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Defining the ‘Turk’: Mechanisms of Establishing Contemporary Meaning in the Archaizing Language of the Byzantines*

Ethnonyms and toponyms provide invaluable information about political and cultural history. For example, each of the names given to the island at the northwest corner of the European continent – Britain, the U.K., England, and Albion – signifies a crucial aspect of the island’s history. Likewise, the names that we give to other people reveal a great deal about who we are and how we see ourselves. For instance, contemporary Turkish speakers do not use one term, but two, to identify the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians of the southern Balkans and Asia Minor. While people originating from within the borders of the modern republic of Greece are called *Yunan*, those Greek-speakers who are from Turkey are called *Rum*. This distinction between *Yunan* and *Rum*, ignored by non-Turkish speakers, provides an excellent example of the effect that politics has on language. The *Yunan/Rum* dichotomy is the result of the need to differentiate between Greek-speaking individuals who (ostensibly) identify with the republic of Greece, and Greek-speaking individuals whose political loyalty is supposed to be to the Turkish republic. The description of the Greek-speaking population of Turkey as *Rum* in Turkish reflects (and reproduces) their separation from Greece and their supposed allegiance to Turkey.

In the same manner, the nomenclature used for neighbors of Byzantium in medieval Greek literature presents opportunities for understanding the construction of the Byzantine identity and the world around it, but it also poses challenges for historians because imitations of the ancient literature, and specifically of Attic literature, garbed contemporary meanings in ancient terms. The archaizing/Atticized ethnonyms used in Byzantine Greek means that terms borrowed from ancient literature are found next to or instead of the contemporary terms.¹ Modern scholars studying archaism in Byzantine literature have examined the impact of this archaizing tendency on historical accuracy, in addition to focusing on reasons why the Byzantines used archaizing language,² on the types of archaizing that was done,³ and on the degree of

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¹ What is meant by ‘contemporary terms’ is non-archaizing exonyms (names of places that are not used by locals but employed by outsiders to define a place) and endonyms (names of places that are used by the locals themselves). For instance, the term ‘Ishmaelite’ used for Muslims in Byzantine Greek is a non-archaizing exonym while the term ‘Μουσουλμάν’ (Muslim) is an endonym.

² While some scholars see archaizing as nothing more than a literary game, others attribute political functions to the archaizing style. Roger Scott writes, “the imitation of classical writers is no more than a way of adorning the Byzantine tradition.” R. SCOTT, *The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography*, in: *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition: University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, 1979, ed. M. MULLETT – R. SCOTT. Birmingham 1981, 62. A summary of explanations for the use of archaism in Byzantine literature can be found in M.C. BARTUSIS, *The Function of Archaizing in Byzantium*. *BSI* 56 (1995) 273.

³ Archaisms in both content and in form were present in Byzantine literature. As H. HUNGER, *On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature*. *DOP* 23/24 (1970) 19–20 argues, ancient content remained relatively rare in Byzantine literary products. However, motifs, figures, quotations, grammar rules, meter, and vocabulary items provided various channels through which elements of classical literature entered Byzantine literature; and terms used for foreign people were among these channels. Gy. MORAVCSIK, *Klassizismus in der byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung*, in: *Polychronion, Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. WIRTH (*Corpus der griechischen Urkunden des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit D*). Heidelberg 1966, 368–372.

archaizing in different genres of literature.⁴ Modern historians claim to varying degrees that the archaizing style distorted the presentation of reality in Byzantine literature, although they agree that a careful reading allows the modern reader to reconstruct that reality.⁵

My aim in this paper is not to extract information about Byzantine identity and its neighbors. I am instead interested in the process by which the Byzantine historian gave contemporary meaning to archaizing ethnonyms in historical texts. I seek to examine that process through which Byzantine historians turned textual indeterminacies (i.e. archaizing ethnonyms which carried no contemporary denotation) into a stable meaning. In a very general sense, then, this paper is concerned with how archaism in Byzantine historical writing contributed to the creation of meaning in texts. My emphasis is on the ethnonyms of Turkish-speaking people of the Medieval Near East, specifically the Great Seljuks and the Seljuks of Rūm (Anatolian Seljuks), in histories and archaizing chronicles written in Byzantine Greek. The period under discussion is from the early eleventh century collapse of Byzantine rule in Asia Minor to the late thirteenth century, excluding the rise of the Ottomans.⁶

