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It is well known that after Romanos Diogenes' sound defeat at Mantzikert in 1071 A.D., the Armenians founded their own principalities in Byzantine territory. Yet, their role in the battle has not been examined systematically until now. According to Michael the Great, the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Armenians were the first to desert from the army. Whereas this was accepted as truth in the past, more recently historians have questioned the historicity of his statement. This study proposes to solve the problem, and concludes that the *Historia* of Attaleiates contains evidence that corroborates the desertion of the Armenian soldiers.

Middle Ages; 11th Century; Mantzikert (battle of); Armenians; Romanos Diogenes; Tarchaneiotes/Trachaneiotes; Attaleiates; Michael the Syrian/Michael the Great.

The fateful outcome of the historical encounter between Romanos Diogenes and Alp Arslan at Mantzikert (1071 A.D.) paved the way for the expansion of the Seljuk Turks into Anatolia that resulted in the establishment of the sultanate of Rum. The Byzantine defeat was the sequel to the internal machinations of the Doukai against Diogenes. The great plethora of sources covering the event is not always a benefit to an historian undertaking research. Differing, often contradictory, information, on the one hand, or reports largely uncorroborated, on the other, makes it quite hard to understand all phases of the battle.

This article deals with the World Chronicle of Michael the Great, the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church (1166–1199)[1], who asserts: «the Ar-

† In memory of Ruth Macrides, an esteemed colleague and a wonderful person.
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[1] For a short biography and bibliography on Michael the Syrian, see the entries by Griffith, *Michael I the Syrian* and Weltecke, *Michael the Great*. For further details see Weltecke, *Originality and Function,* pp. 183-199; and Abrahem, *Michael the Great*, pp. 33-39. I thank the two anonymous readers for their valuable comments and useful suggestions.

menian forces rebelled because the Romans pressured them to accept their heresy (the Chalcedonian faith), and they fled and retreated»[2]. So, how literally should we take this? Did the Armenian soldiers abandon Diogenes during the battle of Mantzikert? Modern scholars mention in passing Michael the Great's statement, but approach it with caution[3]. The sole exceptions are the works of Gérard Dédéyan and Jean-Claude Cheynet. They provide a detailed opinion on this issue, arguing for the Armenians' fidelity and dedication to this emperor. This will be thoroughly discussed in the first part below. The second proposes an answer to the question set out above, concluding that in Attaleiates' *Historia* there is evidence to corroborate the Syrian chronicler's statement which, we must note, is not found in other sources.

1. *Armeno-Byzantine issues in the military campaigns between 1068 and 1071*

This section does not aim at a comprehensive study of the relations between Byzantines and Armenians in the second half of the eleventh century. It rather focuses on the influential parts the latter played between 1068 and 1071 in the army of Diogenes. Attaleiates, a lawyer and historian who accompanied the emperor on all three of his military campaigns, recounts how Hierapolis of Syria (Manbij) was taken in 1068[4]. It occurred when an Armenian group attacked the city before the Byzantines put away their equipment and had a proper rest[5]. A quite similar event is recorded in the subjugation of Mantzikert three years later (1071). The Armenian infantry men launched a successful attack on the citadel before Diogenes (he had been around the city to scope the walls) returned to the camp[6]. In the first case, the Armenians aimed at booty. This much at least is self-evident. «They conveyed much grain and other provisions, for they found plenty of those there, a bit of wine, and items of quite small value. As regards more valuable spoils, they failed [to find], for the enemy had packed them up and had taken away with them in their escape»[7].

[2] See Michael the Great, *The Syriac Chronicle*, p. 609. It may also be of some interest to provide here the translation of Chabot's classical edition of Michael the Great's *Chronique*, p. 169: «Les troupes des Arméniens qu'ils voulaient contraindre à adopter leur hérésie, prirent la fuite les premières et tournèrent le dos dans la bataille». We should note that the statement is not included in the Armenian version of the Syriac original that has been translated by Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand*. See also note 25 below.

[3] E.g. Vryonis, Jr., *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, p. 103; Cahen, *La campagne de Mantzikert*, p. 635; and Friendly, *Dreadful Day*, p. 192.

[4] Hierapolis belonged to the Mirdāsids of Aleppo. The emir Mahmūd captured it on 20 August 1065. Diogenes took possession of Hierapolis in 1068. See Elisséeff, *Manbidj*, p. 379; Beihammer, *Emergence*, pp. 119-120.

[5] References follow the edition in Pérez-Martín, *Miguel Ataliates. Historia*, pp. 82.22-83.2 [thereafter, Attaleiates]. For the sake of convenience, the pagination of the English translation by Kaldellis and Krallis, *History*, will be provided in parenthesis (p. 199).

[6] Attaleiates, p. 113.5-17 (pp. 275-277).

[7] Attaleiates, p. 83.5-9 (p. 201), «καὶ σιτίων μὲν καὶ τῆς ἄλλης διατροφῆς εἰς κόρον μετακομιδὴν ἐποιήσαντο, ἀφθονίαν γὰρ τούτων εὗρον ἐκεῖσε καὶ οἴνου τι μέρος καὶ τῶν εὐτελεστάτων εἰδῶν, τῶν δὲ

