

Michael Attaleiates' Views on Foreigners and Mercenaries in the Byzantine Army

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Introduction

Many Byzantine historians were not just chroniclers who wrote down others' actions, but active participants in the history they wrote about. Michael Attaleiates was an author of Byzantine origin who not only wrote about history, but experienced it. He was part of the elite, being one of the highest ranking military judges of the Byzantine Empire. He took part in the trial against an emperor and accompanied the army to the infamous battle of Manzikert, of which he gives a detailed account.¹ The period in which he lives and writes about was, from his perspective, one of imperial decline in which his empire faltered. Throughout his writing, this can be seen as the theme of his book. He seeks to find the sources for this decline, and to find the way in which it can be halted and reversed. The goal of this thesis is to analyse his primary work, *The History*, for Attaleiates' perception of foreigners and mercenaries in the Byzantine army, specifically the groups of the Pechenegs and the Normans. These two groups are interesting to analyse for a few reasons namely: they were both present in the Byzantine army in significant numbers, at times their states—the Normans of Southern Italy and the independent Pechenegs operating in the Balkans—were hostile to the Byzantine Empire, and both had groups of these mercenaries betray the Byzantine Empire during Attaleiates' lifetime.² To properly analyse this topic a few things need to be established. Namely, what do we mean by foreigners and mercenaries in this context, what major events occurred during Attaleiates lifetime & what was the political and economic situation of the Byzantine Empire, and why did Attaleiates write *The History*?

It has been a common narrative that one of the reasons for the decline of the Byzantine Empire in the 11th century is the reliance on professional soldiers and mercenaries instead of *themata* which eroded the ability of the empire to defend itself. However, this has been contested by modern scholarship, in which the focus lies more on the political developments, specifically centrifugal forces that eroded central authority, combined with domestic conflicts that allowed for the Pechenegs, Cumans, Seljuks, and Normans to make such successes against the empire.³

The term foreigners and mercenaries for the purpose of this thesis refers to military elements within the Byzantine army that were of foreign origin, Foreign here referring to people that were either from outside of the empire entirely, or within the empire, but not considered integrated by Attaleiates. The line between auxiliary, ally, and mercenary is often a blur in this context, but it is clear enough that the Byzantines made an important distinction when it came to military regiments

¹ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 20.1-29.

² Role of Normans in the Byzantine army: Jonathan Shepard, "The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium" *Anglo-Norman Studies XV* (1993): 275-305. Pecheneg interactions with the Byzantine Empire: Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 332-371.

³ Alexander Beihammer, *Byzantium & Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia c.1040-1130* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 1-26. Georgios Theotokis and Meško Marek, *War in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2001), 84. Jonathan Shepard, "The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium" *Anglo-Norman Studies XV* (1993): 275-276.

that were composed of non-Romans. Attaleiates himself frequently specifies the origin regiments within an army.⁴ For example, while narrating the Battle of Manzikert he accounts all the foreign elements that were present in the army. When describing one of the elements taking an action, he specifies that they were Skythians, Franks, etc. While these military units were of foreign origin, they could be integrated into the Byzantine hierarchy and society: the Pecheneg leader Kegenes was granted the title of *patrikios*, and entrusted with three fortresses and an area of land when entering Roman service. From a seal, we learn that he would eventually have the title of *magistros* and *archon* of Patzinacia, and had taken the name John.⁵ In a similar vein, the Norman leaders Krispinos, Roussel de Bailleul and Hervé Frankopoulos had land in Anatolia as well as court titles.⁶ To summarise, foreigners and mercenaries is a combined term for any element of the Byzantine army that was foreign in origin and a professional military unit.

Attaleiates work covers the years 1034-1080, a period of time in which the Byzantine Empire declined rapidly in many aspects. Pecheneg incursions into the Balkans first began in 1027 and would only stop being a threat to the empire in 1091 after a Byzantine victory in the battle of Levounion, after which the Pechenegs stopped being an independent people.⁷ The Normans in Southern Italy over the course of the eleventh century would go from adventurers and mercenaries aligned with the Byzantine Empire, to seizing all of Southern Italy for themselves by 1071 and invading the European lands of the Byzantine Empire, even eventually seizing the city of Antioch for themselves in the First Crusade.⁸ The Seljuks would begin raiding the Eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire in the 1030's, gradually eroding Byzantine power there, and following the decade after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, would conquer most of Anatolia from the Byzantines.⁹ The empire was beset on all sides by threats, and at the same time there were internal struggles for power: the general George Maniakes revolted in 1042, in 1047 the general Leo Tornikios revolted, in 1057 the mercenary commander Hervé Frankopoulos revolted and in the same year Isaac I Komnenos seized the throne by force. Following the battle of Manzikert in 1071, the Doukas clan seized power from Romanos IV Diogenes (r. 1068-71), the mercenary commander Roussel de Bailleul revolted and proclaimed John Doukas emperor in 1073-74, and Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1077-1081) usurped the throne by force in

⁴ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012) 17.6, 18.7, 20.11, 31.1.

⁵ Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 322-324.

⁶ Jonathan Shepard, "The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium" *Anglo-Norman Studies XV* (1993): 275-305.

⁷ Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 366. Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, trans. Elizabeth A. S. Dawes (Salt Lake City: Stonewell Press, 2015), 189.

⁸ Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London: Longman, 1997), 162.

⁹ Alexander Beihammer, *Byzantium & Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia c.1040-1130* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 49-304.

1077 from Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071-1078). This list is not exhaustive, and there were more revolts during this turbulent time of Byzantine history.¹⁰

Michael Attaleiates and his Work

Michael Attaleiates was, as his name suggests, born in or near the city of Attaleia somewhere around the year 1025.¹¹ Attaleia was the only major port on the southern coast of Anatolia west of Cilicia, and was located on a major sea lane, connecting the Levant with the Aegean & the Latin west, and served as both a naval and commercial hub as a result. During his youth, Attaleiates was likely exposed to a great diversity of peoples, including Italians, Armenians, Jews, and people from all over the Eastern Mediterranean.¹² He would be used to seeing and interacting with these people on a daily basis, likely seeing them as a normal part of life. He likely had the first parts of his education in Attaleia, and was then sent to Constantinople to finish it and hopefully, enter the Byzantine civilian elite, as many learned men before him had done.

He arrived in the capital somewhere before 1041.¹³ Here, he would finish his education, and it was an excellent time to study in Constantinople. The liberal arts were thriving, with figures such as Psellos, Mauropous, and Xiphilinos, leading education in Constantinople. Psellos claims that he single handedly revived the study of philosophy in the empire during his career.¹⁴ Whether or not this is true, it is an indication that education and the sciences were thriving in the capital at the time.¹⁵ Following this, Attaleiates would go on to slowly rise through the ranks of the legal system. During the reign of Konstantinos Doukas(r. 1059-1067), Attaleiates became a member of the senate due to his rank in the law courts. When Konstantinos passed away, he sat on the court that tried future emperor Romanos IV Diogenes, and following Romanos IV's ascendance to the throne, entered his inner circle and gained the previously unknown position of judge of the army. As a result of this, Attaleiates joined Romanos IV on his eastern campaigns, including the one that ended with the disaster that was the battle of Manzikert in 1071, where he claims to be an eye witness and provides personal accounts. Despite being a part of Romanos IV's inner circle, Attaleiates was able to maintain a high position under the

¹⁰ George Maniakes: Kenneth Cline, "Byzantium's Star-Crossed General: George Maniakes." *Medieval Warfare* 4, no. 2 (2014): 44–48; Leo Tornikios: Jonathan Shepard, *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire, c. 500 - 1492* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 599-600 Attaleiates covers various revolts himself: Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 5.1-6.12, 11.1-11.9, 23.1-23.13, 30.1-31.12.

¹¹ Dimitris Krallis, *Servings Byzantium's Emperors: The Courtly Life and Career of Michael Attaleiates* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 55.

¹² *Ibid*, 63.

¹³ *Ibid*, 79

¹⁴ Michael Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, trans. E.R. A. Sewter (Penguin Classics, 2010), 123.

¹⁵ Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London: Longman, 1997), 65

next emperor, Michael VII Doukas , who had seized the throne in the civil war following Romanos IV's capture at Manzikert.¹⁶

Attaleiates' primary work and the focus of this thesis, *History*, describes the reign of several emperors between the years 1034 and 1080, as well as significant events and other important people during these years. As is common with historical works, the years closer to the time the work was being written are covered much more extensively than earlier parts. Michael VI (r. 1034-1041)'s reign is covered in a few pages,¹⁷ while the 3 year reign of Romanos IV Diogenes has over a hundred.¹⁸ Attaleiates seeks to explain the causes for the triumphs and failures of the Byzantine Empire, as well as show the virtue or lack thereof of Byzantine leaders.¹⁹ But what does Attaleiates view as a virtue, and good qualities in leadership?

Looking at some quotes within the work can show us. When narrating a victory achieved by Romanos IV during his first eastern campaign in 1068, he states the following after describing the Roman army not pursuing a defeated army:

“I realized that the Romans of our day are neither capable of seizing opportunities, nor of setting ambushes, nor of deciding everything prudently in the midst of bitter war, nor of discerning the strength of their opponents, but in every case they observe just one rule, whether they are dealing with the most powerful of their enemies or with the most miserable, or with supreme or local authorities.”²⁰

Attaleiates was no tactician or general, and Krallis mentions that Romanos IV was acting in accordance with what was considered sound strategy.²¹ While the advice may have been subpar, it shows what Attaleiates valued in a leader. someone who seized opportunities when they arose, and thought about the best way to approach individual circumstances rather than applying the same measure to everything. In further chapters, we will analyse how Attaleiates frames foreign leaders as capable of doing so, while Byzantine leaders lack these qualities.

