

THE END OF DEMETRIOS PALAEOLOGOS AND THE ECTHESIS CHRONICA

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The story of the end of Demetrios Palaeologos, one of the sons of the Byzantine emperor Manuel II and brother to each of the next two emperors, derives from a number of historical sources¹. Amongst these are three of the four so-called 'siege historians' which provide accounts of varying lengths about Demetrios' acquisition of possessions in Thrace and the northern Aegean in 1460². Of these only one work, namely Sphrantzes, proceeds far enough to also deal with the circumstances about the end of these acquisitions seven or eight years later. It claims that Demetrios decided to give up his possessions and income in exchange for a small pension.

There is one other historical narrative which deals with these affairs, and this is the *Ecthesis Chronica*³. It gives a wildly different account of the end of Demetrios' relevant possessions, claiming that they were taken away from him by Mehmed as a result of irregularities in dues to the Ottoman state.

Modern historians usually give a mixed account of Demetrios' final years in relation to these sources as a whole⁴. They accept the versions of the 'siege historians'

1. On these see *D. A. Zakythinos*, *Le Despotat grec de Morée*, 2 vols., Paris, 1932 (Edition revue et augmenté par Chryssa Maltézou, London, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 285-287.

2. Kritovoulos' history concludes just before the point of interest to us here. Chalcocondyles, despite apparently writing toward the end of the century, breaks off his account in 1463. Ducas' history, which breaks off in 1462, says nothing other than that Demetrios and his retinue were taken to Adrianople.

3. I am justifiably ignoring here the secondary accounts drawn from these written sources and none other. The work most prominent in mind here is of course the 'Chronicon Maius' of Macarios Mellisenos. See R. Loenertz, 'Autour du Chronicon Maius attribué à Georges Phrantzès', *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, III, Vatican City, 1946, pp. 273-311; at 305-307 (repr. *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca*, Rome, 1970, pp. 3-44, at 38-40). When we refer to modern scholars reproducing the views of the *Ecthesis Chronica*, also meant here are its various derivatives and particularly Pseudo-Sphrantzes.

4. See for example the account of Runciman where this is especially evident. The account of Runciman has clearly been reproduced, with even less qualification about the problems involved, by Nicol. Babinger attempts a more critical approach by stating that the claims of the *Ecthesis Chronica* about Demetrios'

about what Demetrios got in 1460, but then, with qualification, yet sometimes also without, they accept the version of the *Ecthesis Chronica* in terms of how Demetrios lost his benefits. They seem somehow not to notice that the *Ecthesis Chronica* has a rather different set of information on what Demetrios got in 1460 (information which, when one looks at it, is predicated on the requirements for the story on Demetrios' end which the *Ecthesis Chronica* goes on to narrate).

Let us begin by giving a better picture of what the sources say. Chalcocondyles, Sphrantzes, but especially Kritovoulos, given his documented personal connection with the events here involved, taken together, show that in 1460 Demetrios received Aenos, and the four islands of Imvros, Lemnos, Thasos and Samothrace as an appanage, together with an amount from the Ottoman mint, all giving him a comfortable annual income of seven hundred ducats⁵.

About the end of the appanage, Sphrantzes says:

Τῇ δὲ καθ' ἡ τοῦ μαρτίου μηνὸς τοῦ οε-ου ἔτους, ἐν ᾗ καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον μέγα Πάσχα γέγονεν, ἐναπέψυξεν ὁ τῶν κακῶν πάντων τοῦ Μορέως αἴτιος Ματθαῖος ὁ Ἀσάνης. καὶ ἰδοὺ καὶ τὸ τοῦ Δαυὶδ μελῶδημα καὶ ἔτι πεπλήρωται τὸ 'ἀναστήσω ὁ Θεὸς καὶ διασκορπισθήτωσαν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ φυγέτωσαν ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ οἱ μισοῦντες αὐτόν'. Καὶ τούτου γενομένου, ὡς ἠκούσαμεν παρὰ τινων, ἀπέπεμψε καὶ ὁ δεσπότης τὴν τοῦ ἀμνηρᾶ πρὸς αὐτὸν πρόσσodon καὶ τὸ χρέος τῆς δουλείας εἰς τὰ φωσᾶτα, εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ· 'ἐγὼ εἰμι γέρων

