City and Sovereignty in East Roman Thought, c.1000–1200

Ioannes Zonaras' Historical Vision of the Roman State

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Introduction*

Perhaps more than any other pre-modern polity the Eastern Roman Empire has been defined by its urban centre, even sometimes being described as a form of city state.¹ Prior to the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the empire had had institutional continuity in a city unconquered since Septimius Severus' reign a thousand years before, which became the eastern empire's undisputed centre from 395. Around a broadly stable urban core, however, the wider polity changed radically over this period. With the ever-changing external situation, Constantinople cannot but have assumed greater proportions in East Roman historical thought over the early and central Middle Ages. Moreover, Constantinople's literary construction was inevitably informed by the City's real structural position as the hub of the East Roman state. By the period c.1000–1200, the exponential growth of Greek literature allows us a kaleidoscopic view of the discourses through which the medieval Romans of the east framed their world.² In particular, this 'Golden Age' of historiography

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1 See, for example, Anthony Kaldellis' arguments concerning the East Roman view of their world as a city: Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 42–119; he has nuanced this view more recently to present the empire as a republic, consisting of several "sovereign" cities, held together by the Constantinopolitan centre, see: Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015). For another recent work on the Constantinopolitan 'imperial city state', see Ioannis Stouraitis, "Roman Identity in Byzantium: A Critical Approach," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107 (2014), 175–220.

2 This period, especially the twelfth century, has been appropriately described as the "Third Sophistic": Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, pp. 225–307.

forms a rich source for analysing epistemological aspects of the East Roman historical vision.³

This paper will analyse one of these aspects, Constantinople's historical importance. In this process we uncover one of the myriad discourses available to East Roman writers, that of constitutionalism. Our fullest access to a constitutionally informed historical vision of New Rome is found in the *prooimion* of Ioannes Zonaras' *Epitome of Histories*. Written at some point between the early- and mid-twelfth century,⁴ and covering around 6,619 *anni mundi* from Creation to the death of Alexios I Komnenos in 1118, the *Epitome* is the largest extant historical work in pre-modern Greek literature, and the most substantial which was attempted by a single author between the third century AD and 1453. The *Epitome*'s sheer chronological breadth makes it an ideal case-study for how Constantinople was understood in East Roman thought of the central medieval era.

Elizabeth Jeffreys already noted in 1979 that the Roman Empire is the central strand of Zonaras' narrative, with the historian showing no concern for the eschatology or chronology of earlier 'universal chronicles'.⁵ Ruth Macrides has also demonstrated that Republican Rome is an extremely important part of this story.⁶ The *Epitome*'s 'universal' nature is restricted to Jewish history up to the first century AD, with some attention to the great empires of the ancient near east.⁷ Thus for both these scholars Zonaras represents a novel development

3 Scholarship has periodically addressed the question of how the East Romans viewed their ancient past. See, for example, Elizabeth Jeffreys, "The Attitudes of Byzantine Chroniclers Towards Ancient History," *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 199–238; Ruth Macrides and Paul Magdalino, "The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism," in *Perception of the Past in Twelfth Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino (London, 1992), pp. 117–256; Anthony Kaldellis, "Historicism in Byzantine Thought," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 61 (2007), 1–24.

4 The dating for Zonaras' work is extremely insecure, but 1150 is a loose *terminus ante quem*, with the work certainly being completed by c.1165. The real date is probably much earlier, but 1150 and 1165 are cardinal points, since these are the *termini ante quos* for, respectively, Konstantinos Manasses' *Brief History*, and Michael Glykas' *Chronicle*, both of which seem to have used the *Epitome*. For a full discussion of this, see Ioannes Zonaras, *The History of Zonaras*, trans. Thomas M. Banchich and Eugene N. Lane (London and New York, 2009), pp. 1–22.

5 Jeffreys, "Attitudes," pp. 233–234.

6 Macrides and Magdalino, "Fourth Kingdom," pp. 126–131.

7 This is to a greater or lesser extent also true of others, but it is particularly pronounced in Zonaras. It is important to be aware that East Roman universal history is an evolved version of Eusebius' various historical productions, particularly as reinterpreted by Ioannes of Antioch in the sixth century. Nevertheless, Zonaras' structuring of this history is highly distinctive. For relevant works, see *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and

in East Roman historical thought, perhaps even one with few successors. In a recent volume, however, Anthony Kaldellis has implicitly sought to overturn this view, arguing that Zonaras' historical perspective was not particular in any sense.⁸ Instead, placing him alongside writers of the fifth to thirteenth centuries, Kaldellis suggests that his understanding is in fact paradigmatic of the East Roman historical vision of their empire. Yet this diachronic perspective, whilst beneficial in certain respects, loses sight of Zonaras' particular historiographical aims.

It has been noted before that the *Epitome's* preface can be seen as an interpretive key for the entire work,⁹ providing the reader with important clues as to the historian's wider purposes. The first part of this paper, therefore, provides a close reading of Zonaras' *prooimion*, and the historical vision which it creates. It will be seen that Zonaras goes to extraordinary lengths to provide an encompassing vision of ancient near eastern and Roman history, structured in a very particular manner. In the second section aspects of Zonaras' vision are placed alongside texts of other broadly contemporary writers. Finally, in the conclusion I will suggest some initial thoughts as to why Zonaras envisions the Roman state as he does.

Zonaras' Historical Vision

Through a comparative analysis of the first two chapters of the *Epitome's* preface, Iordanis Grigoriadis established that Zonaras shared the same historiographical ideals as his contemporary high-register historians and epitomisers.¹⁰ The first chapter relates reasons for writing and criticism of previous historians, and the second covers elements of source treatment, together forming a coherent section on historical methodology. Zonaras clearly used his preface as a vehicle for expressing his historiographical purposes. This should

Robert Nelson (Washington, D.C., 2010). From a Latin perspective, see Richard Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time* (Turnhout, 2013).

8 Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 29–30.