In the second case, there is no solid evidence to reach a firm conclusion. Yet, the likelihood that the Armenians were motivated by the same desire is not remote. There is a point in the *Historia* to strengthen it. Attaleiates does not defend the emperor's decision to end the 1069 campaign, proposing instead: «Why should we not take by siege the city of Chliat and the small towns [situated] below it so as the soldiers will be satisfied with the [collection of] spoils and become more willing [to fight]?»[8]. His proposal seems most likely to echo the discontent among soldiers unpaid for long time[9]. The Armenians, who made up an important proportion of Diogenes' army[10], cannot be excluded. This would justify their hasty attacks on both Hierapolis and Mantzikert after long approach marches. The outcome of those attacks must be ascribed to the prowess and fighting skills of the Armenian soldiers. This is more evident in the case of Mantzikert. In the *Synopsis Historion*, John Skylitzes gives some significant details about the city's fortification. It was surrounded, he says, by a triple curtain wall and secured sustainable supplies of spring water. Its capture, therefore, in less than a day was an enormous achievement for the Armenians, if we bear in mind that the sultan Tughrul Beg was storming it for one month with no success[11]. Another point that deserves some attention is that neither of the attacks was ordered by Diogenes. This means that the Armenians performed an impulsive act of bravery which, we note, does not comply with the military science and tactics of the Byzantines. The anonymous treatise *peri strategikes* warns that the lust for booty may turn into dangerous collisions among plunderers; and such collisions were not unusual in the ranks of the army[12]. As concerns the Armenian attack on the citadel of Mantzikert, Attaleiates reports that «the emperor was delighted with what had occurred (i.e. its successful outcome)»[13], although the *Taktika* of Leo VI squarely condemns such incidents of unruly behaviour[14].

An episode that also merits attention happened after the Byzantines' defeat outside the camp at Hierapolis, while the soldiers inside refused to help those in need. Attaleiates vividly describes what followed after the emperor, who had been trying with the Cappadocians to take control of a tower still in enemy hands, returned to the camp: «that night everyone had low expectations, also because all the Armenian foot soldiers (they had been placed as

τιμιωτέρων λαφύρων ἀπέτυχον, προλαβόντων τῶν πολεμίων καὶ συσκευασαμένων αὐτὰ μεθ᾽ ἑαυτῶν ἐν τῷ ἀποδρᾶναι».

[8] Attaleiates, p. 98.21-23 (p. 239), «Διὰ τί δὲ καὶ μὴ ἐκ πολιορκίας αἱρήσομεν τό τε ἄστυ τὸ Χλίατ καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ τούτου πολίχνια, ἵνα καὶ οἱ στρατιῶται τῆς ἐκ τῶν λαφύρων ὠφελείας πλησθῶσι καὶ προθυμότεροι γένωνται».

[9] For further discussion on this issue, see Vryonis, Jr., *The Eleventh Century*, pp. 24-25.

[10] Charanis, *The Armenians*, p. 20, maintains that the Armenians predominated in the Byzantine army from the ninth century to the Crusades. Also, Andrews, *Prolegomena*, p. 91, is of the opinion that the Armenians made up much of Diogenes' army.

[11] Ioannis Scylitzae *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 462.54-60.

[12] *Three Treatises*, pp. 118.23-120.26.

[13] Attaleiates, p. 113.17 (p. 277), «Ἡσθέντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως τῷ γεγονότι».

[14] *The Taktika of Leo VI*, p. 286.83-88.

night guards around the trench in front of the palisade) considered to leave [their posts], refusing to obey the squad leaders»[15]. It is notable that the *peri paradromes polemou*, the late tenth-century military treatise which had been falsely ascribed to Nikephoros II Phokas[16], pays special attention to the inadequacy of Armenian infantry men in carrying out sentry duties[17]. Attaleiates does not tell us why they thought to leave their positions. It is known that the army of Diogenes was a motley force comprised of numerous ethnicities which hardly co-operated with each other[18]. It may be of some importance to mention here an incident that took place in the expedition of 1069, when the Byzantines joined battle with an enemy detachment close to Larissa. Attaleiates recounts that whilst the pursuit was still taking place, a Turkish group attacked the imperial camp. The attack was driven off by the Franks only, because the Byzantines stayed inactive[19]. The bad co-operation between native soldiers and other minorities must not be exclusively ascribed to ethnic or religious quarrels[20], since there are other factors – like the fighting skills or the morale of indigenous soldiers – that played a role. Yet, the question remains as to why Diogenes continued to trust Armenians, although there are doubts on their loyalty. To this I will come later.

As concerns the campaign of 1071, there are two more events, excerpted from the Armenian sources of Matthew of Edessa and Aristakes of Lastivert,[21] that need further consideration. Upon arriving at Sebasteia, Diogenes received numerous complaints about the aggression of Armenian people. Giving credence to those «false accusations», he promised to root out the Armenian faith after the end of his expedition. In the pillaging that followed at his behest, «many were killed, all because of the unjustly and falsely reached judgements of the impious emperor Diogenes»[22]. The detail is not repeated by

[15] Attaleiates, p. 86.4-6 (p. 207), «ἡ νὺξ ἐκείνη πάντας εἶχεν ἐν ἐλπίσιν οὐκ ἀγαθαῖς, καθότι καὶ τὸ πεζὸν ἅπαν τῶν Ἀρμενίων, ἐπιταχθὲν διανυκτερεύειν περὶ τὴν τάφρον ἐν προτειχίσματι, ἀποστασίαν ἐσκόπησε, μὴ πειθαρχῆσαν τοῖς λοχαγοῖς». The event is repeated in the chronicle of the Continuator of Skylitzes: *He synecheia tes chronographias tou Ioannou Skylitze*, p. 130.14-16 [hereafter, Skylitzes Cont.].

[16] See Dennis' introduction to the text, *Three Treatises*, p. 139.

