“Εντεύξεις” and the “political” party: gatherings, friendships and social profiles in the 11th-12th century Byzantium

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The postdoctoral research titled “Electronic Database on the Social History of Byzantium from the 6th to the 12th Centuries: Sources, Problems and Approaches”, which is funded by the European Social Fund, is being conducted in the National Hellenic Research Foundation since April 2012. The program aims at defining distinct social groups, at distinguishing the genuine byzantine elements of social differentiation and, at interpreting them in accordance with byzantine social perception. The present contribution will focus on issues of definitions and self-definitions of two well known groups of the 11th century, the “politikon” and the “stratiotikon” groups.

1 This paper was written as part of the postdoctoral research project entitled “Electronic Database on the Social History of Byzantium from the 6th to the 12th Centuries: Sources, Problems and Approaches”, which was implemented within the framework of the Action «Supporting Postdoctoral Researchers» of the Operational Program "Education and Lifelong Learning" (Management Agency: General Secretariat for Research and Technology), and is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Greek State. The program was realized at the IBR/IHR/NHRF from April 2012 through March 2015.

2 G. Ostrogorsky saw in the “politikon” and the stratiotikon the aristocracy of Constantinople and the group of the stratotikoi, who originated in the provinces. Both were included in what Ostrogorsky used to call “feudal” aristocracy. After Lemerle, Byzance, 258, the «πολιτικόν γένος» is constituted by the people of Constantinople and the senate. For Lemerle the struggle outlined in the sources between the “politikon” and the “stratiotikon” reveals that the progressive forces of the byzantine society in the 11th c. are to be identified with the “politikon”, guild members included, and that Alexios I Komnenos returned to a conservatism that was catastrophic for the future of the empire. A. Kazhdan revised both these views, by suggesting that the final prevalence of this “feudal” aristocracy led to economic expansion. M. Angold considers that the legacy of Basil II was a heavy task for his successors, who strove to maintain their position by relying heavily on the forces of Constantinople. J.-Cl. Cheynet proved that there can be no division of the aristocratic families in those originating in
It is considered that the politikon came to the forefront of the historical scene of Byzantium only in the 11th century. However, the Byzantines are hardly original. The term politikon is an old term denoting in most cases the political sector of the administration. Its meaning does not change in Byzantium. “Politikon” still signifies whatever belongs to the city, the polis. According to the Lexicon of Hesychios “πολιτικός” means “civil, with some craft”, ἀστεῖος, μετὰ τινος τέχνης. Hesychios added another detail: “politikos” is the one who lives in the city (ὅ ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀναστρεφόμενος). In Suda ἀστεῖος itself has a completely different connotation, signifying the prudent (εὐσύνετος), the presentable (εὐπρόσωπος), most probably in the meaning of affable, the charming (χαρίεις), but also the good and the ludicrous (καλός, γελοιώδης), thus shifting the quality from the city (the ἄστυ) to the people. For this reason, the “politikon” in traditional Greek thinking is not juxtaposed to the “stratiotikon”, but to the “agroikikon” (ἀγροικικόν), meaning “to what becomes the countryside”, because the people of the countryside lack any of the qualities of the city people. Thus the countryman, ἀγροικός in Greek, is a person thoughtless (ἄφρων), difficult (δύσκολος), tough (σκληρός) and ignorant or uneducated (ἀπαίδευτος). Indeed, according to Strabo, the “politikos” is somebody who has received education and has been brought up as a free person. Generally, one could say that “politikos” is a person with good manners, pleasant and sociable, affable and easy to be approached, to be spoken to, and as the Byzantine sources would say, “περὶ τὰς ἐντεύξεις εὐπρόσιτος” or “εὐπροσήγορος” (easy to meet with or talk to).

Constantinople and those originating in the provinces. All families tended to give dignitaries to both the civil and the military sector, and all possessed land outside Constantinople.

3 Magdalino, Byzantine courtier, 141-143; idem, Snobbery, 70-71. Magdalino argues how the quality of “ἀστεῖος”, “civil”, by extension “politikos”, befits courtiers and court life.

4 Cf. the definition in Basilika 2.2.160.3: Ἡ πολιτικὴ φαμιλία τῆς ἀγροικικῆς οὐ τόπων, ἀλλὰ τῶν γένει διενήνοχεν. Δύναται γὰρ τις καὶ φροντιστής εἶναι καὶ μὴ συναριθμεῖσθαι τοῖς πολιτικοῖς, ώς ἐπὶ τοῦ οἰκούντος ἐν ἀγρῷ καὶ διοικοῦντος αὐτόν (=Digesta 50.16.166).