9 Macrides and Magdalino, "Fourth Kingdom," p. 127.

10 Iordanis Grigoriadis, "A Study of the Prooimion of Zonaras' Chronicle in Relation to Other 12th-Century Historical Prooimia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 91/2 (January, 1998), 327–344; Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitomae historiarum*, ed. Moritz Pinder and Theodor Büttner-Wobst, 3 vols (Bonn, 1841–1897), prooimion 1–2, 1:1–9. See also Banchich and Lane, *History*, pp. 23–30.

be remembered when reading the subsequent section, where the historian describes what the reader will find in his work.¹¹

In terms of content, much of what is presented in this section conforms to the expectations of the ‘universal chronicle’ genre.¹² Indeed, it is likely that Zonaras has loosely modelled his entire preface on the *prologos* of Georgios Monachos’ ninth-century *Chronicle*.¹³ Georgios also comments on previous historians and literary style, and goes on to describe what will be dealt with in his work. The historian sets up two themes: Jewish scriptural history, and the succession of great near eastern empires. Thus he moves from the Assyrians, to the Persians, to Alexander and the *Diadochoi*, before finally reaching the Romans, who “after the Hellenes [governed] as universal rulers”. Georgios focuses on rulers, empires, and rulership,¹⁴ and ignores all of Rome’s ancient and republican past. Instead, he moves straight from the Macedonians onto the emperors and “their deeds and deaths, from Julius Caesar reaching Diocletian and Maximianus [...] and straight to Constantine the most pious and first Christian emperor”, and from then “finally, [to] Michael son of Theophilos”. The ninth-century historian does have a clear conception of the continuous existence of the Roman state, and the beginning of its ‘modern’ history with Constantine, but it is not the central drama of his story. Instead Rome is primarily framed as the God-appointed successor to the ancient near eastern empires, a clearly eschatological schema.¹⁵

Much of the same content, in roughly identical succession, is found in Zonaras’ *prooimion*. Yet the twelfth-century historian presents the material in a radically different manner. Importantly, the *Epitome*’s preface appears to have been written after the work was completed,¹⁶ and the historian shows clear conceptualisation of his entire narrative structure.¹⁷ Like Georgios,

¹¹ Zonaras, *Epitome*, prooimion 3–4, 1:9–15. See also Banchich and Lane, *History*, pp. 23–30.

¹² Jeffreys, “Attitudes,” pp. 201–218.

¹³ There are simply too many parallels for it to be a coincidence, see Georgios Monachos, *Chronikon*, ed. Charles de Boor [Leipzig, 1904 (repr. Stuttgart, 1978)], prologue 1–4, pp. 1–5.

¹⁴ Jeffreys, “Attitudes,” p. 232.

¹⁵ An understanding of Rome’s universal empire as inherited from Macedonians – in turn following the Persians, and so on – likely pre-dates Christianisation, but already with Eusebius this becomes part of ‘salvation history’, and the underpinning for eschatological and apocalyptic literature such as that of Pseudo-Methodios: Pseudo-Methodios, *Apocalypse*, ed. Benjamin Garstad, *Apocalypse: Pseudo-Methodius. An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012).

¹⁶ Banchich and Lane, *History*, p. 34.

¹⁷ The narrative progression of the prooimion roughly follows that of the main work: Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 127–128.

Zonaras first outlines the history of the Jewish people and the succession of the near eastern empires.¹⁸ In the *Epitome*, however, the narrative is tightly organised around the city of Jerusalem. Both the Jews themselves and the Assyrian Empire are introduced into the narrative through the Hebrew captivities. That of the Samaritans by Salmanasar emphasises the seizure of the *ethnos* and its removal across the Euphrates, whilst the focus for Nebuchadnezzar's Judean captivity is on Jerusalem: "the city became deserted, the temple was burned, and the entire *ethnos* enslaved". Other founders or rulers of great empires are included primarily because of their interaction with Jerusalem, rather than for themselves *per se*. Zonaras does state that he will discuss Cyrus the Great's rise and establishment of the Persian Empire. Nevertheless, this comes after the historian has emphasised that Cyrus' destruction of Assyrian "sovereignty (*basileia*)" allowed the Jewish *ethnos* "to return to Jerusalem, to rebuild the city, and to renovate the temple". Zonaras' clear concern is to show how the great empires or 'sovereignities' interacted with the Jewish *ethnos* and their native city.

This is evident from the scriptural stories which he mentions: Esther, wife of the Persian *shahanshah* and saviour of "the Jewish *ethnos*";¹⁹ Judith, who tricked an invading general of Nebuchadnezzar;²⁰ and Tobit, the central figure of a book dealing with the history of the Naftali tribe after their deportation to Nineveh in the Assyrian heartland.²¹ Even Alexander the Great is included because the history has "necessarily taken note of him both for other reasons and because he sojourned in Jerusalem [...] and especially honoured the high priest". Zonaras does take a general interest in rulers, elaborating a systematic methodology for assessing rulership, the lack of which he criticises in other historians.²² The rulers themselves, however, are highlighted for their interaction with the story of the Jews in Jerusalem. Thus he intends to narrate "how and by whom the building of the city was hindered, and by whom, in turn, its construction was granted". Zonaras does discuss various elements of Alexander's reign: "how he ended the Persians' *basileia* and made it subject to himself", leading to the Hellenistic kingdoms, which are constructed as the division of Alexander's "*basileia*" into 'four rulerships (*arches*)'. Nevertheless, the historian takes especial care to show how these events interacted with the Holy City.

18 Zonaras highly values Josephus as a source here, as well as the Old Testament.

19 Esther, 2:7.

20 Judith, 8:1–16:25.

21 Tobit, 1:1–14:15.

22 This methodology is a systematic elaboration of a ruler's background, the manner in which he gained sovereignty, his character and qualities, and the manner of his death.

Indeed, the chapter culminates with the Hasmonaeans inviting the Romans to arbitrate their power struggles, with the result that “Pompey Magnus [...] seized the city of Jerusalem and subjected the *ethnos* to the Romans”. After running through who came subsequently to rule the Jewish *basileia*, and why and when “governors were dispatched from Rome to Judea”, Zonaras finally says that he will relate “for what reasons the Judeans refused to submit to the Romans [...] and how Jerusalem suffered its final, irrevocable sack.”

By the end of the chapter the image created is that of an *ethnos* whose historical fortunes and sovereignty are entirely bound to its city. Although other geographical spaces are occasionally alluded to, and several figures are mentioned, only Jerusalem and the Jews continually resurface. These two inter-linked aspects are the organising principle of the narrative: the empires of Assyria, Persia, the Macedonians, and Rome are introduced through their contact with the Jews in their city. Zonaras is concerned with the near eastern empires and rulership for their own sakes, reminiscent in this of Georgios’ outlook. However, he is far more systematic in his handling of empires and rulers. He has a particularly subtle understanding of a single “Hellenic *basileia*” split into four *arches*. As in Georgios’ *Chronicle*, the four near eastern empires evoke the ‘Four Kingdoms’ prophecy of the Book of Daniel, the Roman interpretation of which viewed their empire as the final universal kingdom before Judgement Day.²³ In the main part of the *Epitome* Zonaras analyses this prophecy in detail, explicitly setting Rome as the fourth kingdom.²⁴ Nevertheless, in the preface the empires are presented as parts of an almost secular Jewish history.²⁵ Thus, whilst Zonaras understood the successive ‘sovereignties’ in eschatological terms, it is not something he wishes to emphasise in his historical vision. He is decidedly technical in the brief allusion to Jewish government’s progression from high priests to Hasmonaeon monarchy. The implied scheme is that Jewish sovereignty, their *basileia*, was invested in its high priesthood after the return from captivity. The Hasmonaeans monopolise the priesthood and therefore the sovereignty, so that they “even bestowed a diadem on themselves”. Notably, Zonaras makes no value judgment on these developments or their religious dimensions. The mutability of the forms of Jewish government,

23 This interpretation is first attested in Josephus. Daniel’s prophecy held special significance for the Christian Roman Empire, giving their state an eschatological mission that fed into apocalyptic literature, amongst other things: Jeffreys, “Attitudes,” p. 223; Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” particularly pp. 127–128, 140.