A distinction should be made at the outset between genres that used archaizing language intensively and those that did not. In some genres of Byzantine literature, such as military treatises, fiscal records, and majority of the chronicles, the need to produce one direct level of meaning precluded the heavy use of archaizing terms. In reading these genres the Byzantine reader did not have to be in constant negotiation with the text to decipher what the ethnic groups mentioned could be, because mostly contemporary ethnonyms were used. The following examples from among Byzantine chronicles show how the heavy use of archaizing terms was avoided.⁷

Both the Skylitzes Continuatus and the twelfth-century chronicler Kedrenos, who follows Skylitzes' chronicle, describe the early Seljuk invaders of the eleventh century as Turks (Τούρκοι), not as Huns (Οὔννοι), Persians (Πέρσαι), Parthians (Πάρθοι), Persoscythian (Περσοσκυθῶν), or Scythopersians (Σκυθοπέρσαι), which were the archaizing terms used for Turks.⁸ John Zonaras, a high-ranking Byzantine official and chronicler of the early twelfth century, made the same choice when he described the incur-

⁴ Concerning the degree of archaizing, BARTUSIS, Function 274–275 challenges the old view that high-brow literature employed archaizing style more than low-brow literature, and he suggests that the desire to produce “a single contemporary level of meaning” led some Byzantine writers to avoid archaisms, while those aiming for “permanence, timelessness and continuity” embraced the vagueness that the archaizing style offered. For the high-brow and low-brow distinction, see C. MANGO, Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror, in: IDEM, Byzantium and its Image: History and Culture of the Byzantine Empire and its Heritage. London 1984, 1–18. C. MANGO, Discontinuity with the Classical Past in Byzantium, in: Byzantium and the Classical Tradition 48–57.

⁵ MANGO, Byzantine Literature 16, 18 argues that Byzantine literary works were divorced from the realities of their own times, and he recommends historians to discover Byzantium's “true self” behind “its antique mask.” HUNGER, Imitation 26 believes that use of classical models should not “necessarily discredit the Byzantine historian.”

⁶ Studies of the terms used for foreign people, especially the Islamic Near-easterners in Byzantium, are scarce. Gy. MORAVCSIK, Byzantinoturcica, I–II (BBA 10–11). Berlin 1958 with its exhaustive examination of primary sources, remains the seminal work on the subject. More recently, A. SAVVIDES has published articles in this area: Some Notes on Agarenoī, Ismaelītai and Sarakenoī in Byzantine Sources. *Byz* 67/1 (1997) 89–96; Byzantines and the Oghuz-Ghuzz. Some Observations on the Nomenclature. *BSI* 54 (1993) 147–153.

⁷ T.E. GREGORY, A History of Byzantium. Malden 2005, 13: “... Chronicles were commonly written in a somewhat simpler and less pretentious language than the classicizing histories.”

⁸ He synecheia tes chronographias tou Ioannou Skylitse (= Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus), ed. E.T. TSOLAKES (*Idryma Meleton Chersonesou tou Haimou* 105). Thessalonica 1968, various pages. George Kedrenos 566–568, 574, 577 (ed. I. BEKKER, Georgius Cedrenus Ioannis Scylitzae ope, I–II [CSHB 33–34]. Bonn 1838–1839). For Kedrenos as a chronicler, see H. HUNGER, Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner (*HdA* XII 5, 1–2). Munich 1978, I 393. K. SCHWEINBURG, Die ursprüngliche Form der Kedrenchronik. *BZ* 30 (1929/30) 68–77. Kedrenos, George. *ODB* II 1118. For archaizing terms used for Turks in Byzantine sources, see MORAVCSIK, Byzantinoturcica II 359–360. The term τούρκοι was originally used for the Hungarians in Byzantine historical works. For example, Symeon Logothete (also known as Leo the Grammarian) describes the Hungarians of the ninth century as Turks. Symeon Logothete 133, 16–19, ed. S. WAHLGREN, Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon (*CFHB* 44.1). Berlin – New York 2006, 276–277.

sions of the Turks and the establishment of their principality in Nicaea in the eleventh century.⁹ The Chronicle of the Morea, an anonymous account of the peninsula of the Morea from the First Crusade to 1292, was written in a vernacular style in the fourteenth century. In this chronicle, the Turkish population of Asia Minor is described as Τούρκοι or Τουρκομάνοι (Turcomans).¹⁰ One can include the twelfth-century chronicle of Michael Glykas¹¹ and the account of Eustathios of Thessaloniki on the Norman capture of Thessaloniki¹² in this group of archaism-avoiding works that denote the Anatolian Turks as Τούρκοι as well. However, chronicle-writing was not an archaism-free genre, and some chronicles employed the terms ‘Turk’ and ‘Persian’ interchangeably for the Anatolian Turks including the Seljuks of Rūm.¹³