In a section where he compares the modern Romans to the ancient Romans, he makes the following remark:

“For we are pressed on all sides by the pangs of death, the Gothic and other most foul nations having prevailed over the entire east and the west, preying on our simplemindedness or neglect, or, to speak more truthfully; on our impiety and madness, given that we rabidly fight against one another, our own countrymen, without restraint, showing contempt for death, but

¹⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), vii-ix.

¹⁷ Ibid, 11-14.

¹⁸ Ibid, 16.1-24.5.

¹⁹ Ibid, 1.4-2.2.

²⁰ Ibid, 17.14.

²¹ Dimitris Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 138-139.

when it comes to wars with foreigners we are cowardly and unmanly; and appear to turn our backs to the enemy even before the battle begins.”²²

Romans in his time were too busy and eager to war among themselves, and lacked courage and manliness when fighting the true threats of the empire. Romans, and their leaders as a result, should focus their effort on outward threats rather than on their own countrymen. As mentioned previously, Attaleiates lived through a turbulent time of Byzantine history in which many men rose up in revolt for their own gains while weakening the empire as a whole, so it is no wonder that Attaleiates held this view. Romanos IV’s eastern campaigns, followed by the civil war between Romanos IV and the Doukai clan, was likely the most impactful of these events. Attaleiates was personally present on these campaigns, and was able to see the progress a competent and proactive emperor could make, only for all of it to be lost due to infighting.²³ Attaleiates valued those men that defend the Byzantine Empire, as we will see later. In the same section comparing ancient Rome to his time period, he also states:

“As for myself, having participated in numerous campaigns and spent much of my career in the palace, I never witnessed a decision that was in every aspect pleasing to God, nor, in the course of deliberations or in the final decision about military and civilian affairs, was any reverent care taken to avoid any kind of illegality, something loathed by God. Instead, every deliberation was about profit, regardless of whether churches were being desecrated or human beings harmed, [197] and those who deviously offered the best excuses to justify this unjust and God-hated profit stood above everyone else at court. Moreover, most of the time, God is not held to preside over their deliberations and decrees, nor is he even mentioned. It is for this reason that I attribute the disaster that has struck the Romans to divine nemesis and the verdict of his impartial judgement.”²⁴

Piety and acting in a way that pleases God too was important, deliberating on military and civilian affairs should be done to avoid illegality, and seeking profit as a goal was to be avoided. The critiques in this section of the text, comparing the ancient Romans to his contemporaries, while framed as a general perception, feel like they are specifically critiquing the Doukai faction that succeeded Romanos IV. While Attaleiates maintained a high rank during and following the transition of power of Romanos IV to the Doukai faction, his writing of their rule is very critical. Ioannes Doukas, *kaisar*, and brother of the emperor Michael VII’s father, as well as Michael VII himself, are both described by Attaleiates as possessing bad traits that a leader shouldn’t have prior to this section. Michael VII is said to have “lacked steady judgement and showed no lack of childish immaturity”, while Ioannes Doukas doesn’t listen to the sound advice of his advisors and refuses to take action in a battle, resulting in defeat according to Attaleiates. Attaleiates also described that the Eunuch Nikephoros was a close advisor to Michael VII, who Michael VII had recalled from exile personally despite his

²² Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 25-5.

²³ Ibid, 16.1-21.13.

²⁴ Ibid, 24.4.

reputation as a cruel and greedy administrator, and that Nikephoros manipulated his way into his wishes being imperial decisions and orders, causing unjust confiscations, innocent men to pay dues they did not know, and anger against the state.²⁵ Comparing these actions and traits to the quote above, they seem to match Attaleiates criticism closely.

He also believes it is important to adhere to religious traditions, stating the following after a Byzantine army assaulting the at the time rebellious Krispinos and his men:

“After that the leader of the Latins called the men together and gave a speech which was not out of place or without merit, for he condemned the impiety of the Romans who on such an awesome and marvelous day; the feast of feasts, took up arms to shed Christian blood on a day when the Orthodox were not allowed to assault even foreigners and thus make a mockery of the grace of the Resurrection. Nonetheless, he dealt with them gently; showed them compassion, and freed them. He found a place for the wounded in the villages and saw that they received care without any impediment.”²⁶

Acting with compassion and honour after a victory seems to also be important in this scenario, as despite being attacked on a holy day Krispinos here is merciful to Byzantine soldiers. When describing a section of the Battle of Manzikert, Attaleiates mentions the following:

“It was then that I not so much despaired of my own safety as I came to despise the cowardice, ineptitude, or wretchedness of the Romans. For although the Romans had suffered an overwhelming defeat before their encampment, none of the remaining companies or officers was moved to action. Instead, they all sat around inside, each one attending to his own business as though they were camping in a friendly country. They were absolutely unmoved by any inner drive or anxiety.”²⁷

What Attaleiates despises in these Romans, the opposites of that can be seen as what qualities he desires them to have. Romans should be men of action, acting with courage and protecting their brethren, and they should have an inner drive that inspires them to action. Lastly, listening to advisors when they give good advice is a trait Attaleiates values, as he says the following while describing a battle during the Pecheneg war:

“The leader of the Romans, the eunuch Konstantinos the praipositos, again took command of large musters of the units near Adrianople, assembling them in a suitable location which he fortified with trenches, following the recommendation of the vestarches Michael Dokeianos, and there he watched for the next raid of the Skythians. Not long afterward they arrived, filling up the entire field that faced the Romans and moving toward their camp in numbers that were truly beyond counting. And if the Romans had then paid heed to the advice of the magistros Arrianites and guarded themselves inside their camp at that moment and pursued the Skythians closely from behind when they were on their return journey and already tired

²⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 22.1-23.13.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 18-3.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 17.11.

and weary from standing at their position and circumventing the trench, then they might have accomplished something noteworthy.”²⁸

To summarise, the values that Attaleiates thinks a good leader should have are courage, piety, acting with grace in victory, defending the empire and not squabbling with other Byzantines, seizing opportunities, listening to advice of your advisors, and having an inner drive to achieve things. We will see that throughout his work, he emphasises that Byzantine leaders—barring specific examples such as Romanos IV—, generally lack these traits, and shows that other leaders, such as Roussel and Krispinos, do have these traits.

When reading Attaleiates’ work, it seems that he was trying to find a hero to save the empire while also pointing out the flaws that led to its decline over the course of his lifetime. In the first few pages of the work, he states the following:

“For this reason I have written a book containing an account of the deeds that took place during our time in wars and battles, both the victories and the defeats, the military accomplishments and the reversals, and I have added the causes why they happened the way they did, to the best of my ability; then I extended my account, one might say I seasoned it as if with delicacies, with various signs that occurred unexpectedly, and by setting out the virtues and vices of the rulers and the other men in power, weaving in also certain scientific matters concerning natural phenomena and the appearance of animals we saw in those times; in short, I have completed a book with diverse contents, like a meadow teeming with flowers, in order to describe all these matters. And if I have spoken of events I witnessed myself, that is because the abundance of paradoxical developments does not want them to be passed by in silence and so forgotten among men.”²⁹

Attaleiates puts specific emphasis on the quality of leadership, both of emperors and others in positions of powers, and states that he has tried to add the cause for the accomplishments and reversals of the empire. I would argue that Attaleiates aimed to explain the flaws of the leadership he writes about, and for his work to act as a sort of educational content for future leadership on what to do and not to do. Attaleiates dedicates his book to the emperor Nikephoros Botaniates, though if he had lived long enough into the next decade he would have surely dedicated it to Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118), who was the one to reverse the decline. Krallis argues that the final part of the work, which describes Botaniates’ reign, is markedly different from the rest of the book, and was perhaps a later addition to the work. It takes on a more poetic style and the overall tone is different to the rest of the work. Perhaps because he wanted to gain favour at the court of Botaniates, or because Attaleiates truly believed Botaniates was the hero who would save the empire.³⁰ On the other hand, he frequently points out the weakness of the Romans that allowed them to be conquered, specifically the corruption that had occurred during his lifetime, as well as the incompetence of the Byzantine leadership, as we shall see later. Throughout his work, he points out the flaws in Roman leadership that lead to bad

²⁸ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 7.5.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 1.4.

³⁰ *Ibid*, xvi.

relations with the foreigners in Byzantine service. In contrast to this, he often praises the qualities of foreigners, both in leadership and mercenary soldiers as a whole. Whereas Byzantines are timid in battle, Franks act courageously and every soldier bloodies their sword; while Byzantine leaders ignore their advisors' advice, Normans listen to them.³¹ When talking about an uprising by Norman soldiers led by Krispinos, he describes them as acting reasonably and seems to put the blame on the Byzantine leadership rather than on the mercenaries themselves: they were acting as is appropriate given how they were slighted and did not simply loot and pillage but only attacked tax farmers to gain their payment that they perceived as their due.³² We will discuss why Attaleiates contrasts these actions so heavily and what motivated him to portray the Byzantines in a negative light so often.

