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IMAGES OF THE EMPERORS JOHN II AND MANUEL I IN THE ACCOUNTS OF WILLIAM, ARCHBISHOP OF TYRE

Abstract. This article deals with the reception of the image of the Emperors John II and Manuel I of the Komnenos dynasty based on the chronicler's account by William of Tyre (1130–1186). It shows a positive evolution in the portrayal of John II and his successor Manuel I, whom William met twice – in 1168 and when he stayed in Constantinople for seven months in 1179/1180. The image of Manuel I is positive, emphasizing the emperor's positive qualities, such as generosity, wisdom, and justice.

Keywords: William of Tyre, John II Komnenos, Manuel I Komnenos, Byzantine Empire, Principality of Antioch, Kingdom of Jerusalem

The Archbishop of Tyre, William (1130–1186) – not without reason – is considered the most outstanding historian of the Kingdom of Jerusalem¹. Although the Byzantine Empire was not the most prominent theme in his *Historia*

¹ Analytical publications on the life and work of William – named “William of Tyre”, although he was in fact a native of Jerusalem and archbishop of Tyre – have become the basis of a vast literature, both biographical and source studies. Of the somewhat older reflections on William, several publications are still of some value: H. PRUTZ, *Studien über Wilhelm von Tyrus*, NAGÄDG 8, 1882, p. 93–132 (detailed biography); R. RÖHRICHT, *Syria sacra*, ZDPV 10, 1887, p. 1–48; F. CHALANDON, *Jean II Comnène, 1118–1143, et Manuel I Comnène, 1143–1180*, New York 1912, p. XXXVI–XXXVIII; A.C. KREY, *William of Tyre. The Making of an Historian in the Middle Ages*, S 16, 1941, p. 149–166; R.H. DAVIES, *William of Tyre*, [in:] *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. BAKER, Edinburgh 1973, p. 64–76; D.W.T.C. VESSEY, *William of Tyre and the Art of Historiography*, MS 35, 1973, p. 433–455; R. HIESTAND, *Zum Leben und zur Laufbahn Williams von Tyrus*, DAEM 34, 1978, p. 345–380 (dating William's death); P.W. EDBURY, J.G. ROWE, *William of Tyre. Historian of the Latin East*, Cambridge 1988; B. EBELS-HOVING, *Byzantium in Latin Eyes before 1204. Some Remarks on the Thesis of Growing Animosity*, [in:] *The Latin Empire. Some Contributions*, ed. K.N. CIGGAAR, V.D. VAN AALST, Hernen 1990, p. 21–32; L. RALPH-JOHANNES, *Byzantium and the Crusader States, 1096–1204*, trans. J.C. MORRIS, J.E. RIDINGS, Oxford 1993, p. 96–141; E. LANGILLE, *La Constantinople de Guillaume de Tyr*, B 63, 1993, p. 173–197; K.N. CIGGAAR, *Western Travellers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium 962–1204. Cultural and Political Relations*, Leyden 1996 [= MMe, 10], p. 93–101; B. HAMILTON, *William of Tyre and the Byzantium Empire*, [in:] *Porphyrogenita. Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides*, ed. C. DENDRINOS, J. HARRIS, E. HARVALIA-CROOK, J. HERRIN, Aldershot 2003, p. 219–233.

rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum, he did not shy away from the Greek element². I would like to focus my attention on William's perception of two dynasts of the Komnenian era – John II (1118–1143) and his son Manuel I (1143–1180) – especially since the chronicler met the latter personally.

Of course, in writing about the First Crusade and Byzantium's involvement in it, William built his account on chronicles about the First Crusade by such authors as Fulcher of Chartres³, the *Gesta Francorum*⁴, Albert of Aachen⁵, and Raymond of Aguilers⁶. Although I will not discuss the First Crusade here, it should be noted in general that William, in this context, reproduced – quite uncritically – the unfavorable image of Alexius I, which was the product of the historians of this expedition. This unfavorable and unflattering image of Alexius I was reflected after the emperor's death in 1118, when William wrote about his hostile attitude towards the Latinists: *Per idem tempus* [15 August 1118 – ZP] *Constantinopolitanus imperator Alexius, Latinorum maximus persecutor* [emphasis – ZP], *rebus humanis exemptus est*⁷. William did not hesitate to use the term *persequutor*, meaning 'persecutor,' 'a revenge seeker,' or 'tormenting' others with his actions. Did Alexis I really deserve such a bad reputation? According to William, yes. I deliberately referenced the historian's perception of Alexis I because, unfortunately, it indirectly influenced his subsequent perception of Byzantium.