[17] *Three Treatises*, p. 152.11-23. Another report of similar content is found in the *Novella* of Nikephoros II Phokas where the Armenians are described as an «unsteady and unpredictable [nation]» (τὸ γὰρ τῶν ἀρμενίων ἄστατον καὶ πολυπλανὲς). See Svoronos, *Les novelles*, p. 170.7-8.

[18] Apart from the Armenians in Diogenes' army, Attaleiates mentions Scythians, p. 78.5 (p. 189), p. 118.10 (p. 289); Russians, p. 84.6 (p. 203); Franks, p. 111.12 (p. 271), and Nemitzoi, p. 110.5 (p. 269). See more by Charanis, *The Byzantine Empire in the Eleventh Century*, p. 192.

[19] Attaleiates, p. 96.3-7 (pp. 231-233); Skylitzes Cont., pp. 135.24-136.1.

[20] Bedrosian, *Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods*, p. 243, remarks that the vast shift of native Armenians to new estates (mostly in Cappadocia and norther Mesopotamia) and the dismissal of the local Armenian forces from their homeland in 1055 did exacerbate the Byzantine-Armenian ethnic tensions. The unwise decision of the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos left Armenia defenseless and leaderless.

[21] On Armenian chroniclers in general see the useful article by Dowsett, *Armenian Historiography*, pp. 259-268.

[22] Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, pp. 132-133. Smbat Sparapet repeats this information. English translation of the text has been made available: Bedrosian < https://archive.

Vardan, the thirteenth-century Armenian cleric, who merely reports that the emperor had threatened, «to make the Armenians completely Grecised»[23]. Modern historians express reservations about the accuracy of Matthew's account[24]; but can it be entirely fabricated? It must be noted that Vardan did not consult the source of Matthew. He drew upon the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian's text which is of independent value[25]. Diogenes' threat against the Armenian citizens is thus encountered in two different chronicles, without any evidence that they copy from one another. We note that Aristakes of Lastivert, who is contemporary with this event, makes no mention of it[26]. This is because his account does not focus on the campaign, but on the actual battle. Nor does he mention the capture of Mantzikert by the Armenian infantry men. This might have to do with the purpose for which he wrote the Chronicle[27]. Besides, it does not sound likely that Greeks and Armenians lived in entire harmony, especially after the massive settlement in Sebasteia of Senacherim – the former king of Vaspurakan – who took with him, apart from his family, a large retinue[28]. Those settlements were often associated with deep changes in the ethnic compositions of the rural and urban areas, generating tensions within communities. It is probable that the Armeno-Byzantine tensions grew stronger after the pillaging of Sebasteia by the Turks in 1059[29] and reached their peak when the emperor Constantine X Doukas threatened to enforce the Chalcedonian formula on the Armenians in 1063[30]. Nina Garsoïan suspects, but with no absolute evidence, that this threat was presumably not implemented[31]. Nonetheless, even in that case, it is indicative of the disputations between Greeks and Armenians. It must be also observed that there are certain cases of Armenians who "collaborated" with the Turks because of

org/details/SmbatSparapetsChronicle/mode/2up > [last access, 4 March 2018], p. 30.

[23] *The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i*, p. 195, §57]. For the sources of his work, see Thomson, *Vardan's Historical Compilation*, pp. 343-352, esp. 350.

[24] Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, p. 82, expressed the opinion that Matthew's statement «may reflect nothing more than a memory of the traditional confessional hostility in this city».

[25] *The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i*, p. 136. As concerns the Armenian version of Michael the Great's work, Haase, *Die armenische Rezension der syrischen Chronik Michaels des Grossen*, pp. 60-82, 271-284, notes that it is not a close translation of the Syriac original, but a free adaptation with several abbreviations, omissions or additions for Armenian purposes. One of those Armenian translations was made in 1245 by the priest Yeshu'; and it was revised by Vardan Arewelc'i. The text was published at Jerusalem in 1871 (Ignatius Aphram Barsum, *The Scattered Pearls*, p. 446).

[26] Aristakes wrote sometime between 1072 and 1079. For the content of his book see Bartikian, *To Byzantion eis tas Armenikas pegas*, pp. 93-96.

[27] On this, see Thomson, *Medieval Armenian Historians*, pp. 95-96. Also, Thomson, *Armenian Literary Culture*, pp. 235-236.

[28] If we may believe the Continuator of Thomas Ardzrouni, Senacherim immigrated to his new place with 16,000 of his compatriots. This number does not include women and children. See Charanis, *The Armenians*, p. 50, note 197.

[29] Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, pp. 95-96. See also note 20 above.

[30] See discussion in Vryonis, Jr., *Social Basis of Decline*, pp. 170-171; Vryonis, Jr., *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, pp. 93-94.

[31] Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, p. 81. Cf. Bedrosian, *Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods*, p. 245.

their problems with the Greeks[32]. For this reason, it has been argued that the Armenian people, in the face of external danger, preferred to side with the enemy of Byzantium[33]. It seems thus that Matthew of Edessa's statement is not without some truth[34]. The heavy massacre in the streets of Sebasteia, as depicted by the chronicler, sounds unconvincing. Yet, the Armeno-Byzantine discord and the partiality of the emperor in favour of the Greeks sound more credible. This could be further reinforced by his reaction in events of similar nature that reveal his abrupt manners: the unverified accusations that the Latin leader, Robert Crispin, secretly planned to undermine him in the 1069 expedition;[35] and the unjust punishment inflicted on a native soldier for having stolen a donkey in the expedition of 1071[36].

