφθη ποτὲ αὐτοκράτωρ), was never formally crowned. The fact is that, throughout his short reign, Constantine XI was addressed as emperor of Constantinople by numerous contemporaries, including Ludovico Fregoso of Genoa (cf. e.g. his letter to Constantine, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά* IV [Athens 1930] 64, dated 23 May 1452), and the

before the siege and had been financed by funds donated by Cardinal Isidore.²⁶

While the wide distribution of the inscriptions along the walls indicates that restorations went on throughout the circuit of fortifications, our anonymous author concentrates on certain areas that needed special attention. Thus he states first the emperor's personal concern over the state of the defenses and his conclusion that in his own time the walls could not be relied upon to provide adequate protection against future attacks; he then goes on to specify a few areas that received attention (III 296–299): a tower by the Imperial Gate, which had never been completed, was renovated;²⁷ two towers in the Blanka district

formality of a coronation was generally overlooked. Similarly Charles VII of France, in an undated letter to Constantine, addresses him as: *Serenissimo ac potentissimo Principi Constantino Dei Gratia Despoti Regi Romeorum o Palaeologos, Fratri ac consanguineo nostro carissimo* (*Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά* IV 65). Barbaro, in his valuable diary of the siege of 1453, always refers to Constantine as the unquestioned emperor: e.g. E. Cornet, *Giornale dell'Assedio di Constantinopoli 1453 di Nicolò Barbaro P. V.* (Vienna 1856) 29, *una fusta de'l imperador*; 34, *el serenissimo imperador Constantin*; 56, *el serenissimo imperador*, among many other citations. Constantine himself employed the standard imperial formula (echoed in Charles VII's address in Latin) of the Palaeologan emperors in signing official documents: Κωνσταντῖνος ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ θεῷ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων ὁ Παλαιολόγος; see e.g. his signature in the chrysobull to the Ragusans (1451), quoted in full in *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά* IV 23–27. All modern historians, it should be noted, accept Constantine XI as the last emperor of Constantinople. For the second inscription that may refer to the activities of Constantine, cf. n.21 above.

²⁶ Detailed discussion in W. K. Hanak and M. Philippides, *Cardinal Isidore: A Historical and Literary Study of His Life and Times* (forthcoming), ch. 4.

²⁷ πύργος ἦν ἀτελής πρὸς τῇ λεγομένη Βασιλικῇ πύλῃ, ἐκ προγόνων μὲν ἀρχόμενος ἀνοικοδομεῖσθαι ... οὐκ ἠδυνήθη συναπαρτίσαι εἴτε σπάνει χρημάτων, εἴτε ὀλιγωρίᾳ ... διήρκεσεν ἀτελὲς τὸ ἔργον ἄχρι καὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ ἡμετέρου, “there was an unfinished tower in the vicinity of the Basilike Gate, whose erection had been begun by our ancestors ... but lack of funds or lack of time had not allowed its completion ... the project remained unfinished until the reign of our king.”

were erected from scratch;²⁸ moreover, drainage work was undertaken at the fortifications by the Kontoskalion harbor.²⁹ He devotes a special section to the repairs that were carried out at the different sections of the moat. He claims that it was a labor worthy of the ancient king of Persia, Xerxes, who had cut a canal on the Athos peninsula in Khalkidike in 480 B.C.³⁰ In particular, he makes special mention of the ditches in the vicinity of the palace that were in need of restoration, as they had suffered from adverse weather over the centuries and had been filled in by natural erosion.³¹

²⁸ ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ἑτέρους δύο ἐν χώρῳ λεγομένῳ τοῦ Βλάχκα ἐκ βάθρων ἀνήγειρε, μεγέθει μεγίστους καὶ κάλλει διαπρεπεῖς καὶ μηδαμῶς ὄντας δευτέρους τῶν μάλιστα διαφερόντων, “indeed he erected, from their foundations, another two [towers], which were incomparable in size and distinguished in their beauty, and matching our best existing towers.”

²⁹ ἐν τόπῳ λεγομένῳ κοινῇ διαλέκτῳ Κοντοσκαλίῳ ... πολλὴν ὁ χώρος τὴν ὕλην ἐντὸς εἰσεδέξατο ... ἔδοξε τῷ κρατοῦντι ἐκφορηθῆναι ταύτην ἐκ μέσου, “the place commonly called [the harbor of] Kontoskalion ... had been silted up ... so the emperor thought it would be best to excavate it.”

³⁰ καὶ ἦν ἔργον δεόμενον χειρὸς Ξέρξου τοῦ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλέως, ὄν φασι κατὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος πρόην ἐκστρατεύσαντα κατὰ γῆν τε καὶ θάλατταν ... ἐν τῷ Ἄθῳ ... διώρυχα κελεύσαι τοῦτον ποιῆσαι ὡς ἐν πελάγει τὴν ἤπειρον λέγεται διελθεῖν, “the project needed the hand of Xerxes, the king of the Persians, who is said to have made a canal across [the peninsula of] Athos, during his early invasion of Hellas, so that he could bypass the land through the sea.” It is interesting to note that the memory of Xerxes was revived at this time and the ancient king is mentioned often enough in literature, especially in the literature of the siege of 1453; on this see M. Philippides, “The Fall of Constantinople 1453: Classical Comparisons and the Circle of Cardinal Isidore,” *Viator* 38 (2007) 349–383; W. K. Hanak and M. Philippides, *Cardinal Isidore*, ch. 5.