Historiography

Michael Attaleiates' *History* most modern translation was done by Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis in 2012, and contains an introduction to the work, as well as separates the work into sections according to their theme. The original text was—unlike other works at the time—, a single continuous text, and not separated into books or chapters.³³ In their introduction, they state that the main theme of the work is the growing political instability and the incompetence and disloyalty of its political and military classes. They state his focus is on the (moral) failures and inept leadership of the Byzantine elite, rather than specific geostrategic, political, or other developments, but do not mention anything regarding his view on foreigners and mercenaries in the army.³⁴

Regarding secondary literature, I believe there are two lines of thought that should be traced. First, whether this period—that is, the years that *The History* covers—is seen by other scholars as being a period of decline for the Byzantine Empire, and second, whether mercenaries were seen as a contributing factor to this decline.

Ostrogorsky covers the period in his work *History of the Byzantine State*, published in 1956. In the chapter dedicated to the period, Ostrogorsky refers to the death of Basil II as a turning point in Byzantine history and marks the period that followed it as one of decline, steeply contrasted with the period of victory under Basil II and his two predecessors. As causes of this decline, he specifies the clash between a so-called civil bureaucracy and feudal military aristocracy, which caused the disintegration of the old administrative system. The army suffered the most of this, and he states that it was for this reason that mercenaries came into prominence, with the Normans taking on the role the Goths once did. The loss at Manzikert is blamed on the betrayal of Andronikos Doukas and the

³¹ Dimitris Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 142-157.

³² Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.2.

³³ Leonora Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 151.

³⁴ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), vii-xix.

heterogeneous and undisciplined nature of the army that included many foreign mercenaries. In the text, mercenaries are distinctly noted as a negative.³⁵ Ostrogorsky is clear about how this period was a period of great decline when compared to the preceding emperors, and seems to have considered the hiring of mercenaries a symptom of the decline of the Byzantine Empire, rather than a solution employed to combat its decline.

Peter Charanis in an article written in 1975, puts the blame of Byzantine losses in the 11th century largely on their increasing reliance on mercenaries, specifically noting that all Norman leaders revolted in some way, but leaves out the reasoning for their revolts and that some of them returned to service.³⁶ Jonathan Shepard, writing in 1993, refutes the claims made by Charanis, pointing out that they returned to service afterwards, in which they acted competently and loyally. Additionally, he points out that mercenaries were not just employed in the period of decline of the 11th century, but also afterwards under the Komnenoi, a period of stability and expansion of the realm.³⁷ He also discusses the use of the term mercenary in this article, noting that up to the 11th century, most foreign warriors would be referred to as allies, auxiliaries, or foreigners, arguing that this was largely because these were accurate descriptors rather than Byzantine conservatism. Most of the soldiers of foreign descent would have been from allied nearby realms rather than soldiers of fortune that went to the Byzantine Empire on their own, and the earliest occurrence of these would be the Normans and to a degree the Russo-Scandinavians, and he suggests that the arrival of the Normans might have encourage the use of the term mercenaries as a result.³⁸

John Haldon in 2003, aiming to offer an alternative approach to the military history of the half century preceding the battle of Manzikert, notes that the reliance of foreign mercenaries, incompetent leadership, and treachery—both Byzantine and non-Byzantine—, are regarded as the main three factors in the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert, and states that he accepts the first of these but questions the assumptions of the latter two, pointing to the agendas of among other works, Michael Attaleiates' as causing these factors to be considered impactful.³⁹ Regarding mercenaries, he states that the increasing reliance on mercenaries was an incremental adaptation to a changing strategic context. They were more effective tactically and provided greater value for money than the cheap but ineffective thematic militias. He notes that assuming the mercenaries are paid well, they were as loyal if not more than local troops, as they had no connection to local or imperial politics, and provincial levies were just as likely to rebel if not properly treated or paid.⁴⁰ In a different article, Haldon also discusses the *krites tou stratopedou*—judges of the army—, a new title only mentioned by Attaleiates

³⁵ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford: Blackwell), 280-310.

³⁶ Charanis, Peter. "Cultural Diversity and the Breakdown of Byzantine Power in Asia Minor." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975): 18.

³⁷ Jonathan Shepard, "The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium" *Anglo-Norman Studies* XV (1993): 275-276.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 275-305.

³⁹ John F. Haldon, "Approaches to an Alternative Military History of the Period ca. 1025-1071," in *The Empire in Crisis*, ed. Vassiliki N. Vlyssidou (Athens: Institute for Byzantine Research, 2003), 45-46.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 69-61.

when discussing Romanos IV Diogenes' military campaigns during the 1060s. Haldon argues that a military judge was not needed in the Byzantine military, as this role was already fulfilled by the officers of the army, and instead suggests that this role was potentially created to maintain discipline in Romanos IV's army, which was not just made up of native troops, but many foreign elements as well.⁴¹ Michael Attaleiates being appointed to this role, implies a certain proficiency in handling issues between various foreign ethnicities.

Savvas Kyriakidis in his chapter—written in 2021—on the Byzantine concepts of mercenaries in the eleventh century discusses Michael Attaleiates specifically, also notes that Byzantine troops were able to perform well under the right leadership, and that Attaleiates' criticism of the army and its leaders are because of his personal agenda. He notes how Attaleiates uses the term mercenary to differentiate between Uzes and Pechenegs who were integrated into the empire, and those who were not and were hired for specific operations. According to Kyriakidis, Attaleiates portrays the Franks specifically as a people of martial spirit and valour, and contrasts this to the timidity of the Byzantine armies. He further describes how Attaleiates portrays the Norman leaders of Roussel de Bailleul and Krispinos in a positive light, often praising their virtues and leaving out how they harmed Byzantine efforts on occasion. He states that this fits the narrative of Attaleiates' work, as he was critical of Michael VII's reign, during which Roussel de Bailleul revolted.⁴²

In a recent publication, Krallis' chapter "The Social views of Michael Attaleiates" discusses—among other things—Attaleiates' views on Roussel de Bailleul and how the idea of *romanitas*—a shared Roman identity—had changed. Attaleiates refers to Roussel as Roman, and makes efforts throughout the work that give the idea that specific Normans were part of the Byzantine *isopoliteia*, meaning something like commonwealth. Krallis states that Roussel's defence of the empire was greatly admired by Attaleiates, and that he was treated as a potential saviour of the Byzantine polity. Neither Attaleiates nor Byzantine citizens cared that he was Norman, but what mattered was that he could protect the empire from the Turks. Furthermore, Krallis notes that due to the shifting conditions of the 11th century, the idea of Romanness changed as different groups became intermingled, and previous ethnic boundaries were erased as imperial subjects fled before the Turkish advance. With this in mind, he continues to note that Attaleiates has a fluid perspective on these things, noting that he speaks both of Roussel's barbarian cruelty, but also offers a more nuanced picture and gives him high praise. Similarly, Armenians alternatively are noted to be loyal Roman soldiers and vicious heretical aliens.⁴³

Although the role of mercenaries in the Byzantine Empire in the 11th century has evolved in modern literature over the decade, there is still much analysis to be done on Attaleiates' view on

⁴¹ John F. Haldon, "Krites Tou Stratopedou" *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002): 279-286.

⁴² Georgios Theotokis and Meško Marek, *War in Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2001), 84-89.

⁴³ Dimitris Krallis, 'The Social Views of Michael Attaleiates', in *Social Change in Town and Country in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, ed. James Howard-Johnston (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2020), 78-82.

foreigners and mercenaries. Attaleiates was a high ranking member of Byzantine society, and his personal experience in major events such as Romanos IV's eastern campaigns give crucial insights into his views as an individual, allowing us to further understand the histories as works written by individuals that had political, cultural, and personal motivations for writing them in certain ways. As we will see further in this thesis, Attaleiates had strong opinions on the role of foreigners and mercenaries in the Byzantine Empire. By analysing his statements about the Normans and Pechenegs and their leaders, and comparing these to other contemporary authors, we will see how Attaleiates' views differed from his peers and what could have been the cause of these different views.

Attaleiates on the Normans

Normans became influential in the Byzantine Empire in the first half of the 11th century in Southern Italy, when they began serving the Byzantines as well as the Lombard factions there as mercenaries. While the Normans in Southern Italy would eventually be the ones that removed Byzantine influence from the peninsula, many Normans would continue to serve in the Byzantine army, where they seem to have been concentrated in the eastern parts of Anatolia. From the results they achieved, they seem to have been an incredibly effective fighting force for the Byzantines.⁴⁴ Attaleiates in *the History* discusses the Normans extensively, particularly two of their leaders: Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul. Attaleiates discusses the martial nature of the Normans and their leader, and frequently praises their skill at arms as well as their virtues and leadership qualities.