5 Die Fragmenta Griechischer Historiker, ed. F. Jacoby, Brill-Leiden 1923-1958, 2.1.3 (2a, 91f). Cf. Magdalino, Byzantine courtier, 144-145; idem, Snobbery, 67-68; Kazhdan-Constable, People and power, 60. Teachers worked mostly in cities because it was easier to find students. See Roueché, Rhetoric, 28-30.

These are undoubtedly qualities that are cultivated by education. The Byzantines, following Aristotle, sometimes even attributed to the “ἐντεύξεις” (translated as meetings/rendezvous) philosophical content. The way the Byzantines thought about the “politikon” and the “stratiotikon” groups, is revealed to us mostly— but not exclusively— because of the administrative changes in the empire. Administrative necessity commanded that the “politikon” mingled with the “stratiotikon” firstly in the 6th century. It is mostly in the Novels of Justinian that the “politikon” is brought together with the “stratiotikon” in the same context, in order to justify the emperor’s decision to confer both political and military competences to one person. I have selected perhaps the most characteristic passage I found in them to present here, which comes from Novel 26 on the praetor of Thrace. It goes like this:

“Because the barbarian invasions need no moderate resistance, it must be allowed to the man who is able to lead with these laws, to administer all these issues, because there is great difference between order and disorder. It is obvious to everybody that the military, if they are on their own, are more audacious than they ought to. And the political, if they are not mixed with the military, are less than mediocre (καταδεέστερον ἕσται τοῦ μετρίου), but if they both unite in one, then this will be most perfect and self-sufficient both for war and for peace.”

A concise comment on this passage would underscore the apprehension for the military and the contempt for the politikon on the part of the government. However, a moral element underlying this passage is apparent. Naturally the governments at all times were vigilant about the power trusted in the hands of the military. The scorn revealed in the Novel for the politikon might well be attributed to phenomena of corruption observed by Justinian in the 6th century. But it is all more complex than it seems. Thus, in the 8th century, John Damascenus wrote “many are those who accept guileful acts, and call charming the ridiculous, and the foul-spoken political.”

One century later, patriarch Nicephorus explains in one of his treatises how the iconoclasts incited against the orthodox the military, who were “sheperds of goats,

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9 John Damascenus, Sacra parallela, PG 96, 424.27: Πολλοί εἰσι τὰς πονηρὰς πράξεις ἀποδεχόμενοι, καὶ χαρίεται μὲν τὸν εὐτράπελον λέγοντες, τὸν δὲ αἰσχρολόγον πολιτικὸν.
oxen and pigs, directing to dung those who were taxed through dung". But these disdainful comments on the mores of the “politikon” and the “stratiotikon” come from a representative of the ancient aristocracy of the East, and from an agent of the political aristocracy of Constantinople. The opinions that one “party” – if we can call it that – maintained for the other will begin to unravel with more clarity as the struggle for power becomes more bitter with time.

In the historiographical record the “politikon” is distinguished from the “stratiotikon”. In the middle Byzantine times the term “politikon” is restricted primarily to anything that belongs to Constantinople – simply because the term “city” is attributed to few other settlements. For example, its people are called “πολιτικὸν πλῆθος”. But also, everything that has to do with political government, is characterized “politikon”, i.e. economy, justice, administration and so on, which are often found in the same context with, but separated from, the religious element – religious life, canon law,

10 Nicephori Patriarchae Constantinopolitani Refutatio et Eversio Definitionis Synodalis Anni 815, ed. J. Featherstone, Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca 33, Turnhout 1997, 23.1-6: Τί δ’ ἄν τις εἴποι ὅπως τὸ στρατιωτικὸν ἄταν κατὰ τοῦ ὅρθοδόξου μέρους ἐξέμηνεν, καὶ τούτου μάλιστα ὅσον κατὰ τὴν μασιλίδα ἐκ τῶν ἁιπῶλιν καὶ βουκολίων καὶ τῆς συοφορβίας κακῶς συνέλεξεν, καὶ ἐπὶ κοτριά τούς ἐκ τῆς κοπρίας τελουμένους διήγεν, ὡσπερ μηχανάς τινας καὶ πολέμων ὀργάνα κατὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὄπλισας; In this case the comment is undoubtedly accentuated because of the support of army to the iconoclast emperors and of their reaction to the restoration of icon veneration. Comments of this kind are particularly common in the Byzantine literature at this time. Cf. The Life of the Patriarch Tarasios by Ignatios the Deacon (BHG 1698), ed. St. Euthymiades, BBOM 4, Birmingham 1998, 100.5-10: ...ιδοὺ τι σμῆνος σφηκῶν, ἀνδρῶν φημι θυμολεόντων καὶ τῆς Κωνσταντίνου στρατολογίας καὶ λέσχης, τοῦ πάλαι τὸ σκήτηρον οὐκ εὔαγῶς ιθύνατος θρέμματα, ώσ ἐκ τινως κακοδοξίας σίμβλων ἀπανασάν πρὸς τὸ λεχθὲν ιερὸν ἐφίστανται τέμενος τοῖς κατὰ πόλεμον ἀμυντηρίοις ὀπλοὺς φραζόμενον.