The second event is narrated by Aristakes who wrote his chronicle only a few years after the battle was fought. It is unclear, however, what the origins of his material might have been. When the two armies met at Mantzikert, a large group that was comprised of non-Christians deserted to the Turks. Their desertion caused much confusion in the Byzantine army. Being unaware of what had occurred, Diogenes, in the author's words, «was angry with the Armenian corps and with the entire Armenian nation, and he looked upon them with contempt». Despite that many Armenians «harboured hostile feelings towards the emperor», they did not abandon their position. The latter became impressed by their courage and fighting spirit, and promised them rewards[37]. Perhaps his anger reflects his fear that the Armenians might follow the group of non-Christians. It is of equal importance that the emperor's anger extended to their whole nation[38] and also that the Armenians had similar feelings towards him. We do not know whether their hatred was sparked by his harsh behaviour or by his threat to eradicate their faith. Although the first can be suggested as the most reasonable explanation, the Armenian fidelity at Mantzikert should be taken with caution[39], since patriotism was indeed a main factor that inspired the writing of Armenian chroniclers, as modern historians confirm[40]. It is striking that Matthew is silent on how his compatriots fought. After his reference to the death of the two Armenian magnates, named

[32] *Danişmendnâme*, p. 129. Also, Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, p. 124.
[33] Charanis, *Armenians and Greeks*, p. 31.
[34] Thomson, *Influence*, pp. 435-436, does not dispute the historicity of Matthew's account at this point.
[35] Attaleiates, pp. 94.20-95.1 (p. 229). Also, see discussion in Magdalino, *Byzantine Background*, p. 30.
[36] Attaleiates, p. 114.7-17 (p. 279). Haldon, *The Krites tou Stratopedou*, p. 283.
[37] Aristakes of Lastivert, *Récit des malheurs*, p. 126.
[38] Perhaps Diogenes never forgot that his rebellion against the imperial authorities in 1067 was betrayed by a trusted adviser of Armenian origin. Skylitzes Cont., pp. 121.24-122.4. It must be noted here that Der Nersessian, *Armenia in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, p. 428, refers to Aristakes, John Catholicos, and Stephen Asolik as quite reliable historians.
[39] Thomson, *Influence*, p. 433, remarks that «the allegiance of the Armenians was perforce demanded by the empire, but they were not very loyal subjects».
[40] E.g. Dowsett, *Armenian Historiography*, pp. 262-263.

Khatap and Vasilak, on the first, as he claims, day of the battle[41], he forbears to report how the rest performed during the second, and most decisive, day.

2. *The two Armenian commanders, Brachamios and Chatatourios*

Before giving a solution to the problem discussed here, let us close with some comments on two Armenian generals, Philaretos Brachamios and Chatatourios. The former had been entrusted by Diogenes with the greatest part of the army in the campaign of 1069. In the text of Attaleiates we read that, «he was a man boasting of his military successes, but lived a shameful and defamed life. Whereas he had several times fought against that nation (i.e. the Turks), he had lost the most decisive battles and, as it is reasonable, he was utterly detested. He did not refrain from them, for he aimed at the chief command due to his greed for gain and glory»[42]. This passage is an indirect blame for Diogenes' judgement and a pointed criticism against Philaretos who had entirely failed to defend the eastern boundaries, as his soldiers scattered about and took refuge in the mountains of Taurus[43]. We already mentioned that the greed for gain (φιλοκέρδεια) was the main motive of his compatriots for attacking Hierapolis, since the army had been unpaid for a long time. Thus, it is sensible to assume that the loyalty of one motivated by personal gain and the need for personal achievement cannot be guaranteed.

At first sight, this seems not to apply to the case of Chatatourios, the other Armenian general who served as *doux* of Antioch and helped Diogenes to try to get back the throne after his release from the Seljuk camp[44]. Attaleiates describes him as, «a brave man who earlier had shown many marks of his excellence»[45]. Further down, however, he blames him and his soldiers for hes-

[41] Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, p. 134.

[42] Attaleiates, p. 99.16-20 (p. 241), «τῷ Φιλαρέτῳ, ἀνδρὶ στρατιωτικὴν μὲν αὐχοῦντι περιωπήν, αἰσχροῦ δὲ βίου καὶ διαβεβλημένου τυγχάνοντι καὶ τῷ ἔθνει μαχεσαμένῳ μὲν διαφόρως, ἐν δὲ τοῖς μεγίστοις καταπολεμηθέντι καὶ καταφρονηθέντι ὡς τὸ εἰκός, οὐ μὴν ἀπεχομένῳ τούτων, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπιτρέχοντι τὴν ἡγεμονίαν διὰ φιλοκερδείας καὶ φιλοδοξίας ὑπόθεσιν»; also Skylitzes Cont., p. 136.19-24. Brachamios is presented negatively by Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, too, pp. 137-139, 147, 150. He is depicted with epithets that were used in the prophecies of the *vardapet* Yovhannēs Kozeṙn. See Thomson, *Medieval Armenian Historians*, p. 97; and Andrews, *Prophecy*, pp. 105-123. The pagination follows the internet-based edition < https://boris.unibe.ch/43067/1/Andrews_medchron.pdf > [last viewed on 6 May 2018], p. 13.

[43] Attaleiates, p. 100.13-16 (p. 243). Charanis, *The Armenians*, p. 34, notes that the Armenians, «could not be relied on to keep their posts». An elaborate discussion about the Brachamioi in the Byzantine empire and Philaretos during Romanos IV's reign is provided in the first chapter of the study of Dédéyan, *Les Armeniens entre Grecs, Musulmans et Croisés*, pp. 5-73. On the reconstruction of Philaretos' career, see Seibt, *Philaretos - General, Rebell, Vasall?*, p. 286 and pp. 293-294. On his seals, see Koltsida-Makre, *Philaretos Brachamios, Portrait of a Byzantine Official*, pp. 325-332.