Attaleiates mentions the Normans first near the beginning of *the History*, when they first served under the Byzantines. In the attempt to reconquer the island of Sicily for the empire, the general George Maniakes employed a large contingent of Norman mercenaries, and was able to secure the city of Messina successfully.⁴⁵ While discussing the attempt at reconquering Sicily by George Maniakes, Attaleiates states the following:

“And had Georgios Maniakes, who had been entrusted with the overall military command, not been slandered that he was seeking to usurp the throne and removed from his position, and had the war not been assigned to others, that island would now be under Roman rule, [...] As it was, however, envious resentment brought down the man, his accomplishments, and that great enterprise. For his successors in command made wretched and base decisions, causing the Romans to lose that island along with most of their army. Not only that, but the Albans and Latins who abut upon the Italian regions by the Elder Rome were previously allies and formed part of our commonwealth, even practising the same religion, most unexpectedly now became our enemies because the man who held the command, the *doux* Michael Dokeianos, offended their ruler.”⁴⁶

The fault for the failure of the reconquest of the island here is blamed upon the leadership of the Byzantines, specifically Michael Dokeianos, who according to other sources beat the Norman interpreter Arduin, causing the conflict between George Maniakes.⁴⁷ In addition to this, the imperial court is blamed, who slandered George Maniakes, replaced him with incompetent leadership and as a result led to him revolting against the empire. Attaleiates specifically frame the Normans and other mercenaries here as allies integrated into the Byzantine sphere (part of our commonwealth), specifying the things that they had in common. Attaleiates makes use of the ancient connotation of Latins and Albans being close to equals of the Romans and that they practised the same religion as the

⁴⁴ Jonathan Shepard, “The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium” *Anglo-Norman Studies* XV (1993): 275-305.

⁴⁵ Kenneth Cline, “Byzantium’s Star-Crossed General: George Maniakes.” *Medieval Warfare* 4, no. 2 (2014): 46.

⁴⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.1.

⁴⁷ Alexander Olson, “Working with Roman History: Attaleiates’ Portrayal of the Normans.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 1 (2017): 6.

Romans to indicate that they could be integrated into the Byzantine elite.⁴⁸ Attaleiates chooses to ignore that the Normans had arrived in Southern Italy only recently and, by the time that he wrote, had forcefully conquered all Byzantine territory there to form their own state, as his goal with writing seems to be to convince the audience that the Normans were an effective solution for the problems of the Empire during the time he was writing. It should be noted that Attaleiates does a similar thing when presenting Nikephoros III Botaniates as emperor (r. 1078-1081), in which he connects the emperor to the Phokades and ancient Fabii families, whose achievements he cites to know from an old book.⁴⁹ It was only when they were not granted the pay they had agreed to that the Normans deserted the army. Over time, the Normans would carve out their own realm out of Southern Italy, taking advantage of the discord between the various factions in Southern Italy as well as the weakness of the Byzantine Empire, they would eventually unite under Robert de Hauteville, and by 1071 when the city of Bari had fallen, they had conquered all Byzantine holdings in Italy. Following Attaleiates' death, these Normans would become a threat to the empire, invading the Greek mainland from their Italian holdings, as well as acting as antagonists in the First Crusade, where they took Antioch and refused to hand it over to the Byzantines.⁵⁰

But these were not the only Normans who interacted with the Byzantines. Attaleiates and other Byzantine authors talk about three Norman leaders who commanded Norman troops in the Byzantine army, which seem to have been fairly integrated as well as a respected element of the troops. While Hervé Frankopoulos is the earliest mentioned leader and he is active during the time Attaleiates covers, he is not mentioned directly in his work. Attaleiates does discuss an unnamed Latin being appointed as commander of fortresses on the Balkans, who was extremely brave in battle and second to none in understanding what had to be done.⁵¹ This man is likely to be Frankopoulos, but we cannot be certain. Frankopoulos is the first named leader of the Frankish soldiers in the Byzantine Empire, who seem to always be grouped together under their own native leader. Frankopoulos began his service in 1038 under George Maniakes in Southern Italy. When the Normans in Italy turned against the Byzantines, he remained in service of the Byzantines. He would loyally serve the Byzantines and served as a commander of the left flank in a battle against the Pechenegs in the year 1049-1050.⁵² Skylitzes tells us that Frankopoulos revolted in 1056-7 due to being denied a promotion to *magistros*, and was insulted and sneered at by the emperor in the process. After taking his leave he would return to his estates near Dagarabe in the Armeniakon theme, where he bribed some of his fellow Normans into revolting and allied himself with a Turkish leader called Samouch, but their

⁴⁸ For a more elaborate explanation of this, see: Olson, Alexander. "Working with Roman History: Attaleiates' Portrayal of the Normans." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 1 (2017): 7-12.

⁴⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 27.6-13.

⁵⁰ Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London: Longman, 1997), 162.

⁵¹ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 7.7.

⁵² John Skylitzes and John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811-1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 436-453.

relationship lasted a short time due to mutual distrust and they eventually fought each other with the Normans emerging victorious. Following this, he and his forces entered the city of Chleat –controlled by the Marwanids, a muslim dynasty allied to the Byzantine Empire– for recreation, however they were betrayed and killed or captured during the night, and Herve was sold to the Byzantine Emperor.⁵³ While Skylitzes says that this is where Frankopoulos’s journey ended, there is a surviving seal on which Frankopoulos is described as a *magistros*, *vestes*, and *stratelates* of Anatolia, implying that he remained in service and ended up getting the promotion he wanted and more. From Frankopoulos’ career, we learn how the Byzantines handled their Frankish mercenaries. They operated as their own unit led by one of their own. Both Skylitzes and Attaleiates mention that western mercenaries were wintered in Eastern Anatolia, and that they had estates there, specifically the Armeniakon theme.⁵⁴ Their leaders were granted court titles and expected titles and honours, seeing as both Frankopoulos and Krispinos revolted over being denied these. Frankopoulos seems to have been succeeded by a man named Randolph the Frank, who was likely succeeded by Krispinos, who was then succeeded by Roussel de Bailleul.⁵⁵ Attaleiates only discusses Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul in his works, despite covering the years in which Frankopoulos was active as well. Attaleiates is generally sparse in his writings of the earlier years of his work and the focus is on the later years of Romanos IV Diogenes’ reign and beyond, during which both Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul were active and influential figures in Byzantine politics.

Attaleiates on Krispinos

Krispinos is first mentioned by Attaleiates while describing Romanos IV Diogenes’ second eastern campaign of 1069. Krispinos was wintering in the east with his countrymen, and believed he had not been properly honoured by the emperor, and as a result began robbing tax collectors. The emperor sent soldiers after him, including 5 *themata*, but they were all defeated by Krispinos. The emperor himself then set out to the east and gathered an army on the way. After learning this Krispinos sent envoys stating his submission and request for amnesty and explaining the reason for his rebellion, including that he did not wish to fight the Romans sent after him. The emperor grants this request, as according to Attaleiates, Krispinos was a man of great courage, and had a reputation for martial deeds and ability to command, having just earlier defeated a force of turks.⁵⁶

⁵³ John Skylitzes and John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 452-453.

⁵⁴ Find Skylitzes For Krispinos, see Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.2.

⁵⁵ Randolph the Frank is briefly mentioned by Skylitzes, while Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul are written about in that order in Attaleiates’ work: John Skylitzes and John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 460; Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.2, 20-9.

⁵⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.2.

Attaleiates refers to Krispinos as “A certain Latin man from Italy” rather than a Frank, as he does to the troops under him, and in fact, does so to all Norman commanders in the Byzantine Empire.⁵⁷ We know from European sources that Krispinos, or Robert Crispin, was a Norman.⁵⁸ Attaleiates would have certainly been aware of this seeing as he was personally present in military campaigns, and it must have been a narrative choice to refer to them as Latins. The term Latins is largely unused by authors before Attaleiates, and authors that come after Attaleiates it has a distinct negative association.⁵⁹ When Attaleiates uses it however, there seems to be no negative connotation, rather, he praises the individuals for their military prowess and command capabilities.⁶⁰ Olson argues that Attaleiates’ use of the term Latin is inspired by the ancient sources he had access to, and a suggestion that the Normans could be integrated into the Byzantine Empire, as ancient Rome had done with their Latin neighbours.⁶¹ I find this to be the most plausible explanation for Attaleiates’ use of the term Latin, as the narrative of *The History* portrays the Normans as great assets & allies, and potentially saviours of the empire, if treated right by Byzantine leadership.

It would have been very easy for Attaleiates to paint Krispinos as an enemy of the empire, as a greedy foreigner who rose up against his superiors. And yet when describing Krispinos brief uprising, Attaleiates continuously praises the Norman. Attaleiates takes care to specify that while Krispinos did rob tax collectors, Krispinos took care not to murder any Romans, and Attaleiates praises Krispinos’ combat prowess when mentioning the soldiers that came after him. When the five *themata*, led by the *vestarches* Samuel Alousianos attack Krispinos, Attaleiates explains how Krispinos and his soldiers followed the religious customs of Great Sunday, the day of Resurrection, while the Byzantine soldiers acted with impiety on this day, as it is a day “when the orthodox were not allowed to assault even foreigners and thus make a mockery of the grace of the Resurrection”, and on defeating the Byzantines Krispinos gave a fitting speech to his men about this, and dealt with the Byzantines gently, freeing them, taking care of their wounded, and ensured that they received care in nearby villages.⁶² Despite being an active rebel who is defeating Byzantine forces, Krispinos seems to be the person Attaleiates wants us to view as the good guy.

A paragraph later, when the emperor has arrived and Krispinos’ envoys are asking for amnesty for his actions, it is specified that Krispinos did not want to fight the Byzantines, and that the

⁵⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 7.7, 18-2, 23-1.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Shepard, “The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium” *Anglo-Norman Studies* XV (1993): 277.

⁵⁹ Alexander Kazdan, “Latins and Franks” in *the Crusades from the perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim world*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 86. Alexander Olson, “Working with Roman History: Attaleiates’ Portrayal of the Normans.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 1 (2017): 2.