misdeemeanors do not amount to the truth, but constitute evidence for a case of slander. All these accounts incidentally give the facts as they are present in Pseudo-Sphrantzes, and the differences there in comparison with the *Ecthesis Chronica* have been shown to be the product of Mellisenos' rich imagination; (e.g. Didymoteichon as Demetrios' place of exile). *S. Runciman*, *The Fall of Constantinople*, 1453, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 181-182. *D. M. Nicol*, *The Immortal Emperor. The life and legend of Constantine Palaiologos*, last Emperor of the Romans, Cambridge, 1992, p. 114. *F. C. H. Babinger*, *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit*, Munich, 1959, ed. 2, pp. 178-179 (of English language edition). The conclusion of the most comprehensive study states: 'Quoi qu'il en soit, il est probable que les relations entre le sultan et le despote furent rompues'. *Zakythinos*, op. cit., p. 287. The *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, edited by *A. P. Kazhdan*, et al., New York-Oxford, 1991, vol. 1, pp. 41-42; 606-607; stands alone in being appropriately reticent about making any claims about the affair. The view of *Zakythinos* is nonetheless praiseworthy in that it was comparatively qualified at a time when the true nature of the *Chronicon Maius* (on which see notes 4 and 14) was still not known.

5. *Zakythinos*, op.cit., pp. 285-287. The apparent conflict in the sources about whether Demetrios got all or only part of the islands of Thasos and Samothrace was solved in reasonable fashion by *Bakalopoulos*. *A. E. Bakalopoulos*, *Thasos, son histoire, son administration de 1453 à 1912*, Paris, 1953, pp. 21-24. Kritovoulos' apparent discrepancy here in relation to Chalcocondyles and Sphrantzes in fact testifies to a more meticulous knowledge by him of the facts and circumstances surrounding the relevant events. Kritovoulos was by the time of these events Ottoman governor of Imvros, and had in fact been involved in the negotiations for the islands' previous Ottoman takeover, negotiations in which Demetrios, through Kritovoulos himself, had also been involved. Ducas, sadly given his position in the service to the Gattilusi, Demetrios' predecessors in his appanage, says virtually nothing about the affair.

καὶ ἀσθενής, ὁ ἐκπληρῶν τὴν δουλοσύνην ἀπέθανε· λοιπὸν ἡ πολλὴ πρόσοδος αἷς δοθῇ ὅπουν ὀρίσης, ἐμοὶ δὲ αἷς δοθῇ ὅσον νὰ ζῶ καθήμενος ἐνταῦθα μετὰ τινων ὀλίγων, ἀπελογήσατο ὁ ἀμνηστὴς· 'καλῶς λέγει, καὶ αἷς χωρίση τοὺς θέλει', καὶ ἐχώρισε. καὶ δέδωκε πρὸς αὐτὸν ἄσπραν, ἵνα ἔχη αὐτὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ κουμέρκι τοῦ ἀλεύρου, τοὺς δὲ πλείονας τῶν ὑποχειρίων αὐτοῦ περιορίσας ἀπῆρεν, ἵνα εὐρίσκωνται εἰς τὴν Πόλιν. ἄλλοι δὲ εἶπον ἄλλως γεγονέναι, καὶ μέλλομεν μαθεῖν καὶ διηγῆσθαι⁶.

The year of these events is 1467. Immediately following this, during the summer of the same year, Sphrantzes notes the death of Demetrios' daughter from the plague⁷. Finally, for a point between what is in fact late 1470 and 1471, he says:

... καὶ ὁ εἰς τὴν Ἀνδριανούπολιν δεσπότης κύρ Δημήτριος τέθνηκε γερονὸς καὶ καλόγερος καὶ Δανιὶδ ἐπονομασθεὶς, πρὸ αὐτοῦ χρονῶν ὀλίγων ἀποθανούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἡ βασίλισσα τέθνηκε μετὰ τινα καιρὸν ὀλίγον τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ⁸.

