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978-1-108-81262-7 — Manuel II Palaiologos (1350–1425)  
A Byzantine Emperor in a Time of Tumult  
Siren Çelik  
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## MANUEL II PALAIOLOGOS (1350–1425)

Few Byzantine emperors had a life as rich and as turbulent as Manuel II Palaiologos. A fascinating figure at the crossroads of Byzantine, Western European and Ottoman history, he endured political turmoil, witnessed no less than three sieges by the Ottomans and travelled as far as France and England. He was a prolific writer, producing a vast corpus of literary, theological and philosophical works. Yet despite his talent, Manuel has largely been ignored as an author. This biography constructs an in-depth picture of him of as a ruler, author and personality, as well as providing insight into his world and times. It offers the first analysis of the emperor's complete oeuvre, focusing on his literary style, self-representation and philosophical/theological thought. By focusing not only on political events, but also on the personality, personal life and literary output of Manuel, this biography paints a new portrait of a multifaceted emperor.

SIREN ÇELİK obtained her PhD at the University of Birmingham. Her main research interests are Late Byzantine history, Byzantine literature, history-writing and daily life. She has been a Junior Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks and has received postdoctoral fellowships from Koç University-ANAMED, Boğaziçi University and Harvard University.

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*In loving memory of Ruth Macrides (1949–2019)*

*Here is the work . . . pluck then the sweet fruit for yourself, you  
who are the cause of it, for it was you who provided us with the  
seed, and it was by you that the plant was abundantly watered. . .*

*(Manuel II Palaiologos, upon sending his recent composition  
to his teacher Demetrios Kydones, Letter II)*

## *Contents*

<i>List of Figures and Maps</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	x
<i>Chronology of Manuel II Palaiologos' Life</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xvi
<i>The Family Tree of Manuel II Palaiologos</i>	xx
<i>List of Historical Figures</i>	xxi
Introduction	
1 The Young Manuel	25
2 Family Affairs	55
3 Fighting for Freedom	77
4 In Limbo	III
5 The Vassal Emperor	130
6 Besieged	173
7 The New Odysseus	213
8 A Clamorous Tranquillity	259
9 The Protean Emperor	319
10 Exchanging Empires	358
Conclusion	382
<i>Appendices</i>	389
<i>Glossary</i>	401
<i>Bibliography</i>	404
<i>Index</i>	439

## *Figures and Maps*

### Figures

3.1	Walls of Thessalonike. Photo by DeAgostini / Getty Images.	page 81
7.1	Portrait of Manuel II and his family. Paris, Louvre, MR 416 fol. 2r (RMN-Grand Palais). Photo: Louvre, Paris, France / Bridgeman Images.	233
7.2	Manuel II as Herakleios? Medal depicting Emperor Herakleios commissioned by Jean duc de Berry, later cast. Word History Archive / Alamy Stock Photo.	250
7.3	Manuel II as Melchior? The meeting of the Magi. Chantilly, Musée Condé, <i>Les très riches heures du duc de Berry</i> , f 51 v. Photo by Archiv Gerstenberg/ullstein bild via Getty Images.	252
7.4	The meeting of Manuel II and Henry IV. MS6f240, <i>St. Alban's Chronicle</i> , fifteenth century. Image courtesy of Lambeth Palace Library & The Courtauld Institute of Art.	253
8.1 a and b	Ivory pyxis depicting Manuel II, John VII and their families. © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington DC.	262
8.2	Palace of the Porphyrogennitos, Tekfur Saray (pre-restoration). Photo by DeAgostini / Getty Images.	263
8.3	Silver hyperpyron of Manuel II, the reverse. Photo by Werner Forman / Universal Images Group / Getty Images.	277

*List of Figures and Maps* ix

- |     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 8.4 | The signature of Manuel II. <i>Chrysobull</i> ratifying the ownership of the lands of the Pantokrator Monastery in Eastern Macedonia. Archives of the Pantokrator Monastery, Mt. Athos (ψ2 σ. 121–122, no. 2). Photo: Institute of Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation. | 279 |
| 9.1 | Portrait of Manuel II. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Parisinus supplément grec 309. Granger Historical Picture Archive / Alamy Stock Photo.   | 342 |

**Maps**

- |   |   |                  |
|---|---|------------------|
| 1 | The travels of Manuel II Palaiologos (1350–1425)  | <i>page</i> xxiv |
| 2 | The approximate territories of the Byzantine Empire during Manuel II Palaiologos' reign (1350–1425) | xxv              |