⁶⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.2; 7.7; 8.3; 18.2-3; 23.1.

⁶¹ Alexander Olson, “Working with Roman History: Attaleiates’ Portrayal of the Normans.” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 41, no. 1 (2017): 7-12.

⁶² Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.2-3.

emperor gladly granted the request for amnesty due to Krispinos' skill and ability to command forces, even mentioning that Krispinos defeated a great multitude of Turks and accomplished valiant deeds in close combat.⁶³ This mention of Krispinos' achievements done in such a short manner could be interpreted as Attaleiates framing it as a normal action for Krispinos, in contrast to the Byzantines, who continued to struggle in combating the Turks.

The next paragraph described Krispinos meeting the emperor and acting as a loyal servant, bringing with him a few soldiers and leaving the rest in his fortress of Mavrokastro. Attaleiates states, in stark contrast to his other praise of Krispinos, that he is accused of planning something cruel and faithless, as was to be expected of his race, and the only reason he was acting loyal was because of the absence of his companions—presumably, other Franks elsewhere—and as a result was removed from the expedition, and in response to this his soldiers raided the Byzantine theme of Mesopotamia.⁶⁴ We later learn that he was exiled to the island of Abydos after this event by the emperor. Why would Attaleiates spend all that time building up Krispinos, only to condemn him as god hating, cruel, and ungrateful? I interpret this as Attaleiates wanting to show what a mistake it was that the emperor alienated Krispinos. Krispinos is portrayed as a good soldier, good commander, and an honourable man, and alienating him would be a true loss to the empire.

It is important to note that Attaleiates never states that he agrees with the accusations or that they seem factual, simply that Krispinos was accused of these things. In addition, Attaleiates states that it is to be expected of his race, the Frankish, to be faithless.⁶⁵ Yet in the text preceding this, he refers to Krispinos as Latin rather than Frankish, and specifies his piety, comparing it to the impiety of the Byzantine commander. I believe Krispinos here is specifically being differentiated from the rest of the Franks—who are seen as barbarians despite their uses—and is instead a close ally to the Byzantines, integrated into the Byzantine sphere, and a better commander than the Byzantine ones that challenged or replace him. It's not for nothing that in the paragraph after Krispinos is exiled, Attaleiates notes how the Byzantine army sent against a detachment of Turks achieves nothing, and that when they were dispatched again they simply fled.⁶⁶ His aim might have been to make the reader think of what might have been the case if a man like Krispinos, commanding a core of Frankish troops, was leading those forces instead.

Attaleiates' high opinion of the quality of Frankish troops becomes more clear when looking at another example, found in Attaleiates' retelling of Romanos IV's first eastern campaign. Attaleiates tells us how the emperor gave a commander named Ausinalios the command of additional units and officers, and specifies that he gave all the Franks to this commander, who he mentions are warlike and enjoy bloodshed. However, despite having all these resources, when provoked by enemies, and his

⁶³ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.4-5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 18.5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 18.5

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 18.6.

troops wanted to retaliate, he remained in the city of Melitene, refusing to face them. The enemy noticed this, and went around the city to attack some units of the imperial army that were purchasing grain, requiring Romanos IV to personally intervene to save these units. At the end of the paragraph, he mentions the following:

“From all this, if someone should lay down as a general rule that the final result, whether for better or for worse, should be attributed to the commander, he would not altogether fall short of a true and accurate statement.”⁶⁷

Attaleiates is indicating that Ausinalios was given a multitude of support and effective tools to deal with the enemy—including the powerful franks—, but when it came to acting, Ausinalios wasted his opportunities, and is called reluctant to act, timid, and unwilling to fight by Attaleiates. Not only did he fail to attack the army, but by doing so, allowed the enemy to attack other vulnerable units, while it was his job to prevent the enemy from making incursions.

Krispinos is not mentioned again until the civil war that followed the battle of Manzikert between Romanos IV Diogenes and Michael VII Doukas. Following Romanos IV’s capture by the Seljuks, the Doukai seized the city and proclaimed Michael VII emperor, and began gathering troops to challenge Romanos IV. Romanos IV called upon the Kappadokians for his army, and various battles would take place between the two. Attaleiates makes a point of mentioning that Theodoros Alyates, a man of impressive size and who had shown his mettle in many campaigns was on Romanos IV’s side, and that he was getting the better of his enemies by far. Then, as if to be a hero of Michael VII’s side to beat Theodoros Alyates, Attaleiates describes Michael VII bringing Krispinos out of exile, bestowing him with honours, and sending him to reinforce his own army against Romanos IV. Then, he reminds the reader of Krispinos’ qualities: extremely brave in hand-to-hand combat, seemed to be the strongest man alive, and has proven his mettle in the noble deeds that he had accomplished.⁶⁸ It’s clear from this section that Attaleiates did not agree with Krispinos’ exile, and saw him as an excellent commander, and if we are to believe Attaleiates one who could single-handedly sway the odds of battle. In fact, he even states this explicitly, “For the one [Krispinos] who defeated Diogenes in that first battle against Alyates...”⁶⁹ Krispinos and his forces handily defeat Alyates’ forces and Krispinos proves to be influential in swaying soldiers to the Doukai side.⁷⁰ From what Attaleiates tells us, it seems Krispinos was a well known war hero, respected by both sides of the civil war, capable of inspiring the Doukai soldiers and swaying Diogenes’ soldiers to the Doukai side. It should be noted that when referring to Krispinos, Attaleiates calls him a Frank, rather than a Latin, as he does in every other instance when referring to Krispinos.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 17.7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 21.6-8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 21.7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 21.8.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 18.2, 18.3, 21.5.

It's unclear why he does not make the distinction here, but some arguments could be made. Up to this point, Krispinos had been –in Attaleiates eyes– serving as a dutiful servant of the empire. He had brought victories to the empire, had become integrated into its ranks, and when he had revolted, it was with just reason, and he still acted honourably while doing so and became subservient to the emperor again when he met with him. If we are to believe Attaleiates, Krispinos was set up by other mercenaries in the camp, resulting in his eventual exile. Summarising all of these actions, Krispinos acted as a great ally and servant to the Byzantine Empire. In contrast, when he chooses to side with the Doukai clan in the revolt that followed the battle of Manzikert, he is doing the exact opposite. Krispinos was capable of inspiring the Doukai soldiers and swaying Diogenes' soldiers to the Doukai side of the civil war, and chose to do so in return for his exile being dismissed. When we compare these actions to the earlier mentioned values a Roman should have, they contradict heavily with them: he chose what was best for himself rather than what was best for the empire. I would argue that he calls Krispinos a Frank because he sides with what to Attaleiates would be an incapable emperor, against the interests of the empire, and hence he is no longer an integrated ally but instead once more a barbarian warrior, not worthy of being referred to as a Latin.

Attaleiates on Roussel de Bailleul

Roussel de Bailleul, referred to as Rouselios by Attaleiates, was a Norman commander of great renown that led Byzantine forces. As we shall see, Attaleiates praises him much like he praises Krispinos, despite Roussel too working against the empire, briefly establishing his own realm centred around Ankara with his Frankish troops, although eventually returning to Byzantine service.⁷² He is first mentioned by Attaleiates as the leader of a contingent of Germans before the battle of Manzikert, where he is called a warrior strong of arm, and sent ahead of the main army, but Attaleiates gives us little more details about Roussel or his actions afterwards.⁷³ The next mention of Roussel is after the chaos of the civil war has subsided, and Michael VII assigns him and 400 Franks to the command of Isaakios Komnenos to repel a Turkish force. When this force reached Ikonion, a rivalry erupted which caused Roussel to break into open rebellion, causing him to take his Franks with him.⁷⁴ The first thing Attaleiates has to say about this is that he headed to Melitene and triumphed over a group of Turks with his first charge; he is not scolded for rebelling, but praised for defeating the Turks. Next, Attaleiates tells us that Isaakios Komnenos also charged the enemy Turks near Kaisereia. Isaakios was defeated, overwhelmed by the enemy, and taken prisoner.⁷⁵ Attaleiates could not have spelled out his

⁷² Alexander Beihammer, *Byzantium & Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia c.1040-1130* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 209-214.

⁷³ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 20.9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 23.1.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 23.2

thoughts more clearly: clearly the Norman leaders were superior to those of Byzantine stock, capable of defeating the Turks whereas the Byzantine commanders could not.