William showed the successor to the Byzantine throne – Emperor John II (1118–1143) – more kindness and even admiration, but with some caution. John II was much better regarded by William than his father: *Cui successit filius eius, patre multo humanior et meritis exigentibus* [emphasis – ZP] *populo nostro patre longe acceptior, qui etiam non omnino sincerus erga Latinos Orientales extitit, sicut docebunt sequentia*⁸. It seems that the chronicler knew nothing – or omitted – the circumstances surrounding John II's assumption of the throne. The same silence or ignorance applied to the subsequent years of John II's reign. It was not until the spring of 1137 that William noted increased activity of the *basileus*: *Iohannes imperator Constantinopolitanus, versus Antiochiam properans, Ciliciam occupat universam*, as he entitled the 24th chapter of the 14th book of his history.

² The applicable critical edition is: WILLEMI TYRENSIS ARCHIEPISCOPI *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. HUYGENS, identification des sources historiques et détermination des dates par H.E. MAYER, G. RÖSCH, Trvrnholti 1986 (cetera: WILLELMUS TYRENSIS). It contains autobiographical threads not found in older editions. Their discovery (1961) was made by Robert B.C. Huygens at the Vatican Library MS. Lat. 2002.

³ FULCHERII CARNOTENSIS, *Historia Hierosolymitana (1095–1127)*, ed. H. HAGENMEYER, Heidelberg 1913.

⁴ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. R. HILL, Oxford 1967 [= OMT].

⁵ *Alberti Aquensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, [in:] RHC.HO, vol. IV, Paris 1879, p. 265–585.

⁶ *Raimundi de Aguilers Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, [in:] RHC.HO, vol. III, Paris 1866, p. 235–309.

⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 12. 5, 1–2.

⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 12. 5, 3–4.

The rumors of the emperor's great expedition, William regarded as *nec erat sermo fide vacuus*⁹. The emperor's plan involved, among other things, taking away from the crusaders the strategic fortress in Antioch, but also supporting the crusaders' interests in Syria. Here William suspected that since the promises made by Alexius I during the First Crusade had not been kept, John II's intentions were also a continuation of that:

Certum est autem predictos principes cum domino imperatore pacta inisse ipsumque versa vice conditionibus quibusdam se principibus obligasse, a quibus ipsum prius certum est defecisse: unde ei tanquam pactorum violatori se non teneri constanter asserebant qui predictis conditionibus interfuerent, eosque qui iam vita decesserant nichilominus reddebant excusatos, dicentes eum prius tanquam varium et inconstantem hominem et cum eis fraudulenter. Unde et merito lege pactorum se dicebant absolutos: iniquum est enim ei fidem servari, qui contra pacta nititur versari.¹⁰

Initially, John II joined the siege of Antioch (August 29, 1137)¹¹. As reported by the chronicler, shortly thereafter, Raymond of Poitiers (c. 1099–1149), Duke of Antioch (since 1136), reached the besieged city¹² and began to direct the city's defenses. In response, John II ordered the construction of shelling machines for the stronghold, and the shelling began. This undoubtedly undermined the defenders' hopes and forced Raymond to enter into talks with the emperor, until the terms of surrender were finally agreed upon¹³. John II demanded tribute, but he also announced that if he captured Aleppo, Raymond would hand over Antioch to him, which the latter would be forced to abandon and be content with authority in Aleppo, Shaizar (شيزر), Hama, and Homs¹⁴. *Nolens volens* Raymond agreed to the announced terms and took an oath of allegiance before the emperor¹⁵. Raymond and another local notable, Joscelin II of Courtenay, count of Edessa (1131–1159), could neither appreciate nor take advantage of the Byzantines' involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. They treated John II's intervention as a display of his ambition and they regarded him as a shatterer of the existing order. For them, the loss of Antioch could be a harbinger of further misfortune and further loss of prestige. William discussed at length the events surrounding the beginning of *basileus'* offensive in Syria, but he did not then refrain from some biting remarks against John II¹⁶. The emperor's next step was an attempt on April 28, 1138, to

⁹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 24, 6.

¹⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 24, 24–34.

¹¹ The date was convincingly established by F. CHALANDON, *Jean II Comnène, 1118–1143...*, p. 129, footnote 1.

¹² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 30, 4–6.

¹³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 30, 10–21.

¹⁴ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 30, 26–44.

¹⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 30, 30–36.