The *Ecthesis Chronica* takes a totally different approach. It begins by claiming that Demetrios was given half of the salt pans of Aenos and in fact nothing else. Later however it implicitly states that Demetrios also had other sources of income, presumably from Mehmed, though these sources were hardly of the importance of what he received in Aenos itself in the form of the salt pans⁹. The fact is however, that the whole idea of Demetrios possessing an appanage, one including Aenos itself and not just its salt-pans, and also taking in a number of islands, is foreign to the account of the *Ecthesis Chronica*.

Nonetheless the division of the income which the *Ecthesis Chronica* claims, and which is indispensable for its version of things for Demetrios' end, seems to derive from a point of fact. As Kritovoulos informs us, during the time of the Gattilusi possession of Aenos, two tenth parts of the production of the salt did go to the Ottoman treasury, and Kritovoulos also goes on to state that when Demetrios got Aenos, he got it under the arrangement that had previously existed under the Gattilusi¹⁰. It remains an open point in fact whether Demetrios, who indeed needed to be given an extra amount from the Ottoman treasury to bring his income up to the desired amount, did need to continue to pay part of the profits of the salt pans to

6. *Georgii Sphrantzae Chronicon*, edited by R. Maisano, Rome, 1990, pp. 180, (hereafter Sphrantzes).

7. Sphrantzes, p. 182

8. Sphrantzes, p. 190.

9. *Ecthesis chronica and Chronicon Athenarum*, edited with critical notes and indices by *Sp. Lampros*, London, 1902 (repr. Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 1-84; at 23; (hereafter *Ecthesis Chronica*). The existence of some other sources of income is implicitly acknowledged by the *Ecthesis Chronica* when it states that Mehmed took from Demetrios 'the salt pans and all other forms of income'.

10. *Critobuli Imbriotaie Historiae*, edited by *D. R. Reinsch*, Berlin-New York, 1983, pp. 105, 150 (hereafter Kritovoulos).

the Ottoman treasury". Nevertheless, if the claim of the *Ecthesis Chronica* on the division of the salt-pans profits is in any way based on fact, this is in all probability its basis.

Here we give the relevant section of the *Ecthesis Chronica* about the affair, almost all of which, as will be noticed, is concerned with the circumstances of the arrangement's end. Previously the *Ecthesis Chronica* had concluded its last reference to Demetrios by announcing that he and his household had been moved to Adrianople following the end of the Morea Despotate.

Ὁ δὲ δεσπότης Δημήτριος, ὢν ἐν τῇ Ἀνδριανουπόλει, ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν ὁ αὐθέντης τὴν τῆς Αἴνου ἄλυσκην τὴν ἡμῖν· ἔζη δὲ ἐν σπατάλῃ καὶ τιμῇ καὶ κννηγεσίῳ πλέον ἢ ἐν τῇ Πελοποννήσῳ. Ὁ δὲ Ματθαῖος ὁ Ἀσάν ἐπορεύετο μετὰ τοῦ αὐθεντός ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις· ἦν γὰρ οὗτος φρονιμώτατος λίαν. Φθονήσας γὰρ ὁ ἐχθρὸς διάβολος ἐμβάλλει λογισμόν ἐν τοῖς Ἀμαρδάρῳ τοῖς κρατήσασι τότε τὴν ἄλυσκην, ὥς ἵνα κλέψωσιν ἄσπρα ἐκ τῆς ἄλυσκῃς. Εἶπον οὖν τὴν βουλὴν πρῶτον τὸν Ἀσάνην· ὁ δὲ ἀναισχυντήσας ἀπεδίωξεν αὐτούς, μηδὲν παρὰδεξάμενος τὸν λόγον αὐτῶν. Πορευθεὶς οὖν παρήγγειλε τὸν δεσπότην, ὅτι, ἐάν σοι εἴπωσιν οἱ Ἀμαρδάρῳ τὸν λόγον ὅν περ εἶπον καὶ ἐμοί, μὴ ἀκούσῃς αὐτοῦ, ὅτι, ἐάν βουληθῇς ποιῆσαι ὡς καθὼς λέγουσι, μέλλομεν ἐμπεσεῖν ἐν κινδύνῳ μεγάλῳ· ὁ καὶ γέγονεν. Ὁ γὰρ Ἀσάν ἐπορεύθη μὲν μετὰ τοῦ αὐθεντός ἐν τῇ Μπόσῳ οὐ πολὺ τὸ ἐν μέσῳ· ἅμα γὰρ τοῦ ἐξελεῖν τὸν Ἀσάν, πορευθέντες οἱ Ἀμαρδάρῳ ἐπλάνησαν αὐτόν, καὶ ἔστρεψεν ὅπως κλέψωσι τὰ ἄσπρα. Ὅρα γὰρ γινώσκοντες οὐ πολὺ καὶ αὐθεντός. Οὕτως ἐποίησεν ὁ ἀσύνετος δεσπότης. Ὡς ἐν ὀλίγῳ δὲ ἔλθων ὁ αὐθέντης ἐκ τῆς Μπόσας ἠκούσθη, ὥς οἱ Ἀμαρδάρῳ ἔκλεψαν ἄσπρα ἐκ τῆς ἄλυσκῃς, δέδωκεν αὐτοὺς σκάκους, καὶ ὡμολόγησαν, ὅτι καὶ μετὰ βουλῆς τοῦ δε-