³¹ ἐνταῦθα [πρὸς τὸ κλίτος τῶν βασιλείων] γὰρ αἱ διώρυχες περὶ τὸ τεῖχος καὶ τάφροι πάλαι μὲν εἰς βάθος ὠρύγησαν παρὰ τῶν τηνικαῦτα κρατούντων, ἑκατέρων τε τῶν μερῶν, φημὶ δὴ τῆς τάφρου, ἐκ θεμελίων ἀνεγειρόμενα τεῖχη βραχὺ τι ἀνεστηκότα τῆς ἐπιφανείας τῆς γῆς· χρόνου δὲ προϊόντος ἐν ὥραις χειμεριναῖς τῇ τῶν ὑδάτων ἐπιρροῇ κατὰ μικρὸν τὴν ὕλην ἐπισπωμένων ἐπληρώθησαν ταύτης ἄχρι τῶν ἄνω, “At this point [near slope of the palace] the ditches and the moat by the walls had been dug to a great depth, on both sides (of the moat, I mean), at a short distance from the

Thus by reading Khalkokondyles' limited narrative together with the information supplied by the anonymous panegyric and by viewing these documents as serious contributions to the Levantine situation ca. 1434–1435, it can be demonstrated that Constantinople played a role in the war between Venice and Genoa, as we can discern that there were repercussions in the Levant and that the imperial court was involved in the conflict. The conclusions of the Italian operations in the Levant, especially if John VIII received reparations or monetary contributions in some form from the Genoese Perenses, may have assisted in his program of refortifying Constantinople's defenses; at the very least the damage that likely occurred during the operations against Constantinople may have acted as a catalyst for John and prompted him to intensify his renovation policy. Thus a Genoese infusion of cash may have assisted in the early stages of renovating the fortifications.

APPENDIX: Inscriptions of John VIII
on the Eastern (Sea) and Western (Land) Walls

The following inscriptions on the walls of Constantinople that bear the name of John VIII were examined and recorded in the nineteenth century.

1. Paspates 40, no. 7

ΙΩΑΝΝΗCΕΝΧΩΤΩ ΘΩΠΙCΤΟCΒΑCΙΑΛΕΥC ΚΑΙΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΟΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟCΚΑΤΑΜΗΝΑ ΑΥΓΟΥCΤΟΝ ΤΗ Δ ΔΡ ΤΟΥCζΜΘΕΤΟΥC	Ἰωάννης ἐν Χ<ριστ>ῶ τῶ Θε<ε>ῶ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων ὁ Παλαιολόγος κατ'ἡμῶν Αὐγουστον τῆ Δ (δευτέρα?) τοῦ ζ' μηνὸς ἔτους.
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John in Christ the God faithful king and emperor of the Romans Palaeologus in the month of August a Monday [?] of the year 6949 [*anno mundi* = 1441].

foundations of the walls rising from the ground, by those who had been in power long ago; with the passage of time and the winter floods, they had been filled all the way to the top.”

2. Paspates 44, no. 16

†ΑΝΕΚΑΙΝΙΣΕΤΟΚΑΣΤΡΟΝΟΛΟΝΙΩΧΩΑΥ
 ΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡΟΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΣΕΤΕΙΣΰΜΘ†

†ἀνεκαίνισε τὸ κάστρον ὅλον Ἰω<άννης ἐν> Χ<ριστ>ῶ
 Αὐτοκράτωρ ὁ Παλαιολόγος ἔτει ,ς ἄμθ'.†

John Palaeologus emperor in Christ renovated the entire circuit of the fortifications in the year 6941 [= 1433].

3. Paspates 52, no. 24

ΙΩΝΧΩ	Ἰω<άννου> ἐν Χ<ριστ>ῶ
ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑ	Αὐτοκρά-
ΤΟΡΟΣΤΟΥΠΑΛΑΙ	τορος τοῦ Παλαι-
ΟΛΟΓΟΥΚΑΤΑΜΗΝΑΟΚΤ	ολόγου κατὰ μῆνα Ὀκτ<ώβριον>
ΤΟΥςΰΜςΕΤΟΥς	τοῦ ,ς ἄμς' ἔτους.

[Renovation?] of John Palaeologus, emperor in Christ, in the month of October of the year 6946 [= 1438].

4. Paspates 52, no. 25

ΙΩΟΥΕΝΧΩΑΥΤΟ	Ἰω<άννου> ἐν Χ<ριστ>ῶ Αὐτο-
ΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣΤΟΥΠΑ	κράτορος τοῦ Πα-
ΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΟΥ	λαιολόγου
ΚΑΤΑΜΗΝΑΙΑΝΟΥ	κατὰ μῆνα Ἰανου-
ΑΡΙΟΝΤΟΥς	άριον τοῦ ,ς
ΰΜΖΕΤΟΥς	ἄμς' ἔτους.

[Renovation?] of John Palaeologus, emperor in Christ, in the month of January of the year 6947 [= 1439].³²

February, 2016

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³² I would like to thank the Editorial Board of GRBS and the two anonymous readers for their useful suggestions for improvement.