11 John Damascenus descended from an influential Christian family of Arabic origin, known in the sources as the Mansur family. Initially in the service of the Chaliphate, he was forced to become a monk due to slander instigated by the Byzantine emperor. John became the principal apologist of icon veneration; in a work attributed to him, the Sacra parallela, he allows glimpses of a society of the eastern dynasts that is not much different than the one described by Kekaumenos in the 11th c. See briefly ODB, 1063-1064; Kazhdan, Literature (650-850), 75 f. On patriarch Nikephoros see ODB, 1477; Kazhdan, Literature (650-850), 211-214. An asecretis and son of an asecretis, Nikephoros, born in Constantinople, became patriarch in 806 directly from laity. Also see Cheynet, Aristocratie, 289.
people of the Church, etc. The “stratiotikon”, on the other hand, only very late, and rarely, is found in the sources on its own, without its constitutional counter-equivalent, the politikon. In the sources, the politikon and the “stratiotikon” are distinguished in several components: the political law, the political regiment, the political archons or lineage (γένος), the political catalogue, as opposed to the military regiment, archons or lineage and catalogue. These divisions are maintained in the codifications after the 6th c., to which the distinction between the military and the political houses (οἶκοι) is added.

In the 10th c. the central government becomes sensitive to the tendency of the landed magnates to increase their estates. The censure on the military is filtered through the magnifying glass of the state’s struggle against the powerful. The opinion nurtured by the central government about the “stratiotikoί” is explicitly expressed in Novel 5 of emperor Constantine VII, who called them “corrupt, remiss in their duty, without any war experience, less noble than ants, more rapacious than wolves, who ripped off the money of the empire’s subjects because they could not tax the enemy”. It is not mere chance that a letter of Theodore of Cyzicus, written allegedly on behalf of the emperor Romanus II and addressed to Michael Maleinos comes from roughly a decade later. In this letter, the emperor expresses his admiration to Michael, because he has forsaken the way of living of his closest relatives, “who only concern themselves with thriving on, and prospering through, their own sword in life, and who

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12 In the Politica of Aristotle the “politikon” falls in two parts, the “hoplitikon” (ὁπλιτικὸν) and the “bouleutikon” (βουλευτικὸν), meaning the military constitutional elements and the elements which belong to the political government.

13 N. Svoronos, Les novelles des empereurs Macédoniennes concernant la terre et les stratiotes, éd. posthume P. Gounaridis, Athènes 1994, no 5.125-128. The idea appears to come from Chrysostom, see PG 50, 447: Ποίαν οὖν ἔτι ζητεῖς ὑπερβολὴν κακίας, ὅταν καὶ ὄνων ἀναισθήτου, καὶ βοῶν ἀλογώτεροι, καὶ χελιδόνως καὶ τρυγόνως ἀγνωμονέστεροι, καὶ μυρμήκων ἀσυνετώτεροι, καὶ λίθων ἀναισθήτεροι, καὶ ὄφεων ἰσοὶ φαινώμεθα;

14 Theodore, metropolitan of Cyzicus, was a close friend and advisor of emperor Constantine VII. Nothing much is known about him, except that his brother was a magistros, which places him in the inner power circle around the emperor at this time. He was an enemy of patriarch Polyeuktos and he was exiled, to be reinstated shortly after, probably in the reign of Romanus II. See ODB, 2043-2044; Kazhdan, Literature (850-1000), 170-171. The two collections of letters of Theodore, previously published by Sp. Lambros and J. Darrouzès, have been recently re-edited by Maria Tzantzi-Papagianni in the CFHB series.
might hurry to appropriate all that belongs to their neighbours"\textsuperscript{15}. The same idea is expressed also by the author of the Life of Michael Maleinos: "οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐξ οὐκείων ἀποροῦντες πλεονεκτημάτων ἐγκαλλωπίζεσθαι, ἐπὶ τὸν ἐξωθέν νόθον καταφεύγουσι κόσμον, προγόνους ἀρχὰς καὶ πλούτον καὶ δυναστείαν ἐπιφημίζοντες, ἀπερ οὐ κόσμον προξενεῖ καὶ λαμπρότητα, ἀλλ' ἀδοξίαν κατηγορεῖ καὶ φαυλότητα"\textsuperscript{16}.