24 Zonaras, *Epitome* 3.14–3.16, 1:222–228.

25 Even Christ and John the Baptist are only briefly mentioned in connection with Josephus’ works.

and their varying relations with the great powers, is set against the permanence of the Jewish *ethnos* and their collective sovereignty, inextricably connected to the Holy City.

Much as in his main narrative,²⁶ Zonaras uses the Roman sack of Jerusalem in 70 AD as the point from which to transfer focus to the affairs “of the Romans and of Rome [...] from what the *ethnos* of the Romans had their beginning; [and] by whom the region of Italy was previously inhabited”.²⁷ Thus, although the Romans’ non-Italian provenance is referenced, it is not elaborated nor are Aeneas and Troy mentioned. The Romans’ legendary eastern origins are clearly unimportant in Zonaras’ historical vision.²⁸ Instead, as he states at the beginning of the section, and as with the Jews, his main concern is a city, Rome. The first named Roman is Romulus, at the moment of the city’s founding. Thereafter Zonaras states that he will narrate “how the city itself was first ruled; what customs and laws it employed”. Strikingly, the historian goes on to accurately describe the entire constitutional development of the Roman state. Centrally employing the term *basileia*, he describes how Tarquinius Superbus changed this into tyranny. For this reason he is deposed, several wars fought, and “affairs (*pragmata*) for the Romans” were changed from *aristokratia* to *demokratia*, replete with “consuls and dictators, then tribunes too”. It is clear that Zonaras is able to conceive of the Roman state passing through several distinct phases, indeed, that he structures Roman history in terms of constitutional developments.²⁹ He comments that he will describe how different offices functioned, including “what the consulship was in olden days”. Demonstrating again an understanding of the mutability of government forms, Zonaras says he will relate how after the consuls “[...] the *archē* of the Romans later changed to monarchy; how, even if not clearly, Gaius Julius Caesar first pretended to this”, thus causing the Republic’s concluding civil wars, and Augustus’ ultimate victory. Finally, “after he had returned to Rome with brilliant victory celebrations, Octavius (*sic*) pursued *autarchia* and transformed the leadership (*hēgemonia*) of the Romans into genuine one-man rule (*monarchia*)”. Thus the historian

26 It has already been illustrated how deeply Zonaras used his narrative structure to connect biblical history to Roman, and how he structures his later narrative in terms of Roman constitutional progression: Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 127–128.

27 Also in his main narrative he moves chronologically backwards to the founding of Rome at this point.

28 In his main narrative Zonaras avoids all mention of the Trojan War, though Aeneas is still founder of Alba Longa and thus Rome: Jeffreys, “Attitudes,” pp. 233–234.

29 Paul Magdalino, “Aspects of Twelfth-Century *Kaiserkritik*,” *Speculum* 58/2 (April, 1983), p. 343; Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 127–128.

has a remarkably subtle understanding of the Roman Republic's gradual transformation, in many respects no different to that of modern scholars.

The Republic is seamlessly woven into the High Empire with the statement that the history will discuss "who reigned after him (Augustus), how and for how long he ruled, and what sort of end of life he met". Importantly, the emphasis on the emperors is now paired with a concern for the patriarchs "of the four great churches [...] Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem". Nonetheless, Zonaras names no patriarchs or emperors until Diocletian and Maximianus Herculius, the same two pagan emperors named in Georgios' *prologos*. Zonaras both notes these emperors' persecution of Christians, and the fact that they stood aside for their caesars to succeed them. Thus they form the background for the rise of Constantius Chlorus, and, finally, Constantine the Great, "*isapostolos*". Predictably, Constantine is given the longest treatment of any individual, with all the most famous features of his life specifically mentioned. Not least of these, how Constantine "transferred the *basileia* from the senior Rome" to the new city he named after himself in "Byzantion, having dubbed it the new Rome". With Zonaras saying he will discuss "who reigned *therein* after him",³⁰ Constantine's conversion and transferral of Roman sovereignty to the City brings together all the section's themes. It is the final specific notice of what will be discussed, and the historian returns to his systematic methodology for subsequent rulers and the Constantinopolitan patriarchs,³¹ before commenting "And thus, the account, descending as far as those that have become emperors in our own time, concludes the *epitome*".

It is clear that these two chapters constitute a single section which elucidates the *Epitome's* historical vision, much as the previous two chapters form a single whole which elaborates Zonaras' methodology. The basic themes can be found in previous East Roman historical works, presenting an image of the distant past focussed on successive near eastern empires and important rulers, the history of the Jews up to Titus' sack of Jerusalem, and a Roman history focussed on mythical origins and eventual empire.³² Yet Zonaras' structuring of this image is innovative in first avoiding explicit eschatology. As with other chroniclers, ancient Jewish history forms a comparative *exemplum* for the Romans. However, rather than foreshadowing their position as the providentially chosen people, the Jews are constructed as an *ethnos* bound to their

30 Emphasis added.

31 Zonaras adds to his methodological approach here that he will assess which emperors and patriarchs were heretics, thus closely following the equivalent section of Georgios' preface.

32 Jeffreys, "Attitudes," pp. 200–218; see also Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 29–30.

ancestral city, with a collective sovereignty – a *basileia* – which is constant whilst being mutable in form. This mirrors an identical construction of the Romans, first in Rome, and then in Constantinople. The Jews' importance as the original chosen people is implicit, of course, but Zonaras does not bring it to the fore. Similarly, the real function of the successive great empires seems to be to provide a history of universal sovereignty and its interaction with Jewish Jerusalem, rather than to explicitly construct Rome as the fourth of Daniel's kingdoms – although Zonaras does note in the Jewish chapter that he will discuss “certain visions of the prophet [Daniel], which are all recounted with an abbreviated exegesis”.³³

A second apparent innovation is the Republic's central position in Roman history.³⁴ Indeed, Zonaras complains about a lack of republican sources both in his preface and in the main body of the work. In a long digression, placed at a narrative break between the sacks of Corinth and Carthage and the rise of Pompey Magnus, he apologises for providing no information on the intervening period. The historian regretfully states that he has to pass over the things “accomplished by the consuls and dictators”, since he cannot see the necessary books in exile “far from the City”.³⁵ The historian therefore passes onto the era of Pompey and Caesar “having related beforehand certain details, in order that the course by which the Romans were brought to *autarchia* from *aristokratia* and from *demokratia* be clear”.