[44] Attaleiates, p. 127.14-20 (p. 313); Skylitzes Cont., p. 153.14-16.

[45] Attaleiates, pp. 102.25-103.1 (p. 248); Skylitzes Cont., p. 138.12-13. The courage of Chatatourios is mentioned by Nicéphore Bryennios, *Histoire*, p. 127.21, who refers to him as a man «with deep judgement, and [a man] brave in fight» (τὴν γνώμην βαθύς, τὴν χεῖρα γενναῖος).

itating to launch a surprise attack against a band of Turkish raiders on their return from Ikonion, «under the excuse that they [might] disperse those who had not scattered about»[46]. This was because the Turks had been forced to leave their booty at Seleukeia, while ambushed by Armenian bandits[47]. Chatatourios, therefore, had very little or nothing to gain from an attack. From this viewpoint, we can conclude that his loyalty was compromised by his desire to plunder. It is not an accident that Psellos (an eleventh-century monk, politician, philosopher, and historian) extols Chatatourios for his «deep judgement»; but shortly later, he adds that, «in character he was hostile towards us (i.e. the Byzantines)»[48]. Does his statement imply a wider view about the Armenian component in the empire? The possibility should not be discounted. Earlier in the same campaign, Diogenes stayed longer at Keltzene for fear that native soldiers spread out through the mountains of Taurus would be, in Attaleiates' wording, a comfortable target for the local Armenians. Cheynet maintains that the wider region was frequently subject to robberies[49]. His theory is not supported by evidence in Attaleiates' *Historia* in which we read that Diogenes stayed to receive the refugees, «so that they might not be caught scattered in isolation and killed by the Armenians»[50]. Diogenes, thus, would not risk a delay of the campaign's implementation, should he had not been worried about soldiers whose lives were in great danger.

3. *The proposed solution to the problem through the* Historia *of Attaleiates*

Peter Charanis has no doubts that the Armeno-Byzantine problems played a role in the battle of Mantzikert[51]. More recent scholars have expressed a different opinion. Dédéyan, for example, rejects Michael the Syrian's statement, and concludes that the Uzes in the imperial army were the first to desert[52]. Without disputing the Armenians' hostility towards Diogenes, Dédéyan theorises that they united under a common enemy, the Seljuk Turks. His theory, however, overlooks cases of Armenians who collaborated with Turks or Franks[53]. In line with the scholarship of Dédéyan, Cheynet assumes that the twelfth-century polemists impose an anachronistic value-judgement on their

[46] Attaleiates, p. 103.15 (p. 251). The Continuator of John Skylitzes, who copies most of Attaleiates' writings, does not follow his root source at this point.
[47] Cheynet, *Les arméniens*, p. 71, note 22. This event is also recounted by Attaleiates, p. 103.6-9 (pp. 249-251), and by Skylitzes Cont., p. 138.15-17.
[48] Michaelis Pselli *Chronographia*, VII, b.34, p. 278.1-2, «τὴν γνώμην βαθύς, δυσμενὴς ἡμῖν τῆς προαιρέσεως».
[49] See discussion in Cheynet, *Les arméniens*, p. 71, note 23.
[50] See Attaleiates, pp. 101.25-102.1 (p. 247), «ἵνα μὴ καταλαμβανόμενοι σποράδες ἐξ ἐρήμης ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀρμενίων ἀπόλωνται». Also, Skylitzes Cont., p. 137.23-24.
[51] Charanis, *Armenians and Greeks* p. 25; Charanis, *Cultural Diversity*, p. 20.
[52] Dédéyan, *L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce*, p. 115.
[53] See notes 32 and 33 above. It is noted that Bedrosian, *Armenia during the Seljuk and Mongol Periods*, p. 245 says about it: «Some few Armenians saw the anti-Byzantine Turks not as the

references to the Armeno-Byzantine tensions which flared up during the second half of the eleventh century[54]. His view does not take into consideration the events detailed by the eleventh-century writers Attaleiates and Aristakes, and discussed earlier in this study. It is true, as Cheynet observes, that nowhere in the *Historia* the Armenians are treated offensively by Diogenes[55]. This must not be interpreted to mean that he ratified their acts of indiscipline[56]. Instead, he declined to inflict punishments for fear that they might rise up in rebellion. This took place with the German mercenaries in the 1071 campaign[57]. To further support his arguments, Cheynet gives some good examples of Armenians who fought beside Diogenes[58]. We do not expect that all the Armenians in the army were unruly or hostile. Also, it is essential to draw a clear-cut distinction between the Armenian citizens of Sebasteia whom Diogenes threatened to grecise, and the Armenian soldiers he relied on to achieve his military objectives and to secure his imperial position further. The fact that Attaleiates says nothing about the episode at Sebasteia does not mean that it never happened. It is perhaps inflated by Matthew of Edessa, as said earlier. Moreover, it is to be remembered that Michael Attaleiates places more focus upon the military side of the events that led to the battle at Mantzikert.

The solution to the problem under investigation is found in the *Historia* of Attaleiates. Apart from the desertion of the Uzes, which is recounted by Attaleiates and Aristakes, we have another desertion that took place earlier in time: that of the magister Joseph Tarchaneiotes, who had been despatched to Chliat with orders to reinforce the Scythian allies and the Franks under Roussel de Bailleul, the Latin leader[59]. When Diogenes called upon him for assistance, Joseph Tarchaneiotes «took all his forces, and, by fleeing cowardly through Mesopotamia, he hurried into Roman land, without, this fearful man, considering his master or the right»[60]. Jonathan Shepard refutes Joseph Tarchaneiotes' act of disobedience. He exculpates him from any charge of conspiracy, theorising that either the couriers had not been sent off; or they

agents of God sent to punish Armenians for their sins, but as an excellent vehicle opportunely available to themselves for vengeance against the Greeks».