Following Roussel's victory, the emperor grants the *kaisar* Ioannes command of an army and sends him to fight the Turks, but upon reaching a bridge on the Sangarios River, he learns that Roussel is encamped on the other side after having come from the Armeniac *thema*, presumably to summon more Frankish soldiers as this was where they resided.⁷⁶ Ioannes sent out envoys to negotiate peace, but according to Attaleiates did not intend to show respect, nor offer honourable terms and gifts, but instead wanted to humiliate Roussel and give him advice on how to avoid being treated harshly. Roussel did not receive these envoys, trusting in his own strength and filled with warlike fervour and courage—a trait Attaleiates indicates is lacking in most Byzantine commanders—, and gives the orders for battle. Nikephoros Botaniates is said to be present and give advice to Ioannes, but this is ignored, and Ioannes gives the orders to cross the bridge, and was handily defeated and captured by Roussel himself. Roussel imprisoned the *kaisar*, and headed back to his country estates, having acquired power and fame thanks to his great accomplishment.⁷⁷ Once again, we see that Attaleiates makes it clear that Norman leadership, courage, and martial might prevails over Byzantine forces, and the Byzantine commander fails to heed the sound advice of his advisors. Had Ioannes only offered Roussel good terms or listened to the advice of Botaniates, the outcome would have been much better. Contrast this with what he tells us of Roussel soon after:

“For he had by his side as a captive the *protovestis* Basileios Maleses, whom he had captured when he routed the *kaisar*. Maleses had only recently returned from captivity at the hands of the Persians [Turks], only to be admitted into the *kaisar*'s retinue in recognition of his esteemed judgement and practical wisdom. And even though Rousselios had taken him captive, still he treated him with the greatest honor as a man of action and erudition whose experience was acquired in past campaigns, and he placed him among his advisers, or rather as the first among them, and relied on him in political matters as if he were his own voice and hands.”⁷⁸

Roussel instead chooses to listen to advisers, despite them being his captive, as a wise leader should. Maleses was a personal friend of Attaleiates, and with this text he both praises his friend's capabilities, as well as portraying Roussel as a figure who can be seen as an example to any aspiring commander. Considering that Attaleiates' work was likely aimed at the ruling elite of the Byzantine Empire, it seems that commanders such as Roussel and Krispinos are being used as good examples with which to contrast the bad examples of Byzantine commanders and leadership.

⁷⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 23.3; John Skylitzes and John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 452.

⁷⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 23.4-5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 23.8.

Roussel would continue to threaten the empire, having amassed over three thousand Franks to his side, and releasing the *kaisar* and proclaiming him emperor of the Romans with the hopes of recruiting Byzantine soldiers to his side in addition to his Franks. After this proclamation, news came to him of an army of Turks making their camp near a fort called Metabole. Despite being outnumbered two to one, Roussel opted to engage in battle with them. Attaleiates states that the *kaisar* and some notables attempted to stop him so they could ascertain the number of the enemies more clearly, Roussel according to Attaleiates states “It is intolerable to Rouselios that we quibble and postpone a battle against six thousand Turks.”⁷⁹ Roussel does not just act as a mentor figure to readers of *the History*, but as a mentor figure to Byzantine notables in the narrative itself. Roussel then engages in battle with the Turks, defeating the force and chasing them until he and his followers’ horses are exhausted, at which point they found a new force of turks, which Attaleiates states was over a hundred thousand strong. Figuring that retreating would embolden the Turks, he engages with the Turks by himself. Roussel is portrayed as putting up a good fight, but ends up captured due to the impossible odds, along with the *kaisar*, eventually being ransomed by his wife from the Turks.⁸⁰ The number of Turks in the second army Roussel engages is impossibly high, but serves the narrative purpose of showcasing Roussel as a man with bountiful courage and skill of arm, a common theme within *the History* and traits he wishes to imprint upon the reader as good. Roussel does not care that the odds are against him, and simply acts with courage as he should. Attaleiates also makes sure to point out that no hand of a Frank was unbloodied after the battle: unlike Byzantines often do in Attaleiates’ writing, they did not flee but fought fiercely and bravely.

Normans as a whole are praised in *the History*, portrayed as effective, courageous warriors that bring the empire many victories. Their leaders, Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul, embody the positive virtues a leader should have according to Attaleiates, and are compared to Byzantine commanders that do not possess these traits. Even in situations where the Normans are rebelling against the empire, Attaleiates portrays them as being in the right and acting with restraint and piety. Only when Krispinos decided to side with the Doukai clan following the Battle of Manzikert did Attaleiates criticise him and refer to him as a Frank rather than a Latin, because he stopped embodying the values he sought to reinforce to his readers and abandoned the Byzantine commonwealth by siding with the rebels.

⁷⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Dimitris Krallis and Anthony Kaldellis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 23.10.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 23.10-13.

Attaleiates on the Pechenegs

The role of Pechenegs with the Byzantine Empire and within its armies is similar to that of the Normans but also different in many aspects. Much like the Normans, the Pechenegs were initially allies of the Byzantines that were used to maintain Byzantine influence in a border region, in this case the Danube rather than Southern Italy.⁸¹ The Pechenegs would eventually be pushed westward by competing nomadic groups such as the Uzes and the Cumans, leading to them having a more hostile relationship with the Byzantine Empire, but at the same time some of them became integrated into the Byzantine Empire and fought in its armies, sometimes even against other Pechenegs.

The Pecheneg war was a conflict between the Byzantine Empire and the Pechenegs, a turkic people from beyond the Danube that had previously been distant allies to the Byzantines but had now migrated into Byzantine territory. The Pechenegs would inflict severe defeats upon the Byzantines and raid the lands of Bulgaria and Macedonia extensively.⁸² Attaleiates describes them as follows:

“But the Skythians, who are popularly called Pechenegs, crossed the Danube with all their people and soon established themselves on Roman territory. This race practises armed raids more than any other skill or art and makes its living by continuous use of the sword, bow, and arrow. They are loathsome in their diet and the other aspects of their life, and do not abstain from eating foul foods.”⁸³

This description matches up with the general attitude Byzantines had to “barbarians” or outsiders, namely that they are good at combat, and their other traits are negative. He continues to briefly describe how the Pechenegs were afflicted by a disease and as a result were weakened and surrendered to the Byzantines, giving up their leaders as hostages, but criticises the Byzantines for believing that a people who “did not have the capacity for it [being subdued] in their nature.” This type of language and description of the Pechenegs continues in his narrative, describing them as snakes, that it is an impossible and/or pointless task to show them goodwill, and that it is in their nature to betray, war, and pillage. Attaleiates specifically states “When the pestilence abated, like snakes warmed up by the heat they began to move again with vigor and gave the appearance of possessing a strength that could not easily be subdued.”⁸⁴ which is quite similar to a quote that Skylitzes produces, which he claims to have been spoken by Kegenes, a leader of the Pechenegs, going as follows: “One should kill the snake while it is still winter and it cannot move its tail; for once

⁸¹ Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi. (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 317-318.

⁸² For a more extensive overview of this conflict, see: Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi. (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 321-371.

⁸³ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), vii-ix.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 55.

it is warmed by the sun it will give us much toil and trouble".⁸⁵ The resemblance is quite similar, but may be sourced from Aesop's fable *The Farmer and the Viper*, a story from ancient Greece in which a farmer is killed by a snake after warming it in its bosom that had become a common proverb.⁸⁶

In a further section, after describing a Skythian victory in which the Byzantine leader, Dokeianos was captured, he describes how the Dokeianos reached for a sword and killed the Pecheneg leader, after which Dokeianos was sliced open, his guts removed and replaced with his hands and feet, clearly intended as a way to show the reader how barbaric these people were. Skylitzes, in his much more detailed account of the events, makes no mention of this and simply states that Dokeianos fell in battle.⁸⁷ Whether Skylitzes simply thought this was not worth mentioning or Attaleiates fabricated the tale, either option implies that Attaleiates felt the need to show that the Pechenegs were a barbarian people with barbarian practices.

The preceding statements are coloured by the Pechenegs being a large threat to the Byzantine emperors and raiding Bulgaria and Macedonia, but not all of the statements that Attaleiates makes are negative. In the early 1040s, A conflict between two Pecheneg leaders, Tyrach and Kegenes, led to the latter seeking refuge within the Byzantine Empire. Kegenes would be baptised, granted control of border fortresses and, according to a surviving lead seal, would adopt the name John and reach the rank of Patrician.⁸⁸ He is said to have effectively fought hostile Pechenegs beyond the Danube and assisted in fighting them when they crossed the Danube and raided into the Balkans, with some sources saying he was named commander of an army at one point. In these respects, Kegenes has many similarities to figures such as Roussel de Bailleul or Krispinos: Initially foreigners that served in the Byzantine army were integrated into the Byzantine hierarchy and granted titles and lands, and were effective and victorious leaders. Kegenes was active during Attaleiates' lifetime and when he was in Constantinople, but he is not discussed directly by Attaleiates, though Attaleiates may have indirectly referenced him briefly, when he praised a group of Pechenegs for being loyal allies and making the Byzantine interests their own, and that they were honoured some of the Pechenegs who came over to the Byzantine side with senatorial offices.⁸⁹ Skylitzes discusses it in detail, and Attaleiates would have been in Constantinople during the time when these events were occurring, close to the action and the gossip centre of the empire.

There are several factors that may have influenced why Attaleiates wouldn't talk about Kegenes as he did about Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul. Kegenes was active when Attaleiates was beginning his career, and was already dead for two decades by the time Attaleiates was writing his

⁸⁵ John Skylitzes and John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 430.

⁸⁶ *Aesop's Fables*. trans. Laura Gibbs (Oxford University Press: Oxford), 2002.

⁸⁷ John Skylitzes and John Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 439.

⁸⁸ Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi. (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 321-327.

⁸⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 14.12.

work, while Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul were still fresh on his memory comparatively. Secondly, Attaleiates likely served together with Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul during the eastern campaigns. While the responsibilities of his title as judge of the armies are not specified, John Haldon believes that it was a role designed to handle conflicts between the various foreign elements that were present.⁹⁰ If this was true then Attaleiates would've frequently interacted with them, perhaps gaining a personal respect for them. Thirdly, the Pechenegs were still an active threat while Attaleiates was writing, while the Normans had not seized land or threatened the empire since Bari fell in 1071, while the invasions of Robert de Hauteville would happen after his death, perhaps leading Attaleiates to believe that the Normans could become allies of the Byzantines—or as he puts it part of their commonwealth— while such a premise did not seem plausible for the Pechenegs.