Remarkably, in excusing himself Zonaras clearly states the purpose of his Republican material: to provide the Roman Empire's constitutional history. Although the historian does reveal a pronounced interest in the period for its own sake,³⁶ it is emphasised as a key part of a single constitutional development. This development stretches from the ancient monarchy, through the Republic to the Augustan settlement, and finally culminates with the establishment of New Rome. Zonaras' very language emphasises the unity of this story – the preface's entire history of the Roman *basileia*, from Romulus to Constantine, is written as one long sentence stretching sixty-two lines in the standard edition.

33 Importantly, these two Jerusalemite and Roman themes are discernible in the structuring of the main narrative, with book x ending simultaneously with the death of Augustus and the birth of Jesus, Zonaras, *Epitome* 10.39, pp. 456–457.

34 As stated, this has been long established, see note 6.

35 Interestingly, Zonaras seems to run out of Republican information exactly at the point from which Dio is no longer extant today: Banchich and Lane, *Zonaras*, p. 37; see also Magdalino, “*Kaiserkritik*,” p. 343.

36 Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 127–128.

Overall, Zonaras presents an impersonal, state-focused, and largely secular historical vision, with a clear understanding of historical change. Even where he does have an eschatological understanding of the Roman past, as with the prophecy of Daniel, Zonaras goes to lengths to integrate this into a constitutionalist scheme in the main narrative, and does not emphasise it in his preface.³⁷ Constantinople is New Rome, and implicitly New Jerusalem, but this is a result of identifiable historical developments, particularly concerning the Romans' 'constitution'. Zonaras demonstrates how the collective sovereignty of the Roman *ethnos* evolved as a state over time, and was inextricable from their home city. Much as Georgios Monachos, the implication of Zonaras choosing to end with Constantine is that here is where 'modern' Roman history begins. From this point all the necessary pieces are in place for a comprehensive history of the Roman Empire up to his own era, particularly the establishment of imperial sovereignty in the City.

A Common Vision?

Having analysed Zonaras' historical vision in seclusion, it is now possible to provide literary context for the image which he creates. In outlining the development of the Roman *basileia*, Zonaras makes use of remarkably subtle political vocabulary. This enables him to discuss general changes in the Roman state's character, moving from *aristokratia* to *demokratia*; as well as specific changes in one section of the state, such as Caesar and Augustus transforming the "rulership (*archē*)" into "one-man rule (*monarchia/autarchia*)".

This political vocabulary is a central part of Kaldellis' monograph, *The Byzantine Republic*, where he identifies its use in several texts across the late antique and medieval eras. He has proposed a relatively clear division of terminology: *kratos* refers to "power";³⁸ *basileia* to the "the imperial office or monarchy and its authority, functions, and extensions";³⁹ and *politeia* to the East Roman political body as a whole, permanent throughout its existence in various 'aristocratic', 'democratic', and 'monarchical' forms.⁴⁰ Although he does recognise that *basileia* was occasionally used to refer to the whole state, he still insists on "[...] the priority of the *politeia* and its theoretical difference from

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 38.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ This is in general the argument of the monograph, but see particularly: Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 19–31.

and priority to the *basileia*, which was merely the monarchy that governed the polity after Augustus.”⁴¹ It is clear from the preceding analysis, however, that these firm lines cannot be drawn.

It may be more helpful, therefore, to think of these terms as forming a constitutional discourse, informed by the long traditions of Greco-Roman literature, which allowed Zonaras to carefully engage with medieval East Roman state and society.⁴² The question in providing the *Epitome*’s literary context, therefore, is how Zonaras’ use of this constitutional discourse compares with that of his contemporaries. It has already been demonstrated that Zonaras markedly differs in outlook from two contemporary ‘universal’ chroniclers, Konstantinos Manasses, and Michael Glykas.⁴³ Earlier chroniclers do show a concern for laying the historical basis for the emergence of the Christian Roman Empire based in Constantinople,⁴⁴ but this is without Zonaras’ care for constitutional matters. Not unreasonably, therefore, Ruth Macrides has asked whether this material would even be of interest to contemporary East Romans.⁴⁵ However, a different picture is presented if we find *comparanda* from other genres than ‘universal chronicles’.

Two historical works of Zonaras’ eleventh-century predecessors provide fitting points from which to begin this process: one which Zonaras used in his composition,⁴⁶ Michael Psellos’ *Historia Syntomos*;⁴⁷ and another by Psellos’ contemporary, Michael Attaleiates’ *Ponēma Nomikon*.⁴⁸ Notably, unlike

41 Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 39.

42 Paul Magdalino drew attention to the “constitutionalist” nature of imperial rhetoric and *Kaiserkritik* in 1983, see Magdalino, “*Kaiserkritik*,” p. 327.

43 Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 120–136.

44 Ibidem, p. 233.

45 Ibidem, p. 131.

46 Michael Psellos, *Historia syntomos* (HS), ed. Willem Aerts (Berlin, 1990), p. xxiv; Dejan Dželebžić, “Izreke careva u Kratkij istoriji Mihaila Psela,” *Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog instituta* 44 (2007), 155–73 (main text in Greek); Apostolos Karpouzilos, *Βυζαντινοί Ιστορικοί και Χρονογράφοι* [*Byzantine Historians and Chroniclers*], vol. 3, pp. 162–69.

47 On the *Historia Syntomos*’ production, sources, and pedagogical intention for Psellos’ pupil, Michael, see Theofili Kampianaki’s study in the present volume, pp. 311–324. ■ AQ: check reference

48 Attaleiates dedicated this work to Michael VII Doukas in 1072. It has, to my knowledge, never been the principle subject of a study, but it has been included in Wanda Wolska-Conus W., “L’ecole de droit et l’enseignement du droit a Byzance au X le siecle: Xiphilin et Psellos,” *Travaux et Memoirs* 1(1979), 97–100, and Leopold Wenger, *Die Quellen des romischen Rechts, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften* 2 (Vienna, 1953). More recently Dimitris Krallis has included it peripherally in his pioneering study of Attaleiates as an eleventh-century political figure, see Dimitris Krallis, *History as Politics in the Eleventh-Century Byzantium* (Tempe, 2012).