¹⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 14. 24, 1–55; for an analysis of the campaign after Raymond's tribute, see F. CHALANDON, *Jean II Comnène, 1118–1143...*, p. 135–139.

capture Shaizar and wrest it from Muslim hands. However, the siege dragged on. And this is when Williams' narrative shifted; he spared no words of admiration for the valor, the skill of the commander, and the sacrifice of John II:

Urgebat dominus imperator, sicut vir erat magnanimus, studio fervente propositum et propositis braviis adolescentium glorie cupidos ad certamina et congressus Martios accendebat animois, lorica quoque indutus et accinctus gladio, casside caput tectus aurea, mediis inmixtus agminibus nunc hos, nunc illos sermonibus hortatur congruis, nunc exemplo tanquam unus e popularibus provocat et instat viriliter, ut alios ad instandum reddat animosiores. Sic igitur vir egregia animositate insignis sine intermissione discurrens, estus belli a prima diei hora usque ad novissimam sustinens nichil sibi quietis ut vel cibum sumeret indulgebat, sed aut hos qui machinis deserviebant ut frequentius aut directus iacularentur ammonebat, aut his qui in conflictibus desudabant addebat animos, per vicarias successiones vires reparans et pro deficientibus recentes subrogans et integris conatibus validos.¹⁷

The chronicler depicts John II in statuesque terms indeed, as a tenacious and courageous warrior who fights in the front line of attack with a sword in his hand and a golden helmet on his head. William admired the emperor for engaging in battle, setting an example by his actions, bustling amidst the siege machinery, offering encouragement, and even, for not caring about his own meals. In contrast, the Palestinian feudals – Prince Raymond and Count Joscelin – who had just become vassals to the emperor: *Principes autem et comes, ut dicitur, adolescentes ambo et illius etatis levioribus nimium tracti studiis...*¹⁸, and were absorbed in their tents playing dice and remaining completely indifferent to the events around them. John II was 51 years old at the time of the battle of Shaizar, so William rightly considered Raymond (33 years old) and Joscelin (about 25 years old) to be young men compared to the emperor. The attitudes of the Frankish magnates were severely criticized by William, and later by the *basileus*, when he accused them of disloyalty¹⁹. The image of John II was further bolstered by another paean to his honor, for his discretion in admonishing and not ridiculing the languid knights when he himself was in battle:

Quod audiens imperator et facto eorum pernicioso nimis motus interius, eos semel et secundo familiari et secreta commonitione recovare studuit, exemplum sui proponens, qui cum regum terre et principum omnium esset potentissimus nec labori proprii parcebat corporis nec immensis sumptimus²⁰.

¹⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 1, 31–45. Here, as an aside, it may be added that the Arab point of view on these events was presented by USAMA IBN MUNKIDH, *Księga pouczających przykładów*, trans. J. BIELAWSKI, Wrocław 1975, p. 33–35.

¹⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 1, 45–47.

¹⁹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 2, 9–17.

²⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 1, 50–55.

This lethargy and reluctance to support John II stemmed from Prince Raymond's fear that after the capture of Shaizar and any further military successes of the emperor, he would have to leave Antioch. Count Joscelin II, on the other hand, was also reluctant to help the Byzantine ruler during the siege of Shaizar as this could have potentially meant that the disliked Prince Raymond would rule in Shaizar, which he did not want²¹. After the Byzantines captured the lower town of Shaizar, ceasefire negotiations began on May 20, 1138. The local emir and defender of the city, 'Izz ad-Dīn abu-l-'Asākīr Sulṭān (died 1154) of the Munkidh family²², paid tribute before John II. The emperor was showered with gifts and money by the Muslims to placate him. John II, realizing that he was unable to occupy the citadel, abandoned further siege of the city²³. John II's entry into Antioch was pompous and probably motivated by his will. It was meant to clearly show the superiority of the *basileus* over the humiliated Raymond and Joscelin, who were leading by the bridle the imperial steed ridden by the triumphant. There were cheers, music, and hymns in his honor. After these theatrical gestures, necessary for the prestige of the ruler, John II demanded that Raymond surrender the citadel and allow Byzantine troops into the city²⁴. In this situation, Raymond asked for some time before making a decision. Meanwhile, the cunning Joscelin began to spread untrue news that the Greeks intended to remove the Franks from Antioch²⁵. This caused riots in the city, and even the murdering of Greeks. The ringleader of the tumult, Joscelin, tried to deflect the wrath of the emperor, who saw through his intentions. To bring the situation under control, John II demanded the confirmation of the tribute from Raymond and Joscelin and communicated that important matters forced him to return to Constantinople²⁶. The events in Antioch provided an opportunity for William to express another opinion about the emperor: *Scientes igitur hii, quibus mens erat sanior, dominum imperatorem, licet more prudentis dissimulaverit, rancorem adversus principem et nobilium primores mente concepisse...*²⁷ William's further narrative suggests that the emperor was apparently persuaded by the rationale of the repentant Raymond and Joscelin, and forgave them²⁸. William portrayed John II during the 1138 campaign as a courageous, prudent, and just ruler, restraining his anger for the sake of his own causes and gains, but also somewhat naïve. William returned to the theme of this emperor when writing about

²¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 2, 25–31.

²² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 2, 5: described him as a *Machedolus*.

²³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 2, 5–9.