At the same time the historical record condemned the previous emperors for not recording the events before Constantine VII, because they "were not comrades of reason but indulged in country life" (ἀγροικίας γεγόνασι κατεντρύφημα)\textsuperscript{17}. The allusion concerns the emperor Romanus Lekapenus, but against the background of the 10\textsuperscript{th} c. it is much more than a topos. By using brutal force, the military were able to increase their landed wealth; their actions are consistent with, and partly explained by, their lack of education and refinement. While Romanus Lekapenus simply called them “powerful” (δυνατοί), thus creating perhaps the most conspicuous social group of Byzantine History, Constantine VII, by relying on ancient sources, attributed to them cultural qualities befitting country people. In this way the allegations against Romanus Lecapenus of ignorance, barbarism, even of not having been acquainted with the Roman ways, became allegations against an entire social group called in the sources "το στρατιωτικόν"\textsuperscript{18}. Constantine VII to the contrary was applauded for


\textsuperscript{16} L. Petit, Vie de Saint Michel Maléinos, suivie du traité ascétique de Basile Maléinos, ROC 7, 1902, 550.

\textsuperscript{17} Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon magister, Georgius Monachus. Ed. I. Bekker, CSHB, Bonnæ 1836, 4.5-6; Theophanis Continuati Liber V. Vita Basili Imperatoris, ed. I. Ševčenko, CFHB 42, Berlin –Boston 2011, 5*; idem, Rereading, 176; J. Darrouzès, Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle, AOC 6, Paris 1960, 60; Lemerle, Ουμανισμός, 429 note 7.

\textsuperscript{18} See for example: Theodori Cyzici Epistulae, B no 1.8-9, 5.20-21, 7.8-12; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio, ed. G. Moravcsik-J. H. Jenkins, CFHB 1, Washington D.C. 1967, 13.149-152, and comments: Theodori Cyzici Epistulae, 4*-6*; Darrouzès, Épistoliers, 57; Ostrogorsky, Aristocracy, 29-30; Dagron, Nés dans la pourpre, 140. The ability of the military i.e. of countrymen to master all sorts of animals, as well as their physical strength, are recurring themes in literary texts from the 9\textsuperscript{th} to the late 11\textsuperscript{th} c. at least. One remembers for example the talent of Michael II and of Basil I with horses, Basil’s strength and Leo V’s imposing physical appearance which indicated prowess and potency.
“adjusting action to the political things” by appointing the best teachers to the supreme schools of Constantinople and inviting their students to his own table, making them “ὄμοδιαίτους καὶ ὀμοτραπέζους”19. Indeed the anonymous writer of the first book of Theophanes Continuatus in essence connected education and training with the motives underlying political actions20. Thus in the 10th c., when education, a virtue of the city-people par excellence, is boosted at the top of social recognition and its representatives are awarded with the privilege of dining with the emperor, the “stratiotikoi”, marked for their greed, their insolence and their ignorance, are pushed further away from the inner power circles around the emperor. The revolts against emperor Basil II certainly did not help improving the sketched profile of the military. The legacy of the 10th c. clearly echoes in the words of the emperor Michael VI about Isaac Komnenos: “…he collected the money of the people and reduced his authority to a simple case not of glory, but of greed21.

In the 11th c. it appears that many are aware of the deep rift between the “politikoi” and the “stratiotikoi” and the authors have recorded many aspects of this conflict. The positions close to the emperors were filled by persons recruited mostly –if not exclusively- from the “politikon” and the military were kept at arm’s length or even further. Thus the “politicians” were making decisions regarding foreign and economic policy, decided on war and on the course of action on each and every issue, and most usually not to the benefit of the military22. Of all writers, Michael Psellos exalted

This prototype is taken to the extreme in Digenes Akrites, which mirrors the habits and beliefs of the eastern aristocracy of the 9th and 10th c. See Kazhdan, Literature (850-1000), 146-147; Magdalino, Honour, 190-191.