Zonaras' *Epitome*, these two texts have an explicit context and audience: they were both written in the early 1070s for the emperor Michael VII Doukas. They also have very clear historiographical purposes, the *Historia* intends to discuss the rulers of Old and New Rome, and the *Ponēma Nomikon* to provide a synopsis of Roman law, including a brief legal history at the beginning. Thus they provide important *comparanda* for Zonaras' vision, which has similar historiographical purposes to both texts, although it is far more holistic in scope. Nevertheless, the *Historia* in particular has an extremely close historical vision to the *Epitome*, beginning with Romulus' establishment of Rome and proceeding with each king until Tarquinius Superbus,⁴⁹ where Psellos writes:

The royal *politeia* of the Romans remained for four hundred and forty years after the founding of Rome, until in the reign of Tarquinius it became a tyranny, the state (*kratos*) was changed from a *monarchia*, or *basileia*, into *aristokratia*, [...] And it remained in such a manner until Julius Caesar.⁵⁰

Thereafter Psellos elaborates the rule of the consuls, until he notes that this form of government is ill-fitting for his main purpose, and he skips to Julius Caesar, "who changed the *aristokratia* of the Romans into a *monarchia* and the consulship into a *basileia*".⁵¹ These two quotes are significant, especially considering that Zonaras read and used the *Historia*. They demonstrate that, although Zonaras and Psellos have a broadly shared understanding of Caesar's significance, their specifics and use of constitutional terms are quite different. Firstly Psellos has no intermediate 'democratic' constitutional stage, and secondly he constructs Caesar as the first emperor without nuance. This is very different to Zonaras' subtle transformation of the Republic. Moreover, the later historian does not claim that either Caesar or Augustus established a *basileia*, rather they change the "*hēgemonia* of the Romans" into *autarchia*/*monarchia*. Thus it is impossible to establish universal meanings for the terms contained in East Roman constitutional discourse.

Nonetheless, despite these particular differences, Psellos' and Zonaras' historical visions remain remarkably similar. Neither emphasises the role of Aeneas, so that Romulus and Rome's foundation form the real beginning to their Roman histories, with Psellos even noting that "The first settlers of the town were barbarian autochthones". Moreover, although Psellos is mainly

⁴⁹ Psellos, *HS*, pp. 1–6.

⁵⁰ All translations are my own adaptations from the edition; Psellos, *HS*, pp. 6–7.

⁵¹ Psellos, *HS*, pp. 10–11.

concerned with rulers, the city of Rome is a key narrative presence in his first few chapters, with the kings constructed as both “of the Romans” and “of Rome”. He also mentions how Romulus “framed laws for [the City]”, thereby illustrating the strong connection between city and legal sovereignty that is reflected in Zonaras’ preface.

Although Attaleiates does not begin his story with either Romulus or the founding of Rome, this connection is clearly evident in his work’s first chapter:

In the earliest years, when the subjection of the Romans (τὸ τῶν Ρωμαίων ὑπήκοον) was regulated by the high consulships, (for then there were no imperial monarchs (μοναρχίαι βασιλικαί), but each year two consuls were elected by the whole people and the senate – which is to say the more noble archons of Rome – and they would order both civic and military matters) none of the laws were officially written in various books; rather, the many shared in the ordering of the city at that time [...]⁵²

Attaleiates explicitly frames laws as being for the purpose of ordering the city, a construct emphasised in the second chapter where he describes the writing of the Twelve Tables, “the laws of Rome”.⁵³ Thus all three writers create a strong connection between sovereignty and city, and trace the roots of the East Roman system to the earliest days of Old Rome. Notably, however, neither Attaleiates nor Psellos refer to Constantine’s *translatio imperii*, the event which forms the culmination of Zonaras’ narrative. Entirely unmentioned in Attaleiates, Psellos does note that Constantine “left ancient Rome urged by divine oracles and founded the city which bears his name”,⁵⁴ but the City does not form any kind of pivotal transformation in the *Historia*’s narrative. Whilst there are clear resonances between the historical visions of Psellos, Attaleiates, and Zonaras, the twelfth-century historian makes more extensive use of constitutional discourse, and lays an emphasis on Constantinople not present in their works.⁵⁵

52 Michael Attaleiates, *Ponēma Nomikon*, ed. Ioannis Zepos and Panagiotis Zepos, in *Jus Graecoromanum VII* (Athens, 1931), p. 411.

53 Attaleiates, *Ponēma*, pp. 411–412.

54 Psellos, *HS*, pp. 36–37.

55 In part this can be put down to the specific aims of Psellos’ and Attaleiates’ texts, but the complete absence of even the concept of *translatio imperii* is notable nonetheless.

Zonaras' picture has stronger resonances in this regard with the sixth-century *Patria* of Hesychios Illoustrios.⁵⁶ The latter begins his work by saying:

When 362 years had passed since the monarchy of Caesar Augustus in the elder Rome, and her affairs were already coming to an end, Constantine son of Constantius took over the sceptres and established the new Rome, ordering that it should be equal in rank to the first. For after having been administered by tyrants and kings, and often having been governed by the ways of *aristokratia* and *demokratia*, it (Byzantion) finally achieved its present greatness.

So we should tell how it originated in the beginning and by whom it was settled [...]⁵⁷

This image and its wording is so close Zonaras' preface that it is plausible that he had read this text, either in its original form, or as part of the late-tenth century *Patria*. Scholars have recognised Hesychios' desire to give Byzantion a history equivalent to that of Rome.⁵⁸ Importantly, this meant Roman constitutional history, and Hesychios presents a progression from tyranny, to 'aristocracy', and 'democracy' identical to Zonaras'. Likewise, in the main body of the text Hesychios' protagonist is Byzantion itself, forming the narrative's organising principle. Moreover, immediately prior to turning to Byzantion's Roman history, Hesychios recaps his entire constitutional scheme:

So it was that the Byzantines had had aristocracies, democracies, and even tyrannies. Yet when, in the time of consular government (ὑπάτων ἐπικρατείᾳ), Roman rule superseded all local powers, it also subdued the Hellenic *ethnē*, and likewise the Byzantines submitted to it.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ On this text's relationship to the late-tenth century *Patria*, and direction to relevant scholarship, see Albrecht Berger, *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria* (Cambridge, Mass., 2013), pp. vii–xxi. On the text itself, see Anthony Kaldellis, "The Works and Days of Hesychios the Illoustrios of Miletos," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2005), 381–403.

⁵⁷ *Patria*, ed. Theodor Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1901–1907), 1.1. The translation here is adapted from Albrecht Berger, *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012), p. 3.

⁵⁸ See Kaldellis, "Hesychios the Illoustrios," p. 396; Raymond Janin, *Constantinople byzantine: Développement urbain et repertoire topographique* (Paris, 1964), p. 11; Gilbert Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire: études sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris, 1984), p. 26.

⁵⁹ *Patria* 1.33.