11. The *Ecthesis Chronica* says nothing directly about the Gattilusi dependencies in the Aegean and when it lists Mehmed's conquests of their domains it does not specify that it was to them, and not to any remaining Byzantine administration, that they belonged. Aenos, Samothrace and Imvros, had made up the appanage of Dorino II Gattilussio, while Lesvos, Thasos, Lemnos and Phocaea had made up the appanage of Dorino's relative Domenico. The *Ecthesis Chronica* does nevertheless, however vaguely, connect Demetrios with the former owners of the appanage, and this is evident from the claim that on returning from the Council of Florence, Demetrios found his wife 'the daughter of the lord of Aenos dead'. In fact Demetrios' first wife (the wife here in question) was Zoe Paraspondyles, while the Gattilusi wife, daughter of Dorino Gattilusi, Lord of Lesvos, not we may note Lord of Aenos (this being the title at the time of Dorino's brother Palamede), was the second wife of Demetrios' brother Constantine. Both appanages in fact passed to Ottoman control around the time the whole of one of them (that of Aenos), and most of the other, were transferred to Demetrios. Aenos, which included Samothrace and Imvros, had passed to Ottoman control by 1456. Lesvos passed to Ottoman control only in 1462, though its two island dependencies, Thasos and Lemnos, had already become Ottoman by 1460 when they passed to Demetrios. Accordingly there was ample scope for confusion for an account of the type of the *Ecthesis Chronica*, with the arrangement existing under the Gattilusi in Aenos easily passing for that applied to Demetrios.

πότου ἐκλέψαμεν, μοιράσαντες αὐτὰ ὁμοῦ. Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ αὐθέντης, ἡβονλήθη ἀποκτείνει αὐτόν, εἰ ὁ Μαχουμούτ πασίας ἔσκοψεν αὐτόν τοῦ μὴ ἀποκτείνειν. Ἐκράτησεν οὖν τὴν ἀλυκὴν καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο εἰσόδημα. Οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οἱ ὄντες μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐπορεύθησαν ἕκαστος ὁ μὲν ἔνθεν, ὁ δὲ ἔνθεν· οὐ γὰρ εἶχόν τι εἰς διατροφὴν. Καθήμενος δὲ ὁ ταλαίπωρος ἐν τῇ Ἀνδριανουπόλει, ἐποίησαν αὐτόν τοῦ μὴ ἱππεῦσαι ὅλως. Ὁ δὲ Ἀσάν, ἐλθὼν ἐκ τῆς Μπόσνας καὶ ἀκούσας τὸ δρᾶμα, ἐκ τῆς χολῆς πεσὼν ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ ἐτελεύτησεν· ὥς ἐν ὀλίγῳ δὲ ἀπέθανε καὶ ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτοῦ. Ὀλίγον δὲ καιροῦ παρελθόντος, ὑποστρέψας ὁ αὐθέντης ἦλθεν ἐν Ἀδριανουπόλει, καὶ ἐξελθὼν ὁ ταλαίπωρος πεζοπορῶν ὑπήντησεν αὐτόν. Ἰδὼν δὲ αὐτόν, ἠλέησεν αὐτόν· ὥρισε γοῦν καὶ δέδωκεν ἵππον ἐκ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν, καὶ ἐκαθέσθη περιπατῶν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ· δέδωκε δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ σιτηρέσιον μερικὸν εἰς διατροφὴν μόνον. Ὡς ἐν ὀλίγῳ δὲ ἐτελεύτησε καὶ ἡ βασίλισσα καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ δεσπότης ἐν τῇ Ἀδριανουπόλει. Τῆς δὲ θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ τὰ εἶδη ἐδόθησαν ἐν τῷ πατριαρχείῳ, ἐξ ὧν ἔστι καὶ ὁ σάκκος ὁ ἀρχαῖος ἕως τοῦ νῦν, ταφέντες ἅπαντες ἐν τῇ Ἀδριανουπόλει¹².