²⁴ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 3, 1–65; William portrayed the emperor as a persistent politician eager to consummate military successes.

²⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 4, 1–4.

²⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 4, 5–65 and 15. 5, 43–45.

²⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 5, 1–3.

²⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 5, 38–40.

the events of 1142. At that time, the emperor, in the spring of that year, set out for Syria with the aim of ultimately occupying Antioch and removing Prince Raymond out of the equation. As it turned out, the expedition was not advantageous for the future of Byzantium. Even William lamented the unexpected deaths of the imperial sons: first Alexios (1107–1142) and then Andronicus (c. 1108–1142). The cause of their deaths was said to be...*langore correpti gravissimo extremum morientes clauserunt diem...*²⁹ This certainly affected the psyche of the emperor who had lost his two sons. However, the *basileus* proved steadfast and did not abandon the campaign. It is worth noting William's estimation of the enormity of the emperor's army, the size of which was noticed by Count Joscelin II: ...*videns eius incomparabiles copias et quas nemo regum terre sustinere posse videretur...*³⁰ Next, he paid another tribute before John II, and as proof of his intentions, handed over to the emperor a hostage – his own daughter Isabella³¹. It was John II's Christian intention, but also his political duty, to reach the Holy Land. However, the King of Jerusalem, Fulk of Anjou (1131–1143), through the mouth of his deputies, dissuaded him from this intention. The monarch from Jerusalem claimed that Palestine would not be able to cope with such a noble pilgrim, because it would fail to feed the Byzantine army. The king, on the other hand, was willing to accommodate the emperor with only a small detachment, for he was: ...*maximo principi orbis terrarum obedirent*³². Consequently: *Quod audiens imperator et contra imperialem gloriam reputans cum tam modica manu proficisci, qui tot milibus semper stipatus incedere consueverat, verbo supersedit remissisque nuntiis multa liberalitate...*³³ Willam, therefore, suggested that the emperor's lack of proper assistance was beneath his dignity. The historian emphasized that despite Fulk's refusal, John II was generous to the deputies. In any case, the emperor abandoned further march and wintered near Tarsus, in Cilicia³⁴. In the early spring of 1143, preparations began for the resumption of Byzantine operations. William admitted that John II was a hunting enthusiast (*venandi... amator*)³⁵, and this contributed to his death. The emperor himself was said to have wounded his hand with a poisoned arrow while hunting a boar. William admired John II's heroic, courageous attitude during the last days of his life. Faced with the symptoms of approaching death and aware of the inevitability of his fate, the emperor refused to allow surgeons to cut off his wounded hand, and to the strong recommendations of the medics he would reply: *indignum esse Romanorum imperium ut una manu regatur*³⁶. This prompted

²⁹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 19, 13–14.

³⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 19, 29–30.

³¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 19, 32: ...*ex filibus suis Isabellam...*

³² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 21, 20–21.

³³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 21, 21–24.

³⁴ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 21, 25–26.

³⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 22, 2–3.

³⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 22, 25–26.

William's genuine admiration, who saw in John II a wise and prudent man, but who was hesitant about whom to entrust the reins of government in Byzantium after his death (April 8, 1143). John II's choice was a conscious one. He chose his youngest surviving son, Manuel, instead of his elder son, Isaac³⁷. This was because Manuel accompanied him on his campaigns and enjoyed the approval of the army. Isaac, on the other hand, was in Constantinople and was not as favored by his father³⁸. Finally, William concluded, writing about John: ...*inclite recordationis, vir inclitus, liberalis, pius, clemens et miserocoris, in fata concessit...*³⁹ William also outlined the features of the emperor's physiognomy: *Fuit autem statura mediocris, carne et capillo Niger – unde et cognomento dicitur etiam hodire Maurus – facie despicabili sed moribus conspicuus et actibus insignis militaribus*⁴⁰.

The image of John II in William's opinions clearly evolved. In his accounts, this emperor was the opposite of his father. It is not difficult to see elements of admiration and awe developed by the historian. William meticulously recorded the end of John II's life with genuine sympathy for him. The emperor's allegedly poor physiognomy was overshadowed by the greatness of his character and military merits. And ultimately, these were the most desirable features of a knight and a ruler.

* * *

The son of the languishing John II, Manuel I, was named heir to the throne. The new emperor was young, less than 25 years old. According to William, he was already a man then: *porro Manuel, iunior filius, qui ibidem cum patre presens errat, universi exercitus et maxime Latinorum favore et preconii extollebatur...*⁴¹ This important change in the new emperor's perception of Latinists was persistently

³⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 23, 1–5; this is also the assessment of K. Βαρζός, *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών*, vol. I, Θεσσαλονίκη 1984, p. 391.

³⁸ P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*, Cambridge 2002, p. 195.

³⁹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 23, 35–36.