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*Acknowledgments*

xi

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## *Chronology of Manuel II Palaiologos' Life*

- 1350: Manuel II is born
- 1354: John V becomes the sole emperor; John VI Kantakouzenos abdicates
- 1366: Manuel accompanies his father John V to Buda and is left behind as a hostage
- 1369: John V travels to Rome and officially converts to Catholicism; Manuel is made despot of Thessalonike before the emperor's departure
- 1371: Manuel travels to Venice to bring funds to John V and is left behind as a hostage; the Ottomans defeat the Serbians at the Battle of Maritsa (26 September)
- 1373: The failed rebellion of Andronikos IV in May, Andronikos is imprisoned; Manuel is made co-emperor and the heir to the throne (25 September)
- 1376: Andronikos IV escapes from confinement and captures Constantinople; John V, Manuel and Theodore are imprisoned at the Tower of Anemas
- 1379: John V and his sons escape from Anemas and flee to the Ottoman sultan; aided by the Ottomans, they re-enter Constantinople; Andronikos flees to Pera with members of the imperial family as hostages; more fighting ensues between the factions of John V and Andronikos
- 1381/2: A truce is signed between John V and Andronikos IV in which the latter is recognized as the heir to throne; Manuel loses his position as heir
- 1382: Manuel's younger brother Theodore I departs to Morea to assume his position as despot; Manuel establishes a separatist rule in Thessalonike and pursues a policy of aggression towards the Ottomans

*Chronology of Manuel II Palaiologos' Life*

xiii

- 1383: The start of the Ottoman siege of Thessalonike
- 1385: John V and Andronikos IV engage in battle in Melitas near Constantinople; the latter is defeated; Andronikos IV dies of disease (28 June)
- 1387: Manuel abandons Thessalonike due to the ongoing Ottoman siege and sails to Lesbos; the city surrenders to the Ottomans; Manuel stays for a few months in Lesbos and then moves to Tenedos; afterwards he travels to Bursa to submit to the sultan; John V exiles Manuel to Lemnos
- 1389: Manuel returns to Constantinople from Lemnos; the Battle of Kosova (15 June), the assassination of the Ottoman Sultan Murad I and the accession of Bayezid I
- 1390: The rebellion of John VII; he captures Constantinople in April; John V and Manuel lock themselves in the citadel of the Golden Gate; Manuel sails to Rhodes to obtain help from the Hospitallers, accompanied by Rhodian galleys. Manuel re-enters Constantinople in September; John VII flees.
- 1391: While Manuel accompanies the Ottoman sultan on a campaign, John V dies (15 February); Manuel enters Constantinople as the sole emperor (8 March); in June, Manuel leaves Constantinople again to participate in an Ottoman campaign
- 1392: Manuel returns from the Ottoman campaign in January; in February, Manuel marries Helena Dragaš and is crowned emperor; Manuel's eldest son, the future John VIII, is born in December.
- 1393: Bayezid I conquers large territories in Bulgaria, Wallachia and Greece; in 1393/4, Bayezid I gathers his Christian vassals in Serres, including Manuel, Theodore and John VII; the sultan supposedly contemplates murdering them
- 1394: Manuel disobeys Bayezid's summons and as a result the eight-year long Ottoman blockade of Constantinople commences
- 1396: The Crusade of Nikopolis (25 September), the Ottomans annihilate the crusading army; in the fall, the Church takes severe action against anti-Palamites and sympathizers of Catholicism, many opt to go into exile; the death of Manuel's mother, Empress Helena (November)
- 1397/8: Manuel's teacher and friend Demetrios Kydones dies; Manuel starts intense communications with Western European polities for help; Despot Theodore of Morea sells Corinth to the Hospitallers