We note that Sphrantzes and the *Ecthesis Chronica* stand in mutual agreement on two points, namely the death of Matthew Asan at some point during the affair, and the relative poverty of Demetrios at the very end, including on the dispersal of his household. For Sphrantzes however Matthew's death is the cause of the change, whereas for the *Ecthesis Chronica* it is one of its results. For Sphrantzes moreover in comparison with the *Ecthesis Chronica*, Demetrios' poverty is self-imposed and only relative, while for the *Ecthesis Chronica* it is imposed by the dictates of Mehmed and is total at least at the start, becoming something in the range of what Sphrantzes claims sometime later on and only as a result of a further incident.

Despite this mutual incompatibility of the claims, historians have been more than ready to accept the testimony of the *Ecthesis Chronica* about Demetrios' end. It is in fact not difficult to see why. One reason is the scarcity of information from the traditional sources for the events of the time, namely from the 'four siege-historians', in that, as bad luck would have it, it is only Sphrantzes among them who proceeds in his account far enough to cover the affair. The second reason for the preference for the story of the *Ecthesis Chronica* is the sentimental attraction for an account of the tragic end of yet another member of the tragic Palaeologean dynasty¹³. This having been said, the fact is that justification for another and presumably very different version of events in comparison with that offered by Sphrantzes himself (such as for example that which the *Ecthesis Chronica* provides), is also to be found in the very final sentence of Sphrantzes' account. This state of affairs being what it is, together with the

12. *Ecthesis Chronica*, pp. 23-25.

13. Note for example the concluding words of Babinger's account of the affair: 'Such was the miserable end of this branch of the Palaeologi'. Babinger, *op. cit.*, p. 179 (English language version).

consequences of a philological dispute about the nature of Sphrantzes' own account, it is no wonder that secondary works give full rein to the sensational claims of the *Ecthesis Chronica*¹⁴.

An acceptance of the claims of the *Ecthesis Chronica* is in fact not a problem, if only this is preceded by an assessment of the work's reliability. That this ought to have been a prerequisite for an acceptance of the relevant claims is evident from the *Ecthesis Chronica*'s statements of what Demetrios actually received in 1460, information which is at variance with all the other accounts which we have. In any case, an assessment of the trustworthiness of the *Ecthesis Chronica* as a whole as a source has yet to be done. Nonetheless certain portions have already been examined, and from these it is clear that the *Ecthesis Chronica* is not a reliable source, especially for affairs prior to the sixteenth century¹⁵.