19 Theophanes Continuatus, 446.3-18. Ševčenko, Rereading, 168-169, 172; Darrouzès, Épistoliers, 59-60; Kazhdan, Literature (850-1000), 134. Darrouzès maintains that lay and church officials were recruited from this milieu. The tradition of teachers and students dining with the emperor, however, was initiated by Leon VI as part of the celebration of Epiphany and is described in De Cerimoniis I, 130-136. See Dennis, Imperial panygeric, 136-137. However, there is reason to believe that there is truth to the story and that Constantine VII was a true patron of education. See Lemerle, Ουμανισμός, 243-244.

20 Theophanes Continuatus, 21.19-22: καὶ γὰρ ταύτην μόνην ἐπικαλεῖ ἄν ἔγω εἰναὶ ἀληθινωτάτην παιδείαν τε καὶ γυμνασίαν πρὸς τὰς πολιτικὰς πράξεις, τὴν ἐναργεστάτην αἰτίαν καὶ τὸ μὴ τήνδε ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐπικεκαλυμμένην καταφοράν…

21 Michael Psellos, Chronographia 2, 180.6-18: …τὰ δὲ τῶν πολλῶν συλλέξαντα χρήματα, καὶ τὴν ἄρχην ἐσχήκειτα ὑπόθεσιν, ἀλλ’ ἀπλήστας ὑπόθεσιν.

22 Psellos, Chronographia 1, 248.2-16. Psellos here describes the hierarchy of empresses Zoe and Theodora for the year 1042: first came the bodyguards, then followed the ministers
the “politikoi” the most; his Chronography contains an entire theoretical construction with political and cultural nuances. For Psellos, the “politikon” is primarily an “ethos” (ἦθος), which characterizes life itself within society. The lack of this quality in a person signifies that he is not meant for this life, by extension that he should be a monk beyond and away constituted society, or worse, that he is meant for the afterlife. Psellos awarded the quality of “politikos” to John Xiphilinos and to Constantine Leichoudes. In his opinion, Xiphilinos was a ready wit and by mingling rhetoric with the law he was in a position to be accurate and clear when handling anything that might come up. For Leichoudes, Psellos notes that he “mixed the political and noble conviction with priestly life.” His virtues made him a model politikos, for the magnificence of his office was combined with modesty and amiability.
The value attributed to the “politikon” feature in Psellos is even more apparent when it is lacking. The classic example for its absence is found in the narrative about the protosyngellos Leon Strabospondylos, for whom Psellos says that he “was not capable for a civilized conversation (μήτε πρὸς τὰς ἐντεύξεις ἐπιτήδειον εἶναι) neither for anything else that qualifies a political man” and adds with vitriolic irony that “his hand was more eloquent than his tongue”\(^{29}\). Apparently, Leon was not a “politikos” (τοῦ πολιτικοῦ ἠθους ἐστέρητο), because he was not agreeable, his character was rather rough and ill-mannered (τὸ τραχὺ τοῦ ἠθους) and above all, he had no patience for rhetoric digressions, he therefore avoided unnecessary meetings (πᾶσαν ἀποστρεφόμενος ἐντεύξιν)\(^{30}\).

Psellos undoubtedly counted himself among those with “political mores” (πολιτικώτερον τὸ ἤθος), but who, in his interpretation and much to his distress, never reached the highest offices because the emperors always chose somebody who appeared more consistent (τοὺς ἦττον ἀγχιστρόφους) and solemn (σεμνοι)\(^{31}\). Even

\(^{29}\) Michael Psellos, Chronographia 2, 158.9-11, 16-17. On Leon Paraspondylos or Strabospondylos, see ODB, 1586. Leon was a cleric descending from the family of Spondyloi, which produced a dux of Antioch in the 11th c. According to Psellos, Leon failed in being recognized under Constantine IX, but he greatly coveted an influential position at court, until he finally became chief advisor of empress Theodora, position which he maintained until the ascend to the throne of Isaac Komnenos (1057). Apparently, the removal of Leon from office was one of the main demands of the rebels.