- 1399: The French knight Mareschal Boucicaut arrives in Constantinople with a small army; in December, Manuel appoints John VII as regent and leaves Constantinople with Boucicaut for Europe
- 1400: In spring, Manuel sails away from the Morea, he then tours various Italian cities; in June he arrives in Paris
- 1401: In December, Manuel arrives in London and returns to Paris before the end of February
- 1402: Battle of Ankara takes place in July; Bayezid I is defeated and captured by Tamerlane, and the Ottoman Empire starts to disintegrate. Manuel leaves Paris in June
- 1403: After visiting Genoa and experiencing travel delays in the Morea, Manuel returns to Constantinople (June); Manuel ratifies John VII's peace treaty with Süleyman, the eldest son of Bayezid; John VII is banished to Lemnos and later given the city of Thessalonike to rule
- 1405: The birth of Manuel's fourth surviving son, the future Constantine XI (8 February)
- 1407: The death of Manuel's brother Theodore I, despot of Morea; Manuel installs his son Theodore II as the new despot
- 1408: Manuel travels to the Morea; the death of John VII; Manuel travels to Thessalonike in person and installs his son Andronikos as despot of Thessalonike
- 1409: The ecclesiastical controversy about the investiture of Patriarch Matthew reaches its peak; Manuel gets significantly involved in the affair; Makarios of Ankyra is tried and condemned
- 1409–10: Manuel attempts to play one Ottoman prince against the other in order to prevent the unification of the Ottoman Empire
- 1411: The Ottoman prince Musa lays a brief siege to Constantinople
- 1413: Battle of Çamurlu (July), supported by the Byzantines, and Mehmed I defeats Musa and unifies the Ottoman lands
- 1414: John VIII marries Anna of Moscow; Manuel leads an expedition against George Gattilusio for invading Thasos; Manuel Chrysoloras attends the opening of the Council of Constance
- 1415: Manuel travels to the Morea and renovates the Hexamilion; the Moreans rebel against the emperor on the account of the taxes imposed due to the renovation
- 1421: The widowed John VIII marries Sophia of Monferrat, Theodore II marries Cleope Malatesta; John VIII is crowned as co-emperor; the death of Mehmed I; the Byzantines support Mustafa, a pretender to the Ottoman throne, against Murad II

*Chronology of Manuel II Palaiologos' Life*

xv

- 1422: Murad II captures Mustafa; Murad II lays siege to Constantinople in July; the Byzantines succeed in lifting the siege in August; the papal legate arrives in Constantinople in September; Manuel has a stroke in October
- 1423: The Byzantines again support another pretender to the Ottoman throne against Murad II, this scheme, too, fails; the Ottomans attack the Morea and Thessalonike; Despot Andronikos cedes Thessalonike to the Venetians; John VIII travels to Hungary and Italy to seek aid
- 1424: John VIII continues his travels in Europe; a treaty with the Ottomans is signed to the great disadvantage of Byzantium
- 1425: Manuel dies in July and is buried at the Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople

## Abbreviations

Anonymous <i>Tevârih</i>	<i>Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman</i> , ed. F. Giese, re-ed. N. Azamat (Istanbul, 1992)
Argyriou, <i>Makres</i>	<i>Μακαρίου τοῦ Μακρῆ Συγγράμματα</i> , ed. A. Argyriou (Thessalonike, 1996)
Argyriou, <i>Makres-Islam</i>	<i>Macaire Makres et la Polémique contre l'Islam</i> , ed. A. Argyriou (Vatican City, 1986)
Aşıkpaşazade	<i>Âşıkpaşazâde Tarihi</i> (1285–1502), ed. N. Öztürk (Istanbul, 2013)
<i>Barker, Manuel II</i>	J. W. Barker. <i>Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship</i> (New Brunswick, 1969)
<i>BF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BSI</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
Chalkokondyles	Laonikos Chalkokondyles. <i>The Histories</i> , ed. and trans. A. Kaldellis (Cambridge MA and London, 2014)
Chrysostomides, <i>Monumenta Peloponnesiaca</i>	J. Chrysostomides. <i>Monumenta Peloponnesiaca: Documents for the Study of the Peloponnese in the 14th and 15th Centuries</i> (Camberley, 1995)
Clavijo	Ruy González de Clavijo. <i>Embassy to Tamerlane</i> , trans. Guy Le Strange (London, 1928)
Dennis, <i>Letters</i>	<i>The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus</i> , ed. and trans. G. T. Dennis (Washington DC, 1977)
Dennis, <i>Thessalonica</i>	G. T. Dennis. <i>The Reign of Manuel II Palaeologus in Thessalonica (1382–1387)</i> (Rome, 1960)