All the essential features of Zonaras' historical vision are found in Hesychios' text: both writers construct the constitutional histories of *ethnē* bound with their home cities, and narrate the interaction of these cities with the great empires of the ancient world. Whilst Hesychios wrote in the sixth century, his work's inclusion in the later tenth-century *Patria* shows that its perspective was relevant to East Romans of the central medieval era. Indeed, the above quote is found *in toto* in Konstantinos VII Porphrogenetos' *De Thematribus*, notably in the context of justifying Constantinople's position as New Rome.⁶⁰ Between these three texts, therefore, it is possible to identify Zonaras elaborating historical visions first seen in the late-tenth and eleventh centuries with subtle use of constitutional discourse, to present his own comprehensive history of the Roman Empire of Constantinople.

To simplify a complex and varied process, during the period *circa* 1000–1200 there was increased interest in exploring discursive boundaries amongst East Roman writers of diverse socio-economic background.⁶¹ This literary explosion included philosophy and rhetoric,⁶² historiography,⁶³ poetry,⁶⁴ and

60 Konstantinos Porphyrogenetos, *Peri Themātōn*, ed. Agostino Pertusi (Vatican City, 1952), 1.16.

61 For the classic study of the growth of literature in this period, and its relation to socio-cultural changes, see Alexander Kazhdan and Annabel Wharton, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (California, 1985).

62 See, for example, two recent studies on Psellos and 'Hellenising' philosophical and rhetorical literature in this period: Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 191–316; Stratis Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2013).

63 Perhaps influenced by the tenth-century *Historica Excerpta* project, the period ca. 1000–1200 can be characterised as a golden age for East Roman historiography. For a general summary and outline of East Roman historians, see Karpozilos, *Byzantine Historians*, 3 vols, in particular see vol. 3.

64 Poetry in the eleventh century provides a unique source for socio-literary history illustrating a dynamic secular society, see Floris Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry, 1025–1081* (Oxford, 2012). The twelfth-century saw use of, for example, more varied registers in East Roman poetry. See, for example, Emmanuel Bourbouhakis, "Political Personae: the Poem From Prison of Michael Glykas: Byzantine Literature Between Fact and Fiction," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 31/1 (2007), 53–75.

the Greco-Roman novel,⁶⁵ together forming a kind of “Third Sophistic”.⁶⁶ The *Epitome* is part of this literary context, and a deeper view of the key term present in the preface will aid in understanding Zonaras’ discursive exploration of constitutionalism.

This central term is *basileia*. Thus far translated as ‘sovereignty’, and dismissed as solely meaning “monarchy” by Kaldellis,⁶⁷ the term has several connected meanings all related to the exercise of power.⁶⁸ Zonaras’ specific usage, however, denotes the form, exercise, and geographic location of power, and the political expression of an *ethnos*’ collective sovereignty. Interestingly, the late-tenth century *Souda* provides five definitions of *basileia* over three entries. One states that, as well as meaning “kingdom/empire”, *basileia* refers to “the dignity/office (τὸ ἀξίωμα)”.⁶⁹ Another defines *basileia* as “rulership (*archē*) without accountability”. Nevertheless, this absolutism was discursively entwined with a strong idea of the public, civic state, separate but ruled by the holder of the imperial office.⁷⁰ As the *Souda* explains:

Basileia [is] a possession of things held in common, but the *dēmosia* [are] not *basileia*’s possessions. Therefore the forcible and violent collection of taxes should be hated as tyrannical insolence, but the reasoned and benevolent requests for contributions should be honoured as concern for the public welfare.⁷¹

There are several parallels with the vision of *basileia* presented by Zonaras. For him, *basileia* is the collective expression of an *ethnos*’ sovereignty. It is mutable, with both the Jewish and Roman sovereignties passing through distinct forms such as priesthood and aristocracy. Nevertheless, it is permanent, and it

65 The twelfth-century saw the re-emergence of this form of Greco-Roman literature after an apparent disappearance of well over half a millennium, see Panayiotis Agapitos and Ole Smith, *The Study of Medieval Greek Romance* (Copenhagen, 1992). It has been argued that this in particular shows the East Roman ability to understand historical change and represent different historical epochs, see Kaldellis, “Historicism,” pp. 7–12.

66 Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, pp. 225–316.

67 Kaldellis, *Republic*, p. 38.

68 It can mean rulership, a ruler’s power and majesty, the area under an empire or person’s control, and carries several scriptural overtones, meanings, and references; see the various definitions of *basileia* in the dictionaries of Liddell and Scott, Lampe, and Bauer.

69 *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. Ada Adler (Leipzig, 1928–1938), Beta, 146, p. 146; all *Souda* translations have been adapted from: <http://www.stoa.org/sol/history.shtml> (accessed October 2014).

70 Dagron, *Emperor*, pp. 21–22.

71 *Lexicon*, Beta 148, p. 148.

is the possession of the *ethnos*. The *Souda* clearly sees collective sovereignty in similar terms, and repeats the same, unattributed quote under the definition of *dēmosios*.⁷²

The mid-eleventh century *Peira* uses *dēmosia* in a remarkably similar manner to the *Souda*, and has clear parallels with Zonaras historical vision. As its writer, the judge Eustathios Romaïos, comments:

Those things are the *dēmosia*, which are called *dēmosia*, which the *dēmos* had and enjoyed before there was a *basileus* and which passed to the *basileia* once it had been constituted.⁷³

Although *basileia* is here used in a restricted sense to mean monarchy, like Zonaras, Attaleiates, and Psellos, Romaïos has a strong awareness of the constitutional history of the Roman state, and there are clear equivalences with the *Souda* in his construction of *dēmosia*. Whilst these texts have different purposes, and emerge from different contexts, they all participate in the same constitutional discourse.

Another telling parallel is found in Theodoros Prodromos' commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*:

“The best *politeia*”, i.e. the *basileia* in which *monarchia*, *demokratia* and *aristokratia* are combined. For the *basileus* rules, but the best of men govern beside him, since they are wise and can make useful suggestions. But *demokratia* is also to be seen: a certain *taxis* surrounds the *eparchos* and rules the *polis*.⁷⁴

Prodromos here includes the *Epitome*'s three constitutional stages as components of the single Roman *basileia*. The tripartite Roman constitution recalls Polybios' famous discussion of the Republican “Roman *politeia*”,⁷⁵ yet Prodromos has notably updated it to refer directly to twelfth-century

⁷² *Lexicon*, Delta 460, p. 460.

⁷³ Eustathios Romaïos, *Peira*, *Jus Graecoromanum*, ed. Ioannis Zepos and Panagiotis Zepos (Athens, 1931), 4.1.43. See also Dimitris Krallis, “Democratic” Action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates “Republicanism” in Context, *Viator* 40/2 (2009), 50–51.

⁷⁴ Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” p. 146; *Anonymi et Stephani, in artem rhetorica commentaria*, ed. Hugo Rabe, in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, 22/2 (Berlin, 1896), p. 296.

⁷⁵ Polybios, *The Histories*, trans. William Paton, in the revised edition by Frank Walbank and Christian Habicht, 6 vols. (Cambridge Mass., 2010), 6:1–58.