\(^{30}\) Michael Psellos, Chronographia 2, 160.3-9: τοῦ γὰρ πολιτικοῦ ἠθους, ὡς ἔφη, ἐστέρητο θεν οὐτε χαριέστατο ὄν, οὐτε τοῖς προσιοῦσι δεξιῶς ὁμιλῶν, ἀλλ’ ἀεὶ καὶ πάσι τὸ τραχὺ τοῦ ἠθους ἐπιδεικνύμενος, καὶ πᾶσαν ἀποστρεφόμενος ἐντεύξιν, καὶ εἰ μὴ τις εἴποι τὸ ἄρθρον τῆς ὑποθέσεως, ἀλλὰ τι καὶ προοιμίασαι, βαρυθυμῶν καὶ δεινοπαθῶν ἀπεχθὴς σύμπασιν ὦπο, καὶ οὐδεὶς προσιέναι ἐβούλετο, ὅτι μὴ πᾶσα ἁνάγκη. See Kaldellis, Argument, 155-158. For the author the attack on Leon is in reality an attack on the religious aspect of byzantine politics because Leon was a cleric.

\(^{31}\) Michael Psellos, Chronographia 2, 158.11-15: οἱ γὰρ τοῦ βασιλεῖς τῷ καλλίον μέρει προσνέμουσι τοὺς ἦττον ἀγχιστρόφους, εἰ σεμνοὶ εἶν, ἢ τοὺς εὐστρόφους τὴν γλώτταν καὶ τελευτάτους τὴν παίδευσιν, εἰ πολιτικώτερον τὸ ἠθος κατακληρώσαντο. The most common translation of the word would be “serious”, “solemn” or “respected”, for this reason also the word “σεμνος” in most cases means “monastery”. The “σεμνος” quality is also attributed to people with office, but only by extension (they are respected because of their office). See Suda, Σ.227: Σεμνὸν: ἐπί τοῦ ἀξιωματικοῦ λέγονται· ἐσθ’ ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὑπερηφάνου τίθεαιν. Cf. Suda, Σ.223, and also the very interesting K.1252: Κεκομψευμένος· σεμνός, ἢ ἀστέος, ἢ ἐκκαλώπιστος. But cf. the observations of Lemerle, Byzance, 261-263; idem, Gouvernement,
though he admired some of the qualities of the emperors, he never awarded to any of them the attribute of "politikos", probably because none of them was perfect enough to fit into the theoretical frame he had in mind. He acknowledged that the military targeted at abolishing the "political succession" (πολιτικὴν διαδοχὴν)\(^{32}\), that they wanted to disrupt the ascension to the throne of people coming from the "politikon", such as Monomachos and Michael VI Bringas.

It has been alluded to before that the sharp division between the "politikon" and the "stratiotikon" groups was deeply rooted in the consciousness of other writers as well (i.e. Michael Attaleiates and Bryennios, traces of it also found in Skylitzes\(^{33}\)). The "spokesman" for the military, however, was Kekaumenos. Kekaumenos was a member of the aristocracy of the East, a military who recorded daily practices, customs and behaviors, in a work to which the title "Strategikon" is attributed. The content of this treatise, which is addressed to his children, contains counsels for private and public persons. Kekaumenos' work appears to be much closer to the reality of the 11\(^{th}\) c. and for this reason it is of extreme value for the ongoing research.

The profile of the politikoi, as outlined by Kekaumenos, does not compliment them at all. Kekaumenos advises against participating in banquets, because "there is too much chatty nonsense" (βαττολογία καὶ φλυαρία) and because allegations on conspiracy might ensue, even though, abstaining from such events, leaves one open to accusations of being "unsociable and aloof" (ὡς ἀκοινωνίτου καὶ φειδωλοῦ)\(^{34}\). One

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32 Michael Psellos, Chronographia 2, 184.3-4; Lemerle, Byzance, 258, 290. This is the passage in which clearly Psellos shows that he means a "party", a political faction with specific agenda, which supported the emperors who sprang from it. However, the "politikon" in Psellos' Chronographia is also used to denote the people of the city, in particular the higher guild representatives, but also the mob of the city. By noting that the army of the theme of Macedonia was "full of abuses like the politikoi", Psellos again reproves the military as he compares them with the mob of the city.