The reason is not difficult to find. Says the title of the work: «Ἐκθεσις χρονικῇ συντομωτέρᾳ συντεθεῖσα ἐν ἀπλότῃ λέξεων κοινῶς διηγουμένη τὰ γεγονότα ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἡμῶν, ἃ μὲν οἰκείοις ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδομεν, ἃ δὲ ἀκηκόαμεν ἐκ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, ἃ μὲν οἰκείοις ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδομεν, ἃ δὲ ἀκηκόαμεν ἐκ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν οὐκ ὀκνοῦμεν γράψαι»¹⁶. In other words, at least when going along with what the writer himself claims (modern claims to the contrary will be examined elsewhere), the facts for the period prior to the writer's own lifetime derive from word of mouth. When was the work written? Conventionally this has been put at or around 1517¹⁷. In actual fact, if only the work is read in serious fashion, and if Lambros' arguments are given any attention, it becomes obvious that the *Ecthesis Chronica* derives from as late as the 1560s. This is incidentally about one century after the events of interest to us here, akin in fact to someone today being asked to give an account of an affair in the early twentieth century, one derived in fact from an oral authority. Accordingly, given

14. The dispute in question concerns Pseudo-Sphrantzes, who for a very long time passed as the genuine work of Sphrantzes. This however does not excuse the relevant errors present in works written long after the nature of Pseudo-Sphrantzes had been discovered. Runciman for example, despite a full awareness of the problem, nonetheless persists in claiming that the story of the appropriation is 'the story which Phrantzes believed'. Runciman, op. cit., pp. 181-182, 192-193.

15. See, for example, the general consensus on the fictional nature of the *Ecthesis Chronica*'s claims about the Byzantine emperor Manuel II's visit to the Pope during his famous voyage to Europe. Also Barker's valid comments on the allegations by the *Ecthesis Chronica* of the sale by Andronicos Palaeologos of Thessalonica to the Venetians. J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statermanship*, New Brunswick-New Jersey, 1969, pp. 373-374, 510-512. In the latter example, Barker notes how easily the uncontested point of the Venetians' agreeing to provide Andronicos with a pension as an offset to his loss of income from the hand-over of the city seems to have become a purchase 'in the historian's imagination'.

16. *Ecthesis Chronica*, p. 1.

17. G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* 1. Die byzantinischen Quellen der Geschichte der Türkenvölker, ed. 2, Berlin, 1958 (repr. Leiden, 1983), vol. 1, pp. 251-252.

that the things up to, say, the beginnings of the sixteenth century derive not from the writer himself, and given moreover that they are implicitly claimed not to derive from any written source, they have to be accepted with the utmost discretion.

Where then does this leave us on the question of Demetrios' end? The contemporary Sphrantzes is admittedly hostile towards Demetrios in his account of the final years of Byzantium's existence. Despite this, in his account of Demetrios' end, Sphrantzes provides us with an honourable version of events for this individual's fate. Moreover, Sphrantzes never provides us with a conflicting story about Demetrios' end as he promises to do, despite having one entire decade to find out and tell us (his history comes to an end in 1478). This may of course be because he never learns of the contrary account, but it may also be because he does hear of it, and when he does, he places no credence in it based on his better judgment.

The *Ecthesis Chronica* also has a hostile attitude toward Demetrios, but it is, in comparison with Sphrantzes, a hostility of a different type. A simple reading of all that the *Ecthesis Chronica* has to say on Demetrios reveals that this work has one and only one purpose as far as Demetrios is concerned, and that is to see him as a scandalous trouble-maker¹⁸. To this attitude, the story of Demetrios' end at Mehmed's hands as narrated by the *Ecthesis Chronica* serves as this work's logical climax of its portrayal of Demetrios. The moral centre-point of the *Ecthesis Chronica*'s account on Demetrios' end is, accordingly, as will already have been noticed, his lack of nobility of character. This work makes no attempt to conceal; 'observe', it says, 'the sense of a servant in contrast to that of a master'.