Constantinople: the *basileus* and his advisors govern the empire, and “a certain *taxis*” around the *eparchos* rules the City. This is a considered discursive engagement with the medieval East Roman state. What is more, Prodhromos constructs the entire Roman *basileia* as a city, *the City*. Much as Zonaras, he clearly understands Constantinople as the definitive sovereign space, the only space in which and from which the *politeia* operates. Indeed, the etymological root of *politeia* would not be lost on eleventh- and twelfth-century writers.

Although a separate study is required for this issue, it should be noted that the constitutional discourse uncovered here fed directly into Zonaras’ criticisms of contemporary imperial policies.⁷⁶ For example, in a gloss on Canon 28 of Chalcedon, which elevated New Rome to the level of Old Rome because it was “honoured with the monarchy and the senate”, the historian responds that the “former has been transformed into a tyranny and the latter has folded up and gone away”.⁷⁷ Zonaras thus focuses his attack on the Komnenian regime through Constantinople’s status as politically equal to the elder Rome: sovereignty and city are inseparable.

Nowhere is this axiom clearer than in the *Epitome*’s section dealing with Constantinople’s founding.⁷⁸ Recounting the prophecy of a certain astronomer Valens that the City would last for 696 years, Zonaras comments:

So either one must suspect Valens’ prophecy was false and that his skill failed or one must reckon that he spoke of the years in which the customs (*ta ethē*) of the *politeia* were preserved, the status quo (*katastasis*) and senate honoured, its citizens flourished and authority (*epistasia*) was lawful, that is to say, the state was indeed monarchical (τὸ κράτος δὴ τὸ βασιλείον), but not an outright tyranny, with those ruling reckoning the public things (*ta koina*) private and using them for their own pleasures [...] [and] making gifts from the *dēmosia* to whom they wished [...]⁷⁹

76 These were largely to do with alleged grants of imperial power and public land to Komnenian family members, see Magdalino, “*Kaiserkritik*,” particularly pp. 329–333; and Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 128–131.

77 Ibidem, p. 130; Georgios Alexandrou Rhalles and Michael Potles, *Syntagma tōn theiōn kai hierōn kanonōn tōn te hagiōn kai paneuphēmōn apostolōn*, 6 vols (Athens, 1852–1859), 2:282–284. See also Ruth Macrides, “Perception of the Past in the Twelfth-Century Canonists,” in *Kinship and Justice in Byzantium*, ed. eadem (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 589–600.

78 Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” pp. 130–131.

79 Zonaras, *Epitome*, 13.3.13–15.

It is important that Zonaras chose the founding of Constantinople to make this statement on the Roman constitution – indeed, he equates the fall of the *politeia* with the fall of the *polis*. The implication, as in his preface, is that this is the transition to ‘modern’ Roman history, and so the moment to make such a statement on the text’s wider purposes. Thereafter Constantinople provides the setting for the entire political drama of New Rome, dominating the text much as the City dominated the empire. The *Epitome* seeks to comprehend this history, and thence use it as a vehicle for discursively engaging with the twelfth-century Roman Empire of Constantinople. Zonaras is not interested in constitutionalism and ancient history for its own sake, but for its implications in his own era. This is clear from the prophecy itself: the 696 years in which Zonaras says a proper constitution was maintained last well into the middle ages, ending roughly with the death of Emperor Basileios II.⁸⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, we find that City and sovereignty are so intimately bound in East Roman thought as to be inextricable from each other, united in the term *politeia*.⁸¹ This term, as well as *basileia*, and a number of other important signifiers contained in constitutional discourse, allowed Zonaras and others to carefully engage with the medieval Eastern Roman Empire. Bearing this shared discourse in mind, it is likely that contemporaries did indeed read Zonaras for his Republican material.⁸² The *Epitome*’s rich manuscript tradition alone is testament to its popularity, and while Glykas may have been highly selective in his reading, others would have engaged with the constitutional aspects of its historical vision. Whereas scholars have variously seen socio-political, ethno-cultural and religious groupness as the strongest markers of a Roman sense of self in eleventh- and twelfth-century New Rome, Zonaras and many of his contemporaries give far more historiographical prominence to the City and

80 This is surely not accidental – Skylitzes, for example, draws attention to the empire’s apparent sharp downward turn after his death in 1025: Ioannes Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, ed. Hans Thurn (Berlin, 1973), p. 371.

81 This term has also been identified as important for tenth-century imperial conceptualisations: Paul Magdalino, “Constantine VII and the Historical Geography of Empire,” in *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. Sahar Bazzaz, Yota Batsaki, and Dimiter Angelov (Boston Mass., and London 2013), p. 39.

82 Macrides and Magdalino, “Fourth Kingdom,” p. 131; notably both Ioannes Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates begin their works where Zonaras ends, and Choniates in particular makes use of constitutionalism, see Magdalino, “*Kaiserkritik*”.

the nature of the state it contained.⁸³ Thus Niketas Choniates describes himself falling to his knees before the Theodosian walls as he leaves conquered Constantinople, reproaching them for still standing when all they were meant to protect was gone.⁸⁴

Why Zonaras and other East Roman writers constructed their state in this manner is a complex question, and only suggestions can be made here. Kaldellis' argument is that the East Roman state really *was* the "monarchical republic" described by Zonaras and others.⁸⁵ Certainly, the range of texts identified both here and in his monograph provide support for this view. Nevertheless, in both cases only historiographical, legal, and rhetorical works have been analysed. To use these texts' conceptual constructs as interpretive keys for others of different periods and genres, much less for historical events themselves, creates serious methodological problems. It is one thing to note that Zonaras follows earlier writers in drawing a direct line of descent from the ancient Roman monarchy, through the Republic, to Constantinople,⁸⁶ and another thing entirely to explain why he and his eleventh-century forebears chose to emphasise very different aspects of Roman history within this scheme. The use of constitutional vocabulary is contextual, and its particular role must be analysed each time it is met.