## List of Abbreviations

xvii

- Dialogue on Marriage* *Dialogue with the Empress Mother on Marriage*, ed. and trans. A. Angelou (Vienna, 1991)
- Dialogue with a Persian* *Dialoge mit einem Perser*, ed. E. Trapp (Vienna, 1966)
- Discourse to Iagoup* Ch. Dendrinou. *An Annotated Critical Edition* (editio princeps) of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus' treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway and New Bedford College, University of London, 1996), 326–73.
- Doukas Doukas. *Historia Byzantina*, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1958)
- DOP *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
- Dölger, *Regesten* F. Dölger. *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, 5: *Regesten von 1341–1453* (Munich, 1965)
- DVL Thomas, G. M and Predelli, R. *Deputazione di storei patria per le Venezie. Diplomatarium Veneto-levantinum 1351–1454* (Venice, 1880–99; repr. Cambridge, 2012)
- EEBS Έταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
- EHB A. Laiou (ed.) *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, 3 vols (Washington DC, 2002)
- Ethico-Political Orations* C. Kakkoura. 'An Annotated Critical Edition of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus' "Seven Ethico-political Orations" (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, The University of London, 2013)  
*PG* 156, cols. 313–84.
- The Foundations of Imperial Conduct*  
*Funeral Oration* *Manuel II Palaiologos. Funeral Oration to His Brother Theodore*, ed. and trans. J. Chrysostomides (Thessalonike, 1985)
- GRBS *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
- Gregoras Nikephoros Gregoras. *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen, 3 vols (Bonn, 1853)
- Ignatius of Smolensk G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington DC, 1984), 76–113.

xviii

*List of Abbreviations*

- Iorga, *Notes et Extraits* N. Iorga. *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des Croisades au XVe siècle*, vol. I (Paris, 1899).
- Iorga, 'Marea Neagra' N. Iorga, 'Venetia in Marea Neagra', *Analele Academiei Romane, Memoriile Sectiunii Istorice*, II, 36 (1913–14), Pt. 1, 1043–70; Pt. 2, 1071–88: documents, 1058–70, 1093–118.
- JÖB *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
- Kantakouzenos John Kantakouzenos. *Historiarum Libri IV*, ed. L. Schopen, 3 vols (Bonn, 1828–32)
- Loenertz, *La Démétrius Cydonès Correspondance*, 2 vols, ed. R. J. Loenertz (Rome, Vatican City, 1951–60)
- Majeska, *Russian Travellers* G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington DC, 1984)
- Mazaris *Mazaris. Journey to Hades: Or Interviews with Dead Men About Certain Officials of the Imperial Court*, ed. and trans. J. N. Barry et al. (Buffalo, NY, 1975)
- Mioni, 'Cronaca' E. Mioni, 'Una inedita cronaca bizantina dal Mar. gr. 595', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavici* 3 (1981), 71–88.
- MM F. Miklosich, and W. Müller. *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevii sacra et profana*, 6 vols. (Vienna, 1860–90)
- Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Latins and the Ottomans* N. Necipoğlu. *Byzantium between the Latins: and the Ottomans Politics and Society in the Late Empire* (Cambridge, 2009)
- Neşri Neşri. *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ*, 2 vols, eds. F. R. Unat and M. A. Köymen (Ankara, 1949–57)
- OCP *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
- ODB *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols, ed. A. Kazhdan (Oxford, 1991)
- On the Procession of the Holy Spirit* Ch. Dendrinos. 'An Annotated Critical Edition (editio princeps) of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus' treatise *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*' (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway and New Bedford College, University of London, 1996, 1–317.



## List of Abbreviations

xix

<i>Panegyric to John V</i>	<i>Anecdota Graeca</i> , II, ed. J. Boissonade (Paris, 1844; repr. Hildesheim, 1962), 223–45.
PG	J. P. Migne. <i>Patrologiae cursus completus</i> , Series Graeca, 161 vols (Paris, 1857–66)
PLP	E. Trapp. <i>Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit</i> , 14 vols (Vienna, 1976–96)
PRO	Public Record Office
Pseudo-Kodinos	<i>Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies</i> , ed. and trans. R. J. Macrides, J. A. Munitiz and D. G. Angelov (Ashgate, 2013)
Raynaldus, <i>Annales Ecclesiastici</i>	C. Baronius and O. Raynaldus. <i>Ecclesiastici</i> , vols. 25–27 (Bar-le-Duc, 1872–1880)
REB	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
RESEE	<i>Revue des études sud-est européennes</i>
SBN	<i>Studi bizantini e neoellenici</i>
Schreiner, <i>Kleinchroniken</i>	P. Schreiner. <i>Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken</i> , 3 vols (Vienna, 1975)
Sphrantzes	<i>Sphrantzes. Cronaca</i> , ed. and trans. R. Maisano (Rome, 1990)
TM	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>
Thiriet, <i>Régestes</i>	F. Thiriet. <i>Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie</i> , 3 vols (Paris, 1958)
Voulgaris, <i>Bryennios</i>	Ἰωσήφ Μοναχοῦ τοῦ Βρυεννίου τὰ Εὐρεθέντα, 2 vols, ed. E. Voulgares (Leipzig 1768, Thessalonike, 1991)