⁴⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 23, 36–39 and 42–43. Not only here did the chronicler have trouble with chronology; he recorded that he died in the year ...*millesimo centesimo tricesimo septimo* [emphasis – ZP], *mense April, imperii vero vicesimo septimo* [emphasis – ZP], *vite vero ****, and there is an empty space where he intended to write down the age of John II. It is not true that John II died in the 27th year of his reign, but less than the 25th year of his reign. The obvious question is: where did William get this information? Surely not from autopsy, so perhaps from his contacts made in the 1160s and 70s with Manuel I and his courtiers.

⁴¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 15. 23, 23–25. The chronicler clearly writes (WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 16. 1, 1–6) at the beginning of the 16th book that the history he had so far described was based – as in the isnada technique of Arab historians – on the memory of others: *Que de presenti hactenus contextuimus Historia aliorum tantum, quibus prisci temporis plenior adhuc famulabatur memoria, collegimus relatione, unde cum maiore difficultate, quasi aliena mendicantes suffragia, et rei veritatem et gestorum seriem et annorum numerum sumus assequuti, licet fideli, quantum potuimus, hec eadem recitatione scripto mandavimus*. But this too is not entirely accurate, for William returned from Europe to Jerusalem in 1165. He began writing the Chronicle around 1170 at the request of King Amalric I (1163–1174), as the Prologue suggests – WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, Prolog, 80–81, p. 99.

continued by William in his work. William did not return to the themes associated with Manuel I until the events of the Second Crusade, when King Conrad II Hohenstauf arrived in Constantinople in September 1147⁴². In the following year, the first opinion of Manuel I's generosity towards the German monarch appears: *Interea dominus imperator [that is, Conrad III – ZP], transcura hieme apud urbem regiam, ubi a domino Constantinopolitano humanitatis legibus diligenter, prout tantum decebat principem, tractatus et donis in discessu, largissimis cumulatus...*⁴³ In April 1150, the aforementioned Count Joscelin II first fell into the hands of bandits and then ended up with Nūr ad-Dīn (1146–1174), the Zankid ruler of Syria. This event became of interest to Manuel I, who purchased Edessa from Joscelin's wife, Beatrice, offering her a year's salary⁴⁴. The emperor proved generous but also pragmatic, carrying out his father's plan and incorporating the county of Edessa into the Empire⁴⁵. In 1155, William also noted the emperor's military activity in the affairs of Apulia⁴⁶. Finally, the chronicler mentions the family relationship between King Baldwin III (1143–1163) and the Komnenos. The marriage to a Byzantine princess was sought by the king of Jerusalem, who in the summer of 1157 sent envoys to Manuel's court⁴⁷. The negotiations between the emperor and the envoys were summed up by William, who giving vent to his thoughts about the Byzantines: *...tandem post innumeras dilationes et verborum enigmata, qualia Greci, queliabet cavillantes, perplexis ambagibus respondere solent...*⁴⁸ Finally, the emperor presented the hand of the daughter of his brother Isaac (died 1154)⁴⁹ – Theodora (c. 1145–1185), who was about 13 years old at that time⁵⁰. The emperor added to this offer her dowry of 100,000 hyperpyra; 40,000 was her wealth in jewels and robes, and 10,000 was intended for the wedding and reception expenses⁵¹. William estimated that the imperial generosity was significant. In September 1158, the bride-to-be arrived in Tyrus and Baldwin's wedding to Theodora soon took place in Jerusalem⁵².

William followed up on Manuel I in the autumn of 1158 during his expedition to Cilicia⁵³, during which he noted, among other things: *Eodem anno dominus imperator convocatis pro imperiali magnificentia...*⁵⁴ In December 1158, the emperor arrived in Cilicia, which caused an understandable stir among Jerusalem

⁴² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 16. 19, 20–26 and 16. 20, 29. William refers to Conrad as the emperor.

⁴³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 16. 28, 1–4. The theme of imperial generosity appears several more times.

⁴⁴ The chronicler did not know her names, hence – *comitisse*, WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 17. 16, 1–4.

⁴⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 17. 16, 1–49.

⁴⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 7–18. 8.

⁴⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 22, 1–22.

⁴⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 22, 11–14.

⁴⁹ K. ΒΑΡΖΟΣ, *Η Γενεαλογία...*, p. 391–398.

⁵⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 22, 19–20; K. ΒΑΡΖΟΣ, *Η Γενεαλογία...*, p. 327–346, especially, p. 330.

⁵¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 22, 22–28.

⁵² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 22, 33–34.

⁵³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 23, 1–57.