To take one brief example, the following hymn of the ninth-century hymnographer Kassia displays some striking features:

When Augustus established *monarchia* (μοναρχήσαντος) upon the earth, | the *polyarchia* of men ceased; | and when You came into human form through the Pure One | the polytheism of idols was destroyed. | As one worldly *basileia* | the cities became | and also in one divine *despoteia* | the *ethnē* believed. | The peoples were registered by Caesar's decree; | we the faithful have been inscribed in the name of Your divinity, | when our God assumed human form.⁸⁷

In this hymn the twin themes of Augustus assuming *monarchia* and Christ assuming human form are artfully enunciated as a single eschatological moment. Thus we find a ninth-century writer capable of entwining historical

83 On this issue, see Stouraitis, "Roman Identity."

84 Choniates, *History*, pp. 591–592.

85 This is the whole volume's argument, see: Kaldellis, *Republic*.

86 Kaldellis, *Republic*, pp. 29–30.

87 Kassia, *Menaion on the Birth of Christ*, Kassia. *The Legend, the Woman, and Her Work*, ed. and trans. Antonia Tripolitis (New York and London, 1992), p. 19.

vision, constitutional discourse, and eschatological exegesis, in a genre where this might not be expected. Not only are Augustus and Christ linked, but also the subsuming of the “cities” into one *basileia* is paralleled with the uniting of the *ethnē* into one holy lordship, and the benefits of Caesar’s writ are mirrored in the inscription of the believers in the Lord. Zonaras ends book eleven of his history, when he moves from Jewish to Roman history, with an extended discussion of the connection between Augustus’ monarchical universal rule and Christ’s birth.⁸⁸ Considering the relative absence of eschatology and other religious features from the preface, this is a notable emphasis. The implication is that Zonaras does in fact recognise the Roman Empire’s eschatological Christian mission, but chose not to bring it to the fore in his overall historical vision. Nevertheless, it is present in his text, and so cannot be discounted. Thus we must be subtle in how we imagine faith interacting with political ideology.

As a final line of thought, we should consider the question of why Zonaras constructed the East Roman state in this manner from a socio-contextual perspective. Notably, the historian constructs the urban core as the very definition of the entire Roman *politeia* throughout its history, with the empire itself curiously absent. By comparison, the eleventh-century Kekaumenos in his *Strategikon* constructs the empire consistently as “Romania”, a highly territorial conceptualisation implying a Roman homeland.⁸⁹ Importantly, Kekaumenos also makes use of historical *exempla*, including Augustus and Herakleios, so we can only put his differences down to authorial choice, not literariness or education.⁹⁰ Perhaps the greater importance of Constantinople post-Manzikert influenced Zonaras’ choice, in a period when much of old ‘Romania’ had been lost.

There is another option, however. Kekaumenos, although himself unidentifiable, was a scion of a family with a strong tradition of military command in the provinces and frontiers.⁹¹ Zonaras, by contrast, was a career bureaucrat like the vast majority of eleventh- and twelfth-century historians, and also like many of them experienced both the heights and the depths this offered.⁹² Thus

88 See above note 33. ■ AQ: check reference

89 See particularly his begging of emperors to *leave* the City “as if in a prison”, and to “go out into the lands which are under you, and into the themes, and see the injustices which the poor suffer”, Kekaumenos, *Consilia et Narrationes* (SAWS edition, 2013), p. 103, ll. 20–27.

90 Kekaumenos, p. 17, l. 15; p. 101, l. 20.

91 *ODB*, vol. 2, p. 1119.

92 This number includes, in chronological order, Psellos, Attaleiates, Skylitzes, Zonaras, Glykas, Kinnamos, and Choniates. Magdalino has noted that Zonaras “shared the interests and outlook of an increasingly self-confident professional bourgeoisie”, see Magdalino “*Kaiserkritik*,” p. 331.

these historians' lives had been shaped by the imperial state which they discursively explored. They also tended to be from a middling, urban background, though not necessarily Constantinopolitan. Both Attaleiates and Choniates were Anatolian provincials, but gained access to positions in the City through the same mixture of patronage and education as the Constantinopolitan Psellos. Moreover, as illustrated by the example of Eustathios Romaios and the *Peira*,⁹³ legal education was becoming increasingly prominent in the eleventh- and twelfth-centuries.⁹⁴ Psellos and Attaleiates both practiced as judges, Zonaras wrote commentaries on canon law, and all the bureaucrat historians would have been well-acquainted with legal traditions and practices through their official capacities.⁹⁵ Indeed, as career administrators these writers had access to documents and texts contained in the imperial palace, including law codes and other imperial productions which continued to use the language of *politeia* throughout the medieval era.⁹⁶

The constitutionalism exhibited by such writers might therefore be seen as a literary epistemology, within which highly educated bureaucrats of modest background negotiated a place for themselves in the "Empire of Constantinople".⁹⁷ It enabled them to discursively define their role in the state as "senators", and created a point from which they could criticise imperial policy on constitutional grounds.⁹⁸ A most striking example of this process is

93 See above pages 56–57. ■ AQ: check reference

94 This development witnesses an increased presence of legalism in historical works as well, see Angeliki Laiou, "Law, Justice, and the Byzantine Historians: Ninth to Twelfth Centuries," in *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Angeliki Laiou and Dieter Simon (Washington D.C., 1994), pp. 151–185.

95 Angeliki Laiou emphasised that these bureaucrat historians' common position as jurists and men associated with the law "must be kept in mind" when reading their historical works, see Laiou, "Law," p. 173.

96 A striking feature of the works which Kaldellis cites as using 'republican' language is the heavy weight of fifth to sixth, and eleventh to twelfth century texts, in the intervening period however the majority of cited works are imperial productions, see: Kaldellis, *Republic*.

97 This is a formula used for the empire in the Treaty of Devol, 1108, as recorded by Anna Komnene: *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, ed. Diether Reinsch and Athanasios Kambylis (Berlin, 2001), 13.12.

98 Psellos, Choniates, Attaleiates, and Zonaras consistently self-identify as "senators", and by their titles all eleventh- and twelfth-century bureaucrat historians would qualify as such. For how this self-identification fed into criticisms of the Komnenian regime see Magdalino, "*Kaiserkritik*," pp. 335–338.

found in Attaleiates' *Diataxis*, where the historian describes himself as a self-made provincial,⁹⁹ who rose to office and high honour in Constantinople:

For I did not receive any property whatsoever in the metropolis of culture, the Queen of Cities [...] [nevertheless, I, a sinner, was blessed enough] to become a member of the senate, in spite of my humble and foreign background, and to be enrolled among the elite of the senators – whom the language of old used to call 'aristocrats' [...]¹⁰⁰

This quote perfectly illustrates how constitutional discourse allowed bureaucrats such as Attaleiates and Zonaras to situate their lived experience in a meaningful framework. Subscribing to a 'senatorial' epistemology allowed them to make sense of the complex socio-political, economic, and human relationships which made up the medieval Eastern Roman Empire, all of which ran to, through, and from the City.

99 Krallis has drawn attention to the economic aspects of the *Diataxis*, and Attaleiates' remarkable definition of himself as a 'self-made' man: Krallis, *History*, pp. 1–42.

100 Compare with Prodhomos' conceptualisation above. See also Paul Gautier, "La diataxis de Michel Attaliat," *Revue des études byzantines* 39 (1989), 5–143. The translation is adapted from: Alice-Mary Talbot, *The Diataxis of Michael Attaleiates*, in <http://www.doaks.org/resources/publications/doaks-online-publications/byzantine-monastic-foundation-documents/typo27.pdf> (accessed October 2014).