54 Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, p. 401, note 113, and p. 402. For the sources of the period see Weltecke, *Die 'Beschreibung der Zeiten' von Mor Michael dem Grossen*, pp. 220-249. According to Charanis, *The Armenians*, p. 34, these accusations cannot be completely dismissed, since they are recorded in official sources.

55 Cheynet, *Les arméniens*, p. 71.

56 When the Armenians failed to attack the Turks traversing Mopsuestia, Attaleiates, p. 103.23 (p. 251) remarks that «the emperor was distressed when he learnt [the news]» (ἀνία μὲν κατέσχε τὸν βασιλέα πυθόμενον).

57 Attaleiates, p. 110.1-15 (pp. 267-269); Skylitzes Cont., pp. 143.27-144.6.

58 Cheynet, *Les arméniens*, p. 71; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, p. 401.

59 Attaleiates, p. 111.23-26 (p. 273); Skylitzes Cont., p. 144.22-24; Nicéphore Bryennios, *Histoire*, p. 109.6-15. The Scythian allies and the Frankish troops were detached from the main army when Diogenes arrived at Theodosioupolis.

60 Attaleiates, p. 118.5-7 (p. 289), «ἄρας τοὺς ἀμφ᾽ αὐτὸν ἅπαντας διὰ τῆς Μεσοποταμίας φυγὰς ἀγεννῶς εἰς τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἐνέβαλε, μηδένα λόγον τοῦ δεσπότου μήτε μὴν τοῦ εἰκότος ὁ δείλαιος θέμενος». Also, Skylitzes Cont., 147.15-18.

failed to deliver the imperial order to Chliat; or they arrived late[61]. Yet, the accounts of the Continuator of John Skylitzes, John Zonaras[62], and Matthew of Edessa[63] confirm that the magister had been informed by the couriers, but he ignored the call for help. Alexander Beihammer chose to interpret Tarchaneiotes' retreat as a precautious measure to ensure the safety of his troops[64]. The decision was made after the defeat of Bryennios and Basilakios in the preliminaries to the encounter at Mantzikert. It seems that Beihammer takes for granted that Tarchaneiotes was aware of the number and strength of the Seljuk army or of the sultan's plans, when negotiating a peace agreement with Diogenes. There is no indication within the text of Attaleiates, or of Matthew of Edessa, to corroborate such a possibility. I have recently suggested that Tarchaneiotes' withdrawal from the scene should not be linked to the scheming of the Doukas faction. It rather has to do with Diogenes' arrogance that led him to ignore advice on issues of strategy and rely upon his own judgement. Accordingly, the titles of *proedros* and *doux* of Antioch he gained when Michael VII Doukas occupied the throne, were not his reward for his co-operation with the leading conspirators (i.e. the Doukai), but for the outcome of the battle that brought about the removal of Diogenes, their political enemy, from power[65].

The armed forces of Tarchaneiotes, Attaleiates says, «were more trained [than others] in the "dance of war", and always fighting in the front line»[66]. In short, the magister had been entrusted with the army's elite regiment. But what was their ethnic composition? The question is answered later in the *Historia*: Bryennios was sent off against a group of Seljuks who harassed the foraging parties of the army. After his failure to drive them away, Diogenes also despatched Basilakes, the *katepano* of Theodosioupolis[67], who moved there «with some local soldiers», asserts Attaleiates, «because the rest had been with Trachaneiotes at Chliat»[68]. Theodosioupolis (mod. Erzurum) had been captured in 949 by John Tzimiskes. Yet, it was permanently annexed to the Byzantine state after 1000, when David of Tao – the Georgian prince

[61] Shepard, *Byzantinorussica*, pp. 220-222. Leveniotis, *Stasiastiko kinema*, pp. 95-99, shares Shepard's view.
[62] Skylitzes Cont., p. 147.16-17; Zonaras, *Epitomae historiarum*, 699.10-11.
[63] For the reference see note 77 below.
[64] Beihammer, *Emergence*, p. 156.
[65] Vratimos, *Tarchaneiotes and the Battle of Mantzikert* (Published online by «Al-Masāq» on 26th December 2019) < https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/09503110.2019.1704121?scroll=top&need Access=true > [last access: 9 January 2019].
[66] Attaleiates, p. 117.23-24 (p. 287), «συνήθως ἀεὶ προπολεμοῦντας καὶ ἠσκημένους μᾶλλον τὴν πυρρίχιον ὄρχησιν».
[67] Attaleiates, p. 115.2-23 (pp. 281-283). Nicéphore Bryennios, *Histoire*, pp. 109.15-111.23, notes that his homonymous grandfather was chronologically sent after Basilakes failed to force the Seljuks back.
[68] Attaleiates p. 115.23-24 (p. 283), «μετά τινῶν ἐγχωρίων στρατιωτῶν, ὡς τῶν λοιπῶν ὄντων μετὰ τοῦ Τραχανειώτου εἰς τὸ Χλίατ».