A disinterested examination of the principal facts about Demetrios' state of affairs by 1467 is here of interest. For these we need to look, not at the prejudiced account of the *Ecthesis Chronica*, but at the annals-style and matter-of-fact account of Sphrantzes. So then, with all four of his islands lost, indeed only recently (by 1466), with his right-

18. Demetrios' name is first mentioned in the list of Manuel II's sons, of which sons Demetrios, other than perhaps for John VIII, is the one to be most spoken about thereafter. He is again brought up in the context of John's travelling to the Council of Florence, the point being that John took him along with him so that he would not make trouble if left behind 'as occurred on previous occasions'. That Demetrios was a convinced anti-Unionist (which is the more obvious point to make in regard to Demetrios and Florence), is made neither here nor anywhere else in the *Ecthesis Chronica*. Demetrios is referred to again on John's death, to state the granting of the Empire to Constantine, and the division of the Peloponnese between Demetrios and Thomas (surprisingly here for once without the display of scandals). The point on the Despotate is immediately picked up after the *Ecthesis Chronica* shows the situation in Constantinople to have settled as far as Mehmed is concerned. Interest now is in showing Demetrios and Thomas to be duplicitous toward Mehmed, and to display scandalous behaviour toward each other. In an oversimplification of the historical facts, Demetrios is shown to have invited Mehmed into the Peloponnese in the campaign that results in the Despotate's end, precisely in order to settle his disagreements with Thomas.

hand man Matthew Asan dead (on March 29, 1467 following Sphrantzes' precise date), with Demetrios himself old and admittedly ill, with the plague raging in Thrace (on account of which Demetrios' daughter is soon to die), what better action is there to take than the laudable, time-honoured Byzantine practice of giving up most things (though not everything) and, immediately or some time thereafter, becoming a monk? The fate of Aenos, the richest and only asset left to Demetrios by that time, which was in fact attacked, indeed thoroughly destroyed, by a Venetian fleet in 1469, perhaps as little as a year after Demetrios left it, is also a thing to speculate about at this point. Would not Demetrios, or his advisors at the very least, not have realised its exposed position from late 1466 onwards, being as it was at the mercy of western forces and potentially one of their prime targets?

Nonetheless, in its own restricted form, inaccurate in terms of what Demetrios actually received in 1460, the account of the *Ecthesis Chronica*, when taken as a whole, without any internal contradictions, could be claimed to 'sound right' after all. Its purpose however is in this case all too obvious, and this is to see Demetrios' end as the normal consequence of his standard public reputation up to that point. An account of this sort is of course not to be avoided, indeed by a public accustomed to an individual with a reputation such as Demetrios had. That Aenos was renowned at the time for its salt, and was identified by all on account of its salt wealth, is abundantly evident from Kritovoulos' History¹⁹. The ingredients for an account such as that which the *Ecthesis Chronica* provides are amazingly present to the full. These are present in the tantalizing combination of a salt-rich Aenos and a life of poverty for Demetrios at the very end. The irresistible formulation for such an account takes shape through the moral element of the scandalous Demetrios remaining on-so-ungrateful, given his noted privileged state, toward the all-too-benevolent Mehmed.

Matthew Asan is here, we may note, the good character, indeed Demetrios' immediate opposite. This is despite the contrary opinion of him which we find in the contemporary Sphrantzes, who surely would have had a more reliable assessment of him than does the *Ecthesis Chronica*. Indeed the *Ecthesis Chronica* prepares its readers well in advance in this respect by bringing out Asan's noble lineage, this despite Asan's relative unimportance in its account of historical events up to that point. The context for this is the end of the Peloponnese Despotate, and it is placed at the very end of the affair, prior to the move of the Despot and Asan himself to Adrianople, and this is just a page or so away from the point the story of Demetrios' fall begins.

There are other things to point to as well. One is the popular, tell-tale device of Asan being approached by the managers, Asan then going to warn Demetrios, Demetrios then himself being (predictably) approached, and finally Demetrios himself

19. Kritovoulos, pp. 101-107, 150.

falling into the very trap despite Asan's advice. The managers themselves, we may note, had the idea put into their head by 'the devil', an expression of the precise type we would expect from a tale of the moralising sort such as this. The claim that Mehmed suddenly and without explanation 'heard of the affair', leaves questions unanswered. Likewise, Mahmud Pasha's 'preventing' Mehmed from having Demetrios punished, indeed with the unexpected punishment of execution (given that only theft, possibly of a minor type, was here involved), is all too difficult to take seriously without any further elaboration. Also to be noted is that Mehmed and Asan conveniently return from Bosnia at different yet highly appropriate times, though both presumably came from the same campaign.