⁵⁴ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 23, 1–2.

notables⁵⁵. This became an opportunity for William to reaffirm Manuel I's skill in waging war and taming his opponents⁵⁶. William depicted a meeting between the emperor and Baldwin III, where the former manifested his feudal superiority over the Jerusalem monarch, but reportedly, there was also no lack of cordiality and gifts from Manuel⁵⁷. The chronicler noted the tact, generosity, and courtesies extended by the *basileus* to the dignitaries of Jerusalem during the ten-day meeting. The emperor spent Easter, which fell on April 12, 1159, in Cilicia, after which he resumed his march to Antioch, which opened its gates to him and received him imperially. During Manuel I's stay in Antioch, William noted that he enjoyed hunting (along with Baldwin III), bathing, bestowing gifts on his subjects, and proved to be a caring guardian. The occasion for this became the unpleasant episode involving Baldwin III, who broke his arm while hunting and was battered after falling from his mount⁵⁸. The emperor personally made sure that the king was properly attended to.

At the end of August 1159, Manuel I's first wife Bertha of Sulzbach, who was eight years older than him and known in Byzantium as Irene, died⁵⁹. According to William's account, the emperor sent notice of his loss and revealed a certain desire in a letter to Baldwin III. William had access to the archives in Jerusalem, so it can be trusted that he was quoting an imperial letter. Manuel I presented himself as a distressed widower, concerned about the fate of his dominion⁶⁰. The emperor, having no male heir, asked Baldwin III to suggest a possible candidate for a wife from among his female relatives. The final choice was Mary of Antioch (1145–1182), daughter of the aforementioned Prince Raymond of Poitiers, with whom his father, John, had competed⁶¹. William only mentioned that she had gone to see her future spouse⁶².

⁵⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 23, 8.

⁵⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 23, 8–13 and 49–57.

⁵⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 24, 1–65. I am not analyzing here the political significance of the meeting between Manuel I and Baldwin III.

⁵⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 25, 18–30. ...*Quod ut domino imperatori innotuit, ei multa humanitate compatiens, chirurgicorum implens officium...* (18. 25, 24–25).

⁵⁹ *Ioannis Cinnami Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. MEINEKE, Bonn 1836 [= *CSHB*] (cetera: IOANNES CINNAMUS), p. 208. In Byzantium, the name Ειρήνη was reserved for ladies of foreign origin who became the wives of emperors.

⁶⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 30, 30–44.

⁶¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 31, 54–59. William also described the first candidate for the future empress. She was Melisanda (Melisenda) of Tripoli, daughter of Raymond II of Tripoli and sister of Raymond III. The chronicler raised the indecision of Manuel I and his advisors. In fact, it was about the actions of imperial intelligence officers who advised him against this union and encouraged him to enter into talks to marry Maria. William once again returned to the dashed hopes, the bitterness of Melisande and her brother – WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 32, 1–19 – as well as Melisande's death and the attempted revenge against Manuel 18. 33, 1–30. See also M.B. LESZKA, M.J. LESZKA, *Bazyliśa. Świat bizantyńskich cesarzowych (IV–XV wiek)*, Łódź 2017, p. 357–358.

⁶² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 18. 31, 63–67; IOANNES CINNAMUS, p. 210–211 – the dating of Manuel and Maria's wedding, December 24, 1161; K. ΒΑΡΖΟΣ, *Η Γενεαλογία...*, p. 459–460.

The following chronicle passages concerning Manuel I deal with the high qualifications of his entourage⁶³ and show the effectiveness of his intelligence in Egypt⁶⁴. In 1168, the new King of Jerusalem, Amalric, sent William to Constantinople to agree on terms for joint battles for Egypt. However, the emperor was not in the Queen City as he was busy with military operations in Serbia⁶⁵, so William went to the Byzantine camp at Monastir (Μοναστήρι), which is called Butella in his chronicle⁶⁶. There, the chronicler had his first encounter with Manuel I, who invited him to join his cortege on his return to Constantinople – *ubi a domino imperatore honorifice suscepti, benigne et imperiali clementia tractati, legationis et vie causam formamque pactorum diligenter exposuimus*⁶⁷. William returned to the completion of the then signed treaty when he described the action of the Byzantine fleet against Egypt in the second half of 1169, expressing another praise of Manuel for the fulfillment of the agreement⁶⁸. However, after the failed invasion of Egypt, repentant Amalric left by sea for Constantinople in March 1170. William did not accompany him⁶⁹. Despite this, he wished to reassure the reader of the character traits of Manuel I: *Audiens ergo dominus imperator, vir magnificentissimus, providus et discretus et per omnia commendabilis...*⁷⁰ William also shared his observations from his earlier peregrinations and experiences gained during his stay in Constantinople, describing the places he, the king, and his entourage had seen. William was delighted with the generosity and power that the emperor represented, as well as the versatility of the ruler, who did not shy away from entertainment in the form of games accompanied by music and sing-along, previously unknown to the chronicler⁷¹. It is likely that William received the information about the reception of the guests in Constantinople from them upon his return to Jerusalem. William did not return to the thread about the emperor until after the defeat of Manuel I at Myriokephalon (September 17, 1176), which he described as the clash at Iconium and which resulted in:

⁶³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 1, 14–21: *viros illustres et magnificos, imperialis eminentie familiares dominum Palliologum et Manuelem sevaston...*

⁶⁴ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 4, 7–11.