of the Bagratid dynasty – died[69]. It became the centre of the theme of Iberia. The author informs that the city had been recently reconstructed and reinhabited after the pillaging of Artze (Arcn) in the mid-eleventh century[70]. The Armenians in eastern frontier themes were quite numerous[71]. It is reasonable to assume that their numbers in Theodosioupolis did not differ much. What does this «local soldiers» really mean? In the section depicting Diogenes' release from the Seljuks, we read that he arrived at Theodosioupolis in order for to receive a treatment for his injury, and to replace his Seljuk costume with an imperial robe, «for he was about to go farther off, to Roman land»[72]. If, for Attaleiates, Theodosioupolis was an Armenian city, then we are bound to conclude that the men under the command of Basilakes and Tarchaneiotes were Armenians too[73]. This is further reinforced by his reference to the betrayal of Tarchaneiotes who withdrew «into Roman land»[74]. It must be said that Attaleiates is not the sole historian to confuse Byzantine with Armenian territories due to their large Armenian population. Leo the Deacon, the tenth-century historian, calls the region of the Byzantine Lykandos as: «land of the Armenians»[75]. Apart from Leo's, we have another history written by an anonymous author of the first crusade, in which we are told that the Crusaders considered as Armenian the territory that extends beyond Herakleia towards Caesarea in Cappadocia[76].

A reference to Tarchaneiotes' act of betrayal is also found in the text of Matthew of Edessa. He reports that the magister «and the other Roman magnates had returned to Constantinople with their troops»[77]; but he does not denote their ethnic identity[78]. Matthew puts Tarchaneiotes' retreat on the first day of the battle, though modern historians actually isolate the preliminaries

[69] Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, pp. 319-321. For a detailed discussion of the topic, see Garsoïan, *Annexation of the Armenian Kingdoms*, pp. 188-193.
[70] Attaleiates, pp. 110.25-111.6 (p. 271).
[71] Charanis, *The Armenians*, p. 31; Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, p. 110. There is the testimony of Attaleiates, pp. 73.11-16 (p. 177) about the massive influx of Armenian Monophysites in the Byzantine districts of Iberia, Melitene, and Mesopotamia. The dominance of the Armenian language in remote eastern themes is corroborated by the will of Eustathios Boilas. See Lemerle, *Cinq études*, text pp. 20-29.
[72] Attaleiates, p. 123.24-25 (p. 303), «διὰ τὸ μέλλειν εἰς τὰ πρόσω τῆς Ῥωμαίων χωρεῖν». Unlike Polemis (Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, p. 295; 1997), and Pérez-Martín (*Miguel Ataliates. Historia*, p. 123; 2002), Kaldellis and Krallis (Michael Attaleiates, The history, p. 303; 2012) translate this phrase as «so that he could march *deeper* into Roman territory» (my italics).
[73] Cheynet, *Mantzikert. Un désastre militaire?*, p. 424, expresses the view that a large proportion of the imperial army was comprised of Armenians coming from Sebasteia, or Theodosioupolis, or Syria and Armenia.
[74] Cf. the translation by Kaldellis and Krallis in note 72 above.
[75] Leonis Diaconi *Historiae*, p. 169.23-24.
[76] Anonymous, *Histoire anonyme de la première Croisade*, pp. 56-57, 62-63.
[77] Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, p. 134.
[78] Based on the accounts of the Muslims writers Ibn al-Athir, 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani, Shepard, *Byzantinorussica*, p. 220, suspects that Tarchaneiotes' troops were comprised of Russians. His suspicion, however, is unverifiable, for he also remarks that the word Rūs in Arabic has a double meaning. It may denote either "heads" or "Russians" (p. 219, note 17).

from the final encounter. We cannot discount the probability that Michael the Syrian did not have in mind that the battle lasted two days when he claims that the Armenians were the first to abandon their posts.

4. *Conclusions*

We can sum up as follows: The role of the Armenians, who made up much of the Byzantine army, in the battle of Mantzikert stands as another reason why the empire was led to the verge of collapse in the eleventh century[79]. No one has examined the subject in depth. Some scholars have nevertheless produced answers which refute Michael the Syrian's statement. Their arguments are based on three points: A) the exploits of the Armenians in the army[80]. All cases discussed earlier manifest that their exploits were courageous indeed, but also spontaneous acts which violated the prescriptions of military textbooks. Armenian soldiers were motivated by the gathering of spoils, because of their lack of pay. (We know that the former emperor, Constantine Doukas, had let the regular army to fall apart). The only exception is their attack on the plunderers of Ikonion[81]. It is, however, unknown, as Cheynet remarks, whether those Armenians were soldiers or mere citizens of Seleukeia. B) The Armeno-Byzantine issues, as described by Matthew of Edessa and Michael the Syrian, are anachronistic and, therefore, untenable. Nowhere does Cheynet or Garsoïan claim that there were no tensions between Armenians and Byzantines in that period of time[82]. Dédéyan notes that they much suspected each other[83]; and finally C) Diogenes' trust in Armenians despite their failure at Hierapolis during the 1068 campaign[84]. This, in turn, begs the question of whether Diogenes had alternatives. The answer is negative, since the Armenians were the most important element in the army not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality[85]. Attaleiates points out the acute fear of native soldiers whenever fighting against Turks. Even the physical presence of the enemy was enough to cause horror in most of them[86]. The emperor was not ignorant of his soldiers' inexperience in warfare; hence he exempted them from sentry duties at Hierapolis[87]. He delegated more tasks to Armenian