Concerning the use of archaizing ethnonyms for ethnicities other than Turks, some chroniclers mentioned above avoid archaizing terms for all ethnic groups and reference ethnic groups such as Serbs, Cumans, Pechenegs,¹⁴ Bulgars and Franks by their contemporary names, while others use both archaizing and non-archaizing terms. For instance, the anonymous writer of the Chronicle of the Morea uses contemporary ethnonyms for all the ethnic groups that he mentions. On the other hand, John Skylitzes (who died in the second half of the eleventh century) uses archaizing and non-archaizing terms interchangeably for almost every ethnic group in his work.¹⁵

In contrast, genres such as epistolography, poetry, oratory, and history employed archaizing terms heavily. The following table presents the terms used for Turks in a selection of letters from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Out of five letter-writers, only one employs the contemporary term for Turks, while the others use the archaizing terms, referring to Turks as Persians (Πέρσαι) or Amalekites (Ἀμαλεκίται).

⁹ Ioannes Zonaras, *Epitome historion*, ed. I. GREGORIADES (*Keimena Byzantines Historiographias* 5). Athens 1995–1999, 132, 134, 138, 212–214. On Zonaras, see HUNGER, *Literatur* I 416–419. Zonaras, John. *ODB* III 2229.

¹⁰ There are too many references to Τούρκοι in the Chronicle to cite here. For an example, see the Chronicle of the Morea, *Chronicon Moreae*, recensio II, ed. J. SCHMITT. London 1904, 247, 251. On the Chronicle of the Morea, see H.-G. BECK, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (*HdA* XII 2). Munich 1971, 157–159. M.J. JEFFREYS, *The Chronicle of the Morea: Priority of the Greek Version*. *BZ* 68 (1975) 304–350.

¹¹ Michael Glykas 605, 609, 612 (ed. I. BEKKER, *Michaelis Glycae annales* [*CShB* 26]. Bonn 1836). On Michael Glykas, see H. EIDENEIER, *Zur Sprache des Michael Glykas*. *BZ* 61 (1968) 5–9.

¹² Eustathios names the Anatolian Seljuk ruler of the twelfth century as ‘ὁ τῶν Τούρκων σουλτάν’ (the sultan of the Turks) in the Capture of Thessalonike. Eustazio di Tessalonica, *La espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. S. KYRIAKIDIS. (*Testi e monumenti* 5). Palermo 1961, 22. On Eustathios of Thessaloniki, see A. KAZHDAN – S. FRANKLIN, *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. Cambridge 1984, 115–195.

¹³ The author of *Synopsis Chronike* writes as follows: “... Turks whom we call Persian ...”. In: *Mesaionike Bibliothek*, ed. K.N. SATHAS. Athens 1872–1894, VII 183–184. In the Short Chronicles, a series of short notices that were in the folios of manuscripts from the tenth century onwards, the Seljuks of Rūm are described as Persians. *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 14.74, 15.19, 17.4, ed. P. SCHREINER, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken, I–III* (*CFHB* 12/1–3). Vienna 1975–1979, I 144, 161, 170.

¹⁴ Nomadic people settled between the Don and the lower Danube in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Pechenegs. *ODB* III 1613.

¹⁵ The anonymous writer of the Chronicle of the Morea did not use archaizing terms for any ethnic group. They were called by their contemporary ethnic names, such as Cumans (Κουμάνοι), not Scythians; Serbs (Σέρβοι), not ‘Triballoi’; and Bulgars (Βούλγαροι), not Mysians. *Chronicon Moreae* 247 (SCHMITT). Likewise, in the account of Eustathios of Thessaloniki, Turks appear as Τούρκοι, Serbs as Σέρβοι, Bulgars as Βούλγαροι, and the territory of the Franks as Φραγγία. The Capture of Thessalonike 22, 94, 120, 52 (KYRIAKIDIS). Similarly, Kedrenos described the Pechenegs as Πατζινάκαι not as Scythians (Σκύθαι). George Kedrenos 599–602 (II BEKKER). On the other hand, some chroniclers made a selective use of archaizing ethnonyms. Michael Glykas used only non-archaizing terms for Turks and Franks, and both the archaizing and non-archaizing terms for Arabs and Serbians. Michael Glykas 609, 621, 515–517, 583, 594 (BEKKER). Skylitzes *Continuatus* used the non-archaizing terms for Serbs, Bulgars, and Franks; but used both archaizing and non-archaizing terms for Arabs and Oghuz. Ioannes Skylitzes *continuatus* (on Serbs) 163, 165, (on Bulgars) 114–115, 163–166, (on Franks) 125, 158, (on Oghuz/Scythians) 115, 125, 135, 144, 147, (on Arabs/Saracens) 129, 131–132 (TSOLAKES). For examples in Skylitzes’ chronicle, see his use of the terms ‘Russian’ and ‘Scythian’ together. Ioannis Scylitzae *synopsis historiarum*, ed. J. THURN (*CFHB* 5). Berlin – New York 1973, 295, 300.