⁶⁵ It was about Manuel I's conflict with Stefan Nemanja, because his brother, Tihomir, fled to Constantinople and asked the emperor for help – К. ЖИРЕЧЕК, *Историја срба*, trans. J. РАДОНИЋ, Београд 1952, p. 146.

⁶⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 5, 49, it is modern-day Bitola, Macedonia.

⁶⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 5, 51–55. Here it is worth adding that William wrote a few words about Emperor Justinian on the occasion of his meeting with Manuel I: *...domini felicissimi et invictissimi prudentis...* see WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 5, 49–50. Perhaps William believed that Manuel I was as powerful a ruler as Justinian the Great.

⁶⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 13, 4–6.

⁶⁹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 22, 43–47.

⁷⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 22, 52–54.

⁷¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 20. 23, 1–75 and 20. 24, 1–39.

...Ab ea die huius tam sinistri casus predictus dominus imperator adeo menti perhennem dicitur impressisse memoriam, ut de cetero nec solita mentis hilaritate, qua singulariter preminebat, letiorem, se suis admodum postulantibus exhiberet nec corporis sospitate, qua plurimum pollebat, usque in supremum vite diem frueretur: ita sane continua facti refricatione urebatur, ut animo quies nec menti consueta tranquillitas indulgeretur⁷².

The loss of Byzantium against the Seljuk Turks was also troubling in terms of Manuel I's continued successful cooperation with the Kingdom of Jerusalem. William expressed genuine sympathy to the emperor, who, although not injured in the battle, was certainly horrified by its aftermath. Interestingly, the chronicler blamed the failure of the battle not on the emperor, but on the commanders of the Greek troops, who led the soldiers through risky roads and ravines⁷³. After this event, the chronicler's interest in Byzantium slightly waned, but he returned to it reporting on his absence from the Holy Land, which was said to have lasted one year and ten months. It was partly connected with a second meeting with the emperor. First, in August or September 1178, William sailed for Rome. The reason for his trip to Europe was the Third Vatican Council announced by Pope Alexander III (1159–1181). William was accompanied by other representatives of the church hierarchy from the Holy Land⁷⁴. Having arrived in the Eternal City, William participated in the deliberations that lasted from March 5 to 19, 1179. It is unknown how much longer he stayed in Rome. We can assume that he was there until the late summer or early fall of 1179, after which he went to the court of Manuel I. We do not know at whose initiative William found himself in Constantinople. William's text indicates that after a seven-month stay in Constantinople, he was allowed to return to the Holy Land⁷⁵. What do we know about this stay? What image of the emperor did the chronicler develop? The *basileus* received William in the fall of 1179. In Constantinople, William discovered that the emperor had sensed his death was approaching and, therefore, he married off his children. On March 2, 1180, the eleven-year-old heir to the throne, Alexis, married Agnes-Anne (1171–1220 or 1240), daughter of King Louis VII of France⁷⁶. His

⁷² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 21. 11 (12), 26–32.

⁷³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 21. 11 (12), 1–25.

⁷⁴ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 21. 25 (26), 1–9. They were: Heraclius, Archbishop of Caesarea (died 1191), Joscius (*Ioscius*), Bishop of Akka (died 1202), Radulf, Bishop of Sebaste, Albert, Bishop of Bethlehem, Roman, Bishop of Tripoli, Peter, Prior of the Temple of the Holy Sepulchre, and Raynald, Abbot of Mount Zion. Confirmation in: J.D. MANSI, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, vol. XXII, Venetiis 1778, col. 210D–211A; ERNOUL, *Chronique d'Ernoult et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. L. DE MAS LATRIE, Paris 1871, p. 82 – writes about Heraclius and provides his characterization.