33 See Kazhdan, Αλλαγές, 168 f.

34 Cecaumenos, Raccomandazioni e consigli di un galantuomo (Στρατηγικόν), ed. M. D. Spadaro, Hellenica 2, Alessandria 1998, ch. I.3. Also see Galatariotou, Perceived worlds, 314-315, 318. The existing translations choose "miser" for "φειδωλός", however, this does not fit the concept of the text, where money is not mentioned at all. Rather, "φειδωλός" can be translated as "aloof" to signify a person introverted and not socially open, even though the
should also not visit higher officials too often, because he might make himself unwelcome. If one is a man of letters, he should be “οἰκονομικός καὶ πολιτικός”, meaning, not “like a mime and an entertainer, but politkos, able to teach a whole city how to do good and suspend its evil”. Kekaumenos is not the only author who appears to be including in the politikon group people of the lower social strata that worked for entertainment, in fact, one would hardly escape noticing the similarities of his opinion to the definitions in the Lexica. However, “mime and entertainer” is an expression loaded with irony, Kekaumenos therefore mocks the “politikoi” for their ability to put on faces adjusting to every situation – exactly like mimes. Concerning participation in banquets, one could make the connection with Psellos’ account on the revolt of Leon Tornikes: he was suspected of treason because he was frequenting the house of the emperor’s sister, so Kekaumenos’ advice to be cautious when it came to befriending somebody might carry some truth. On the other hand, Kekaumenos attributes to the ideal “politikos” person the quality – admittedly much more useful to society- of “οἰκονομικός”, meaning the ability to address in the best possible way all problems.

This contrasts sharply with the qualification of the “politikoi” as mimes. Kekaumenos says in another chapter “do not wish to be a politikos, for you cannot be both a general and a mime”, and he goes on to explain how certain people were awarded supreme military command just by being cordial. “They have achieved this not by the book, but despite their value. He who speaks and laughs in a disorderly manner is not dikaios, meaning he who at least he is not generous. Kekaumenos also advises against hosting friends in one’s house and is generally considered to have a low appreciation of friendship. See Magdalino, Honour, 210-211, 215-216. I tend to agree with Magdalino, who sees in Kekaumenos’ text only socially vertical ties recognized by the author.
himself scorned and accused of being undisciplined\textsuperscript{40}. If a general fails, then the most insignificant mistake will become known to everybody. As an example Kekaumenos sets the case of the praepositus Basil Pediadites\textsuperscript{41}, who had been sent to Sicily under Michael IV and had managed to loose all territorial gains of Maniakes. The emperor wrote to him “my majesty was informed that you did well playing tavli”\textsuperscript{42}. Thus a leisure activity was marked as inappropriate when on campaign, and the shame brought to Pediadites was assessed as being such, that it was recorded in Kekaumenos’ treatise for eternity.

In general, the “politikoi” in Kekaumenos’ treatise is a group whose honesty is open to discussion, its abilities to concentrate on, and handle important tasks is at least questionable, and these traits may on occasion combine with a hidden agenda, with the purpose of deceiving and misleading somebody in order to achieve their targets. What Kekaumenos had in mind is probably not far from what Psellos admits in his Chronography. In an effort to persuade Isaac Komnenos into laying arms down, he presented the imperial office as the peak of a successful career of a public employee—mind that Psellos was particularly proud of this achievement\textsuperscript{43}. In contrast to the “politikoi”, someone serving in the military sector of the empire is, after Kekaumenos, obliged to be solemn, to take seriously whatever task is assigned to him, to look glorious and magnificent to others, to excel in speech and in dressing and even in the way of walking, and most importantly in his deeds. But when one has withdrawn to his estates, he should be modest, humble and simple. This, then, is one part of the profile of the “stratiotikoi”, which relates to their mores (ἦθος)\textsuperscript{44}. In Psellos’

\textsuperscript{40} Kekaumenos, ch. II.23: Μὴ θέλει εἶναι πολιτικός· οὐ γὰρ δύνασαι στρατηγὸς καὶ μῖμος τυχάνειν. Εἴ δὲ καὶ τινὲς οὕτως στρατηγοῦσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐ κατάλογον, παραξίαν δὲ. Ὁ γὰρ ἀτάκτως ὁμιλῶν καὶ γελῶν ὡς ἄτακτος καταφρονεῖται καὶ ψέγεται. Cf. Kazhdan-Constable, People and power, 62.

\textsuperscript{41} On Basil Pediadites see Cheynet, Pouvoir, 257, 310. The eunuch Basil Pediadites was sent to Italy as katepano of Sicily. Better known descendent of this family is the homonymous metropolitans of Corfu (1201-1219), who left some writings. See ODB 1614-1615.

\textsuperscript{42} Kekaumenos, ch. II.23. See Lemerle, Prolégomènes, 65-66.

\textsuperscript{43} Lemerle, Byzance, 256-257; Galatariotou, Perceived worlds, 307; Kaldellis, Argument, 167-168.