Attaleiates on Foreigners in the Battle of Manzikert

For Attaleiates and many other Romans at the time, the battle of Manzikert and its consequences were probably the most impactful event in their entire lives. This battle, fought in 1071 at Manzikert between the Byzantine forces under Romanos IV Diogenes and the forces of Alp Arslan, would be the first time a Roman emperor was captured in war since emperor Valerian (r. 253-260).⁹¹ While the battle itself did not cause devastating losses for the Byzantine army, the civil war that followed between Romanos IV and Michael VII (r. 1071-78) was devastating, weakening the eastern armies and allowing Turkic forces to pillage and invade further and further westward, as well as allowing future uprisings such as those of Roussel de Bailleul that would combine in the loss of most of Anatolia for the Byzantine Empire. The theme of Attaleiates' work is one of decline, and finding reasons for why this decline happened to the Byzantine Empire. For Manzikert, he seems to put the emphasis largely on the flaws of Romanos IV and his foreign mercenaries.

While describing Romanos IV's preparations for his Eastern campaign that would eventually lead to the battle of Manzikert, he puts significant emphasis on rituals that are ignored or are done wrong: The empress remained in Constantinople rather than escort him, he landed at a different port than usual, and fire burst out in the emperor's residence, and they encountered the site of a previous battle with the Turks. All of these events were omens for what was to come.⁹² Attaleiates is clearly hinting to his readers that things are about to go very wrong.

The first mention of foreigners and mercenaries in this section is when Attaleiates describes the emperor setting up camp near Krya Pege. The soldiers, specifically mercenaries and foreigners, laid waste to the countryside while camping here and prematurely cut down crops, leading to

⁹⁰ John F. Haldon, "Krites Tou Stratopedou" *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002): 279-286.

⁹¹ Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History* (London: Longman, 1997), 23.

⁹² Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 261-269.

Romanos IV lashing out at them, specifically a group Attaleiates calls the “*Nemitzoi*, who in ancient times were also known as the *Sauromatai*.”⁹³ *Nemitzoi* here means Germans, meaning they could be either Germans, or possibly Franks/Normans, as Attaleiates also refers to Franks as Germans.⁹⁴ In response to this punishment, the *Nemitzoi* go to the emperor’s tent to confront him, but Romanos IV lines up his army in battle array and the *Nemitzoi* are cowed into obedience again. Attaleiates specifies that as a result of this, the *Nemitzoi* are no longer part of Romanos IV’s bodyguard, but instead are put in the back of the marching order. Attaleiates remarks here that this is the only punishment they are given, possibly indicating his disagreement with the punishment.

The next section of descriptions forms the prelude to the battle of Manzikert itself. Attaleiates describes Romanos IV as sending out the Skythian mercenaries, that is Pechenegs and Uzes, to send out as pillaging and foraging parties, while the Franks were sent ahead to attack the city of Chliat under Roussel de Bailleul. As mentioned previously, Attaleiates calls them “the Germans who are called Franks”.⁹⁵ It seems that to Attaleiates, they were a specific group of Germans rather than an entirely different group. Next, while describing the siege of Manzikert, Attaleiates specifies that it was Armenian infantry that attacked and seized the walls outside the Citadel, he might simply be describing what happened, or was aiming to specifically give them praise or contrast them to the other foreign elements of the army.⁹⁶

During the battle of Manzikert itself, Attaleiates describes how the Turks attacked a contingent of Skythian mercenaries, and that they looked much alike, causing confusion among the Roman forces as to what was happening. Soon after, Attaleiates says that a band of Skythians, commanded by a man named Tamis, went over to the enemy side, causing the Romans to distrust the Skythians that remained on the Roman side to do the same. Later when the emperor is preparing for battle on the following day, Attaleiates himself suggests making the Skythians bind their loyalty with an oath to the emperor to ensure that they would not turn over to the enemy.⁹⁷ Attaleiates granting this advice and executing this plan himself gives us a lot of insights into his perception of the Skythians. While he viewed them as barbarians, he must have believed that they would’ve upheld their oath once he had made them swear it. He specifies that he “had them swear oaths in their traditional manner that they would observe genuine loyalty towards the emperor...” implying that he had some (perceived) understanding of their culture and traditions. It’s unclear what the general opinion of the Skythians was at the time in camp towards the Skythians, but Attaleiates himself at least trusted them to keep to their word despite just yesterday part of them having betrayed the Roman cause.

⁹³ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis.(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 269.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 271.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 271-275.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 277.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 289.

Attaleiates' views in Comparison to Contemporary Writers

We have now discussed Attaleiates' views on the Norman and Pecheneg mercenaries, and how they differ from the views that most secondary literature has had on the view. But were his views abnormal compared to other writers at the time, and if so, what caused Attaleiates to have such a different view? The other major works of history that exist covering this time period are those of Psellus and Skylitzes, both of which provide differing accounts that provide insights into Attaleiates' statements. Additionally, the *Taktika* of Leo VI and the *Strategikon* Kekaumenos, two military manuals written in the 10th century and end of the 11th century respectively, both provide some descriptions of foreigners and how they should be treated.

Psellus, much like Attaleiates, was an active and high ranking member of the Byzantine court, and was highly involved in matters of state. Unlike Attaleiates, Psellus was a critic of Romanos IV and a supporter of Michael VII.⁹⁸ Psellus was in this sense on the opposite side of the civil war when it was happening, as while Attaleiates maintained a position in court after Michael VII secured power, his writing indicated he supported Romanos IV as we have discussed previously. Attaleiates criticises Krispinos for siding with the Doukai clan and acknowledges the significant impact Krispinos had on the conflict, so what does Psellus say about Krispinos?

Psellus writes briefly about Krispinos and his role during the civil war that followed the battle of Manzikert between the Doukai clan and Romanos IV Diogenes. He states that while Krispinos was initially hostile to the Byzantines, he was now as loyal as he once was hostile. Krispinos is said to have encouraged Andronikos Doukas before the battle, and charged with his men—presumably other Normans—into Romanos IV's line, routing them and achieving victory.⁹⁹ Krispinos, much like in Attaleiates' narrative, is portrayed as a major reason for the victory of the Doukai clan in this battle. As discussed earlier, Attaleiates is more negative about Krispinos during this than he is in other segments of his work, even resorting to calling him a Frank instead of a Latin to other him. Considering that Attaleiates and Psellus favoured different emperors in this conflict, both of their descriptions of Krispinos during this event make sense. To Psellus, Krispinos was a loyal ally who helped his emperor secure the throne against Romanos IV, while to Attaleiates' Krispinos came back from exile just to betray his emperor and ensure the rebel's victory.

Also of note is Psellus' statement regarding emperor Trajan, who he describes as a barbarian that became Roman through his deeds and love of literature.¹⁰⁰ Here then, is another Byzantine author of the 11th century agreeing that a once barbarian can become Roman through their deeds and service to the empire, much akin to how Attaleiates viewed the likes of Roussel de Bailleul and Krispinos.

Skylitzes' work is split into two parts, the *Synopsis Historion* and *scylitzes Continuatus*. The former covers the years 811-1057, while the later covers the years of 1057-1079. While the former is generally agreed upon to be written by Skylitzes, it is not agreed upon whether the latter was written by Skylitzes himself or a different author.¹⁰¹ However, for the purpose of this thesis is of no concern, as the purpose of comparison is whether Attaleiates differed from other contemporary authors. It is

⁹⁸ Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, trans. Edgar R. A. Sewter (London: Penguin Classics, 1966), 363-364.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 351-380.

¹⁰⁰ Dimitris Krallis, *Serving Byzantium's Emperors: The Courtly Life and Career of Michael Attaleiates* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 157. Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, trans. Edgar R. A. Sewter (London: Penguin Classics, 1966), 363.

¹⁰¹ Leonora Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 155-161.

important to note that much of the *Continuation* is based on both Attaleiates' *History* and Psellos' *Chronographia*, but were adapted to remove the personal statements and made to create a better narrative.¹⁰² Skylitzes' description of Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul's actions are almost a word for word copy of Attaleiates, and additionally, does not contest the positive views that Attaleiates has of the Norman soldiers.¹⁰³ One explanation for this is that the writer of the *Continuation*, whether it was Skylitzes or another, was writing during the 1090's during the rule of Alexios Komnenos, who sought military aid from the west against the Turks, and may have shared the sentiment that the Normans could be a solution to the empire's problems in the east.

Of note is that Skylitzes does change the section covering the battle between Roussel de Bailleul and Andronikos Doukas, where Skylitzes has made the choice to remove the criticism of Andronikos for not listening to Botaniates and the praise for Roussel de Bailleul for listening to Basileios Maleses.¹⁰⁴ The removal of these statements implies that Skylitzes believed that they were personal statements and not relevant to the historical narrative. In other words, these were personal beliefs held by Attaleiates, and might have even been invented by Attaleiates so that he could praise a friend, the emperor he dedicated the work too, and allow him to use the situation to depict Roussel de Bailleul as a good leader and Andronikas Doukas as a bad one.