[79] This is thoroughly discussed by Vryonis, Jr., *Decline of Medieval Hellenism*, pp. 102-103.
[80] See note 58 above.
[81] See note 47 above. On discipline in the Byzantine army, see discussion in Haldon, *Approaches*, pp. 49-52.
[82] Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, p. 402; Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, pp. 76, 81.
[83] Dédéyan, *L'immigration arménienne en Cappadoce*, p. 114.
[84] Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, p. 401. Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, p. 63, endorses the same view.
[85] Charanis' view (see note 10 above) is shared by Tourmanoff, *Background to Mantzikert*, p. 416.
[86] Attaleiates, p. 98.12-13 (pp. 237-239); p. 100.21-22 (p. 245); 101.2-3 (p. 245).
[87] On the bad condition of the imperial army over the course of Romanos Diogenes' opening campaign, see Vryonis, Jr., *The Eleventh Century*, pp. 25-29.

officers of high rank to assure the discipline of Armenian foot soldiers. This could explain why Brachamios had been entrusted with the largest part of the army in the 1069 campaign, although he was utterly detested for his failure to win decisive victories[88]. Diogenes' extreme suspicion of everyone around him was catalytic and crucial too. It will suffice here to note an example. Attaleiates hints at the emperor's bitterness, when he was told about the military successes of Manuel Komnenos, the commander of the 1070 campaign. The Continuator of John Skylitzes, who copies most of Attaleiates' views, departs from his source on this point by saying directly that, «once the ruler was informed about these achievements, he looked as though he were cheerful, but had envy inside him»[89]. We may, thus, conclude that the emperor's trust in Armenians emerged from his entire distrust of his own officers, especially those who constituted a direct threat to his power[90].

It is important, however, to distinguish between Armenians who did not assimilate to Greek society, and Armenians who had been grecised. The first could be unreliable, but not necessarily the second. Such is the case of Brachamios, as Garsoïan postulates, who had been Greek in faith, language, and customs[91]; hence he is described by the anti-Chalcedonian Matthew of Edessa as a vile and sinful man[92]. It is notable that only members of the Armenian aristocracy who converted to Chalcedonianism became completely integrated into Greek society[93]. Undeniably, the work of Michael the Syrian is marked by an anti-Chalcedonian colour too[94]. Yet, experts in this field treat him as a conscientious chronicler whose text provides corroboration for other sources[95]. Michael presents himself as lover of the truth[96], while also conceding that he collected the material for his chronicle against the Greeks (i.e. Byzantines)[97]. Therefore, the possibility that the Armenians are deliberately condemned for their withdrawal from the scene is quite remote. This may be why his claim

[88] See note 42 above. Attaleiates, however, provides no information as to when and where Brachamios fought those battles.
[89] Attaleiates, p. 104.20-22 (Bonn, p. 255); Skylitzes Cont., p. 139.19-20, «Πυνθανόμενος δὲ ταυτὶ ὁ κρατῶν εὐθυμεῖν μὲν ἐῴκει κρύψας δ᾽ ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸν φθόνον».
[90] This conclusion is extracted from Attaleiates' passage, p. 80.7-11 (p. 193) that describes the sack of Neokaisareia in 1068. The author points out that Diogenes was primarily worried about the impact of that event to the citizens of Constantinople, implying that his political opponents (i.e. the Doukai) would use his failure in order to remove him from power.
[91] Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, p. 98, p. 103, note 188.
[92] Andrews, *Prolegomena*, pp. 71-73.
[93] Garsoïan, *Armenian Integration*, pp. 104-105. Thomson, *Armenian Literary Culture*, p. 233, is of the opinion that the Armenians who had taken service in the Byzantine government apparatus or the army were, to a lesser or greater extent, lost to Armenia.
[94] The Syrians shared the same faith (i.e. the Monophysite faith) with the Armenians; hence Michael the Syrian calls them *mhaymnē* (the believers). The ones who adhered to the Chalcedonian confession – i.e. the Byzantine Orthodox Church – were not included in the term. (Weltecke, *Michael the Syrian and Syriac Orthodox Identity*, p. 117).
[95] Weltecke, *Some Reflections*, p. 21; Abrahem, *Michael the Great*, p. 44.
[96] Weltecke, *Originality and Function,* p. 194.
[97] *The Syriac Chronicle* (translated by Moosa), p. 739; *Chronique* (translated by Chabot), p. 447.

is absent from the Armenian version of his chronicle[98]. All evidence leads one to conclude that a considerable number of Armenians did not take part at Mantzikert[99]. It seems, though, that their withdrawal did not take place in the thick of the battle, as the chronicler wants us to believe. It rather was a premature flight scheduled by the foreign mercenary troops who had been sent off to Chliat under the command of Roussel[100]. What is difficult to say for sure is why the chronicler refers to Armenians only[101]. This was either because they made up the majority of deserters[102], or because Tarchaneiotes with the Armenians were those who proposed the withdrawal. Despite his initial reluctance to follow them, Roussel mustered his mercenaries and headed westwards, as the continuator of Skylitzes recounts[103].

[98] The deliberate transfer of Armenian bishoprics outside Armenia and the exile of the patriarch to Cappadocia after 1045 instilled a national consciousness in people which remained until the establishment of a smaller Armenian state in Cilicia (Thomson, *Armenian Literary Culture*, p. 232).
[99] This does not mean that several Armenian contingents had not stayed on Diogenes' side. The opinion of Cheynet, who claims that the heaviest casualties were amongst them (*Mantzikert, Un désastre militaire?,* p. 431), seems quite plausible to me.
[100] Attaleiates, p. 111.23-26 (p. 273). See discussion in Vratimos, *Remarks*, pp. 160-162.
[101] We may consider as almost certain that several of them were Georgians. See the relevant entries of Yuzbashian, *Iberia* and of Thomson *Iberians*.
[102] According to Cheynet, *Les effectifs de l'armée*, pp. 323-324, the number of the foreign mercenaries serving in the imperial army was limited in that period of time.
[103] Skylitzes Cont., 147.13-14.

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