Writer	Date	Name used for Turks
Michael Italikos ¹⁶	Died before 1157	Persians
Theodore II Laskaris ¹⁷	Died 1258	Persians
Patriarch Athanasios I ¹⁸	Died ca. 1315	Ishmaelites (Ἰσμαηλίται), Amalekites ¹⁹
Nikephoros Gregoras ²⁰	Died 1358–1361	Persians
Demetrios Kydones ²¹	Died ca. 1398	Turks, Persians

Within this group of Byzantine literary products that employed archaisms very frequently, a second distinction should be made between genres where the reader needed to know what people that archaizing term denoted, and genres where such a need did not exist. In some genres, the necessity of knowing the ethnic background of a person or people was very low. Therefore, archaizing terms appeared frequently in these genres. For example, it did not matter if a character described as ‘Persian’ in a saint’s life was an Iranian or a Turk, since the emphasis was usually on his being non-Christian, not on his ethnic background. The situation was somewhat similar in epistolography. Letters were either written to display the literary abilities of the sender, in which case the recipient had no need to know what the archaizing term represented, or the reference of the archaizing term was obvious to both the sender and the recipient of the letter because both were part of the same contemporary milieu. Therefore, a reference to a Scythian at a certain time and a place in the letter would be clear enough for the receiver to figure out who is the referent of the term. On the other hand, histories stand in a curious position since they combine the need to convey facts with the desire to be literary.

The mechanisms of creating contemporary meanings through ancient terms can be observed best in histories, because Byzantine historians employed archaizing terms, yet they had to make it clear whom these archaizing terms signified. A number of mechanisms were available for transforming archaizing terms into contemporary signs. Archaizing terms could possess contemporary meaning in the text either because they already had contemporary meaning (for example, the hypothesis that the term ‘Saracen’ meant exclusively Arab) or contemporary/non-archaizing terms were employed simultaneously to make the meaning of the archaizing term clearer.

We attempt to show in the following pages how Byzantine historians and chroniclers differentiated between the terms ‘Saracens’ (Σαρακῆνοι)²² and ‘Persians’ (Πέρσαι) in support of the hypothesis that archaizing ethnonyms for different eastern neighbors of Byzantium were not used randomly, but had

¹⁶ Michael Italikos, *Orationes, lettres et discours*, ed. P. GAUTIER (*Archives de l’Orient chrétien* 14). Paris 1972, 84–85.

¹⁷ Theodore Laskaris XLIV 80, LXV 30 (ed. N. FESTA, *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII* [*Pubblicazioni del R. Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento in Firenze. Sezione di filosofia e lettere* 29]. Florence 1898, 58, 266).

¹⁸ *The Correspondence of Athanasios I, Patriarch of Constantinople*, ed. and trans. A.-M. TALBOT (*CFHB* 7). Washington, D.C. 1975, 210 (ep. 81).

¹⁹ The Amalekites were a Bedouin tribe, described as one of the most hated people by the Israelis. Amelek, in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D.N. FREEDMAN *et alii*. New York 1992, I 161–171.

²⁰ In the letters of Nikephoros Gregoras, Turks are called Persians, while Serbians are called Triballian, and Bulgarians are called Mysians. *Nicephori Gregorae Epistolae, I–II*, ed. P.L.M. LEONE. Matino (LE) 1982–1983, II 138, 279, 104, 110, 121, 117, 119.

²¹ Démétrius Cydonès, *Correspondance, I–II*, ed. R.-J. LOENERTZ (*StT* 186/208). Vatican City 1956, I 41, I 86, I 59, II 121, II 298.

²² The term ‘Saracen’ is associated in Arabic with *sharq/sharqiyun* (meaning ‘East/Easterner’), *saraka* (meaning ‘banditry’), *sawāriq* (meaning ‘tribe’) or *shrkt*, (meaning ‘federation’ in Aramaic). Saracens, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam (= EI)*, ed. P.J. BEARMAN – Th. BIANQUIS – C.E. BOSWORTH – E. VAN DONZEL – W.P. HEINRICHS *et alii*. Leiden 1960–2005, IX 27. SAVVIDES, *Some Notes* 88. M. O’CONNOR, *The Origin of the