⁷⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 1–5: ...*cum per menses VII continuos cum illustris memorie domino Manuele, Constantinopoleos imperatore magnifico...*

⁷⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 20–27. William was present at these nuptials, which took place in Constantine's palace; M. DĄBROWSKA, *Agnieszka z Francji w Konstantynopolu*, [in:] *Niebem*

elder daughter, Maria (1152–1182), whom he had from his first marriage, he married off to Rainer (Renier) of Monteferrat (1162–1183)⁷⁷. The wedding took place at the Blacherne Palace in February 1180⁷⁸. From William's description we learn of the lavish celebrations of this second union, including a spectacle at the hippodrome. The chronicler went on enumerating the wealth and imperial generosity. What is worrying is the lack of any details about his meetings with Manuel I, except for the fact that the emperor asked him to participate in a diplomatic mission⁷⁹. Immediately after Easter (April 20) 1180, on the 23rd of that month, William set out for Antioch⁸⁰. This expedition was carefully prepared by Manuel I. In addition to the archbishop of Tyre, the Greek delegation included high imperial officials not named by him, who occupied as many as four galleys⁸¹. Next, William focused on a detailed description of the sailing route across the Mediterranean Sea. Finally, the ships moored in the port of Antioch (now Samandağ) on May 12, 1180⁸². At this point in the text of the chronicle, William lapsed into a diplomatic silence about his mission. Instead, he delved into his memories of so many months spent in Constantinople. Finally, he briefly concluded that he had completed the emperor's commission and returned to Tyre on July 6, 1180⁸³. It is presumed that the goal was to establish some sort of alliance between Constantinople and Jerusalem. Perhaps the emperor's aim was to win for himself a protectorate over Antioch and to restore the Greek patriarch there. In the absence of progress in these talks, it can be assumed that the negotiators, and perhaps Manuel himself, abandoned further plans⁸⁴. The historian's peculiar silence about the visit at the instigation

i sercem okryta. Studia historyczne dedykowane dr Jolancie Malinowskiej, ed. M. MALINOWSKI, Toruń 2002, p. 41–63 (reprint – EADEM, *Drugie oko Europy. Bizancjum w średniowieczu*, Wrocław 2015, p. 77–113). William was misinformed about the age of Alexius II, writing that he was thirteen (*tredecim*).

⁷⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 27–30 and 34. Here also a chronological clue that Rainer arrived in Constantinople fifteen days before William.

⁷⁸ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 42. A clue about the time of creating this record: *...solum Alexium, hodie imperat...*, that is, William noted this after the death of Manuel I, on September 24, 1180, and while Alexius II (September 1180 – September 1183) was still in power.

⁷⁹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 43–54. Perhaps these reminiscences of wealth reached the ears of the participants of the Fourth Crusade. While in Constantinople for several months, William certainly had the opportunity to meet Manuel I's secretary, John Kinnamos (c. 1143–1195), who left behind the aforementioned *Epitome*. It is perhaps from him that he learned numerous details regarding Byzantine history.

⁸⁰ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 1–5.

⁸¹ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 5–7, once again, we read about the *basileus'* generosity.

⁸² WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 8–13.

⁸³ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 4, 60; R. GROUSSET, *Histoire des Croisades et du Royaume Franc de Jérusalem*, vol. II, *Monarchie franque et monarchie musulmane l'équilibre*, Paris 1935, p. 682, footnote 1 – an erroneous date of the return to Tyre, June 6, 1180.

⁸⁴ R. GROUSSET, *Histoire...*, vol. II, p. 682–683, surmised that the talks were about the Crusaders' alliance with Byzantium, and that its purpose was supposedly an expedition to Egypt; P.W. EDBURY, J.G. ROWE, *William of Tyre...*, p. 54–55 and 146–147.

of the emperor who was, after all, praised, may suggest that the talks failed, despite the fact that they lasted from mid-May to, at least, late June 1180.

Shortly thereafter, Manuel I died on 24 September 1180, and William described him: *inclite recordationis imperatore felicissimo*⁸⁵. Here is the chronicler's interesting conclusion about the Byzantine world:

Dum hec itaque in nostro sic geruntur Oriente, apud Constantinopolim grandis circa imperium facta est permutatio et casus accidit universe Latinitati lugubris et inauditam irrogans cum enormi dampno contumeliam: dolorem enim, quem pridem fallax et perfida Grecia conceperat, edidit et peperit iniquitatem⁸⁶.

William also estimated that the passing of Manuel I was the beginning of the misery of the Latinists under Greek rule. He was not wrong. The chaos in Byzantium that followed the death of Manuel I was observed by William with disbelief and unconcealed horror⁸⁷.

* * *

As I have mentioned earlier, the images of the emperors from the Komnenos dynasty, presented by William, underwent a positive evolution, which is brilliantly illustrated in the case of John II. The chronicler's direct contacts with Manuel I undoubtedly contributed to softening the emperor's image and making bold comparisons of his achievements to those of Justinian the Great. The emperor was portrayed somewhat idyllically as generous, tactful, versatile, surrounded by a carefully selected court, a valiant leader, a just and happily ruling monarch, concerned about the future of the empire, also looking after dynastic interests and supporting Christians in the Holy Land.

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⁸⁵ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 11 (10), 6: *Defuncto enim domino Manuele*.

⁸⁶ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 11 (10), 1–5.

⁸⁷ WILLELMUS TYRENSIS, 22. 12 (11) – 22. 14 (13).

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