The *Taktika* of Leo VI was written in the 10th century by or on behalf of the emperor Leo VI the Wise (r. 886-912), and is a military manual that extensively covers the knowledge a general needs to be successful.¹⁰⁵ Among this, there is a chapter concerning the peoples that surround the Byzantine Empire, their traits, and their tactics in battle, among which are covered the Franks and Lombards, as well as the ancient Skythians and Turks.¹⁰⁶ In this chapter, the author describes the Franks and Lombards as allies and sometimes subjects of the Byzantine empire, noting the shared religion and peace, and specifying that their tactics are not described to aid in battling the Franks and Lombards, but to use the useful aspects of their tactics against others.¹⁰⁷ In the *Taktika*, Franks and Lombards are described as particularly bold and undaunted, daring in battle, and regarding timidity and retreat as a disgrace.¹⁰⁸ Despite the manual referring to Franks of almost a century earlier, the stereotype and descriptions match those of Attaleiates quite well, as he also emphasises the shared religion and tries to frame them as loyal subjects and allies in his work as was discussed earlier.

Unlike Attaleiates however, the *Taktika*, a military manual written in the 10th century, describes that the Franks are disobedient to their leaders, and that they are greedy and easily corrupted by money, stating that the Byzantines know this from experience because they frequently travel through Italy to the empire.¹⁰⁹ Attaleiates in his narratives implies that the Normans Krispinos and Roussel de Bailleul were wronged when they revolted, shifting the blame from the Franks being greedy by nature to incompetence of Byzantine leadership. In the *Strategikon* of Kekaumenos, there is a section that covers advice for an emperor, and one of the points that is made is that foreigners should not be overpromoted, a practice that the authors implies began after emperor Romanos III Argyros (r. 1028-1034). The author states that foreigners should ascend no higher than the rank of *spatharios*, and that by promoting the foreigner, you deny these ranks to the Byzantines themselves, and the foreigners will no longer serve you well. We know that Kegenes, Herve Frankopoulos, Krispinos, and Roussel de

¹⁰² McGeer, Eric, and John Nesbitt. *Byzantium in the Time of Troubles*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 2-3.

¹⁰³ McGeer, Eric, and John Nesbitt. *Byzantium in the Time of Troubles*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 26; 97-99; 131; 139-171. Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 18.2-5; 21.5-6; 23.1-12.

¹⁰⁴ Eric McGeer, and John Nesbitt. *Byzantium in the Time of Troubles*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 139-142.

¹⁰⁵ George T. Dennis, *The Taktika of Leo VI* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 437-501.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 463-465.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 465-467.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 467.

Bailleul all had higher ranks than this, and that some of them revolted because they were not granted further ranks.¹¹⁰ The fact that all of these Norman commanders had revolted because they didn't feel properly dignified implies that Kekaumenos' advice has some merit, and Kekaumenos might have penned this advice exactly because of these events happening. As discussed, Attaleiates hold an opposite view, that if these outsiders could be properly integrated instead of treated as foreigners, they can serve as loyal commanders and protectors of the empire.

Whereas most Byzantine authors at the time see Normans as a useful military asset that should be treated with caution and prone to their barbarian nature, Attaleiates holds a different view, believing that they coreligionists and are part of the same commonwealth, and can be made into close allies and loyal subjects of the empire. What caused him to hold these views that are different from his peers? For one, his role as military judge likely brought him in close contact with many of these figures. He may have personally known Herve, Roussel, and Krispinos, and could have held a genuine respect or admiration for them. He was present during the eastern campaigns of Romanos IV, and likely witnessed their combat prowess personally, if not heard the tales about it from his Byzantine peers.

His role at court and criticism of the emperors is another factor. He personally saw what happened when these commanders weren't given the dignities they felt that they deserved, turning them from loyal and effective troops into enemies of the empire. Where others saw barbarians driven by their greed, Attaleiates may have seen the alienation of soon to be integrated allies of the empire, caused by the ineptitude of Byzantine leadership. This is especially observable when Attaleiates writes about Krispino, who both Attaleiates and Psellus give credit for being a major factor in the Doukai winning the civil war that followed Manzikert. In Attaleiates' narrative, Romanos IV alienates Krispinos, causes him to revolt, and when Krispinos returns loyally and subserviently, Romanos IV believes baseless accusations and banishes him. Years later, the consequences of these actions are revealed, when his enemies in the civil war are now able to secure the loyalty of Krispinos, putting an excellent military commander in their ranks and swaying many of Romanos IV's mercenaries to their side as well. Attaleiates' narrative leaves us to wonder if Romanos IV had not done so, perhaps may he have won the civil war, and maintain Krispinos as a loyal subject?

¹¹⁰ For Kegenes, see: Aleksander Paroń, *The Pechenegs: Nomads in the Political and Cultural Landscape of Medieval Europe*. trans. Thomas Anessi (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 322. For the Normans, see: Jonathan Shepard, "The Use of the Franks in Eleventh-century Byzantium" *Anglo-Norman Studies* XV (1993): 297-300.

Conclusion

When considering Attaleiates' view on foreigners and mercenaries in his work, it's important to realise what the purpose of his work was. Keeping in mind that his work was likely wasn't widespread and intended for the higher echelons of the Byzantine Empire, specifically intellectual circles, and the things Attaleiates focuses on, that is the virtues of leadership and the way Romans acted during his time, his goal likely was to educate the current and future generation on leadership on why the decline that happened during his lifetime did, and to prevent it from happening in the future. To this goal, whenever he writes about foreigners and mercenaries, it is largely to contrast them with native Byzantine forces, showing their flaws while highlighting the qualities the foreigners have.

Attaleiates had a nuanced view of foreigners and mercenaries in the army in his work. When talking about them they serve a specific purpose for his narrative, especially so when it comes to the Normans and their leaders at the time, Roussel de Bailleul and Krispinos. In his effort to define the reasons for the troubles and failures endured during his lifetime, he finds that leaders displaying qualities such as they do—courage, strength, listening to their advisors, seizing opportunities— are rare to find among the Byzantine leadership, while the Norman leaders are rarely criticised and often praised. They are both strong of arm, act with courage, are able to inspire troops, listen to advisors when they give sound advice, and seize opportunities, both in battle and otherwise. Even when describing these figures in open revolt, Attaleiates highlights their qualities while doing so: Krispinos only attacked tax collectors rather than pillaging the countryside, and when he won a battle against Byzantine troops in Easter Sunday, he acted with piety and ensured the wounded were taken care of. Roussel De Bailleul, despite forming an independent entity and declaring John Doukas as emperor, was praised for defending Byzantine lands and for listening to his advisors.

However, he also retains some of the expected xenophobia found in other Byzantine authors. Foreigners are referred to as barbarian, and he makes statements such as the “the franks are faithless by race”, but Attaleiates clearly has a more nuanced viewpoint. He was appointed to a role in the Manzikert campaign in which his task was likely to act as an arbiter between different groups in the army, specifically regarding foreign elements. He would not have been appointed to this role if he had not had some form of proficiency in handling relations with foreigners.

He makes an effort to portray the Normans that served in the Empire as integrated allies, as being a part of the Byzantine *isopoliteia*, loosely translated to commonwealth. He makes use of the term Latin in a positive way, something that other Byzantine authors at the time did not do. Rather than portraying them as foreign mercenaries that are only here for coin and fame, they are made out to be stalwart allies of the empire, who in certain cases are better defended of the empire than the Byzantines themselves. In the case of Krispinos, Attaleiates even attributes his presence to why Michael VII Doukas was able to win the civil war that followed the Battle of Manzikert.

The Norman soldiers specifically are also noted to act with more courage than Byzantine soldiers are by Attaleiates. While the Byzantine soldiers are often timid, reluctant to act or filled with cowardice, Norman soldiers are noted to have each bloodied their sword, or to charge an enemy as soon as spotting them, and Byzantine commanders are criticised for not utilising Frankish soldiers by Attaleiates for offensive operations.

The foreign mercenaries in the *History* often act as a mirror held up to the Byzantines, as they are used in Attaleiates' narrative to reflect what qualities a Byzantine general or army lacked and what qualities they should embody. In an effort to make them more Byzantine he aims to portray specifically the Normans as Latins, who share the religion of the Byzantines and are allies of the same society.

It is important that the viewpoints of authors are properly understood so that we can better understand the historical events that they write about. Authors such as Attaleiates, Psellos, and Anna Komnena to name a few were not just scribes that wrote these works in offices isolated from the world but they themselves were individuals with great influence in the Byzantine world, who were driven by political, cultural, religious, and personal reasons to structure their narratives in certain ways. By analysing their works and understanding the factors that influenced their viewpoints, we are also able to understand their layers of society as a whole better. Decades ago, George Ostrogorsky's *The Byzantine State* portrayed the 11th century Byzantine Empire as a country divided into two factions, one of civil bureaucrats, and one of military aristocracy. Since then, research such as this thesis has allowed us to see this not as some conflict between two blocs of people, but as individuals, driven by their own needs, ambitions, and ideologies. Understanding the individuality of the author and what drives them is crucial to understanding why certain historiographical assumptions—such as that foreigners and mercenaries were a net negative for the 11th century Byzantine Empire—have come to be and allows us to challenge these and replace them with more nuanced understandings of the historical reality. Attaleiates stands out as an author that praised forces that could be seen as being detrimental to the empire.

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