\textsuperscript{44} Education is not included in this profile, but it is not excluded either. To the contrary, Kekaumenos considers that one might as well choose a career in the civil sector, whereby an education is a prerequisite for becoming an ideal “politikos”. For Kekaumenos it appears that when a professional choice has been reached, then the effort for excellence might begin, either in the political, or in the military sector. See Magdalino, Honour, 201. After Roueché,
Chronographia a clear military profile resembling that of Kekaumenos is the profile of Basil II. That emperor combined personal asceticism with power and a profound concern for the state affairs. But Psellos does not praise this model, because reason and persuasion have no place in it, it is therefore incomplete\(^45\). In the 10\(^{th}\) and 11\(^{th}\) c. other sources complement the profile of the military by projecting to society their valor, nobility, and wealth\(^46\).

In the sources of the 12\(^{th}\) c. there is no word about the “politikon” and the “stratiotikon”. I have located only three references of the “politikoi” that are of some significance, of which two relate to the people of the city of Thessalonica\(^47\), and one which refers to the educated in rhetoric and philosophy\(^48\).

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\(^{45}\) The profile of Basil II, See however Kaldellis, Argument, 51 f., 166. Taking into consideration that from this profile education and refinement are missing, I do not share the author’s opinion that it forms the other end of the two opposite profiles of Psellos. For Psellos, the “politikos” is a perfect person, but neither Basil II, nor Isaakios I, ever reached that level.

\(^{46}\) Their wealth, power, the social esteem they enjoyed for their accomplishments in the battlefields, their claim to ancient and glorious ancestries, were some of the reasons of envy of the military. See for example Ioannis Scylitzes Synopsis Historiarum, ed. I. Thurn, CFHB V, Berlin-New York 1973, 293.68-294.74: ἐδεί σε, ὦ ἄνθρωπε, ἐφη, “τό ἀστάθμητον λογισάμενον τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων τύχης μὴ προσονειδίζειν, μηδὲ ἐπεμβαίνειν ἀνθρώπῳ ταῖς ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐπηρείαις ἡγακασμένων, ἀλλ’ οἰκτείρειν μᾶλλον καὶ ἔλεεῖν τὸν δυστυχοῦντα ἐμέ, πατέρα μὲν ἐσχηκότα κουροπαλάτην, πάππον καίσαρα, θείον βασιλέα, δοῦκα δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν γεγονότα καὶ τοῖς ἀνωτάτως συναριθμηθέντα, νυνὶ δὲ ἐσχάτοις κακοῖς ύποβεβλημένον καὶ ἀκληρήμασι.”

The imaginary dialog between Leon Phokas and Constantine Charon is placed by Skylitzes in 971, when Bardas Phokas, the son of Leon, rebelled against Ioannes Tzimiskes. On the inherent concept of tyche, which controls human destiny, see ODB, 2131.

\(^{47}\) Eustazio di Tessalonica. La espugnazione di Tessalonica, ed. S. Kyriakidis, Testi e Monumenti 5, Palermo 1961, ch. 37.31, 121.29.

\(^{48}\) Georges et Démètrios Tornikes, lettres et discours. Introduction, texte, analyses, traduction et notes par J. Darrouzès, Paris 1970, 281.4-18. In this oration on the death of Anna Komnena Tornikes explains how under Alexios I Komnenos teachers and philosophers spread their knowledge for free, a practice continued by his daughter. It is meant, and actually spelled out, that Anna Komnena “gathered together” (συναγαγοῦσα) the most distinguished scholars.
To conclude this brief analysis of a huge subject I would once again call your attention to the significance of the social and political clashes of the 10th c. The profiles of the “politikoi” and the “stratiotikoi” groups are outlined with clarity and consistency in the sources of the 11th c. However, it is the “stratiotikon” that has always been in an advantageous position, because it took higher offices, titles, money, even genealogies, for granted. The “politikon” group to the contrary, only temporarily claimed an elevated social standing, either because of the talents of its members, either because of their offices. Their assertions in the 11th c. lay on cultural foundations, specifically on their education and training, intelligence and intellectual superiority combined with social graces and their abilities to socialize with ease - πρὸς τὰς ἐντεύξεις ἐπιτήδειον ἔιναι, as Psellos would say. In my appreciation their claims—and the observed rivalry between the two groups—would not have evolved had the state also not constructed for itself, particularly in the 10th c., specific profiles for separate groups. These profiles in the long run affected the social standing and appreciation of each group, but in the 10th c. they facilitated the state’s task to implement its policies, justify its decisions and neutralize the opposition, with the purpose of consolidating its own authority and rule in the empire. To make it even clearer, the profiles that each group maintained for the other are only stabilized, take their definitive form, and acquire their significance in the context of the competition for access to power of the 10th.

49 On a different kind of elitism see Magdalino, Snobbery, 66.
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