A further problem is the different point of death of Asan during the affair which exists between the accounts. Here Sphrantzes' reliability is again supported, given that he supplies us with so important detail as the date of Asan's death, in contrast to the *Ecthesis Chronica* where we are only informed of the event within the context of the sensational and tragic story-line. One may also point out here the unlikelihood of Asan dying of something of despair after finding out what had (allegedly) eventuated with Demetrios, when, if the *Ecthesis Chronica* itself till this point is to be believed, such behaviour by Demetrios was well within the norm given his character. Here we may note the daughter's death, which according to Sphrantzes was unrelated to the affair, yet which the *Ecthesis Chronica* cleverly brings in at a point which shows it by implication to have resulted from the same sorry affair.

The *Ecthesis Chronica*'s overbearing negative disposition toward Demetrios is evident in its refusal to inform its readers that Demetrios became a monk before his death. This is something which must have occurred given that Sphrantzes even supplies us with the name which Demetrios assumed on the occasion. The same disposition is also evident, in the claim of Demetrios' foolish refusal to listen to sound advice, but also in the claim of Demetrios' allegedly frivolous and leisurely living in Thrace, 'more so than in the Peloponnese'. Demetrios is in fact also claimed to have spent much of his time enjoying the hunt. Here the *Ecthesis Chronica* is obviously using to its own advantage a circumstance which would have been exploited by most aristocrats living with the lush Hebrus riverbanks at their very feet.

The 'fifty-fifty' breakdown in the ownership of the pans remains one of the basic inaccuracies of the account, irrespective of the likelihood that the basis for its information here is actual fact. This is in fact but an aspect of the wider inaccuracy which the *Ecthesis Chronica* wants to project, that the salt pans, indeed only a part of the salt pans, is all Demetrios received from Mehmed in 1460. It is possible that the remaining concessions are not mentioned because they no longer represented the state of affairs around 1467. Nonetheless the wider state of things involving western powers in the Aegean, which would at least imply consideration of Demetrios' loss of his

islands, is not a part of the *Ecthesis Chronica*'s account in any immediate sense. The fact is that the information the *Ecthesis Chronica* supplies us with on what Demetrios received is predicated solely on the requirements for the story on Demetrios' end which it then goes on to narrate. As we have seen however in comparison with the text of Sphrantzes, this is an account which is deficient in every meaningful sense²⁰.

All we have said so far constitute in fact only temporary conclusions about the matter of Demetrios Palaeologos' end. These remain to be confirmed and supplemented following a comprehensive study of the *Ecthesis Chronica*, such as we are presently undertaking. A further point one ought to note here is that future independent historical appraisals of Demetrios Palaeologos, but especially of Matthew Asan, would certainly go a long way to evaluate critically the respective positions of Sphrantzes and the *Ecthesis Chronica*. A question nevertheless one may legitimately ask is what motives the *Ecthesis Chronica* may have had to publicise such a story, if indeed it was, as seems likely, a fiction. Some worthwhile comments in this respect, however vague and unelaborated, have in fact already been made²¹. A fuller answer must however await the clearer appreciation of the *Ecthesis Chronica* that will follow the study of the work as a whole.

20. Although we should not perhaps be pressing the point, the fate of David Comnenos, who was in fact executed by Mehmed on suspicion of secret dealings with anti-Ottoman powers, may have offered a further incentive to the popular and hostile mind for a negative view of Demetrios' end. There were of course obvious parallels in the loss of Trebizond and the Morea, as there were of the parts of David and Demetrios in the respective affairs. Trebizond, we may recall, fell in the year after Mistra; it fell under terms which involved a marriage agreement between Mehmed and the daughter of the vanquished prince (one apparently not respected by Mehmed); while in both cases the rulers were compensated with estates in the same part of the world (Macedonia-Thrace). The conditions demanded by David from Mehmed are known to have been based directly on what had been given to Demetrios on the surrender of Mistra.

21. Notably by B. Braude, 'Foundation Myths of the Millet System', in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The functioning of a plural society*, edited by B. Braude and B. Lewis, New York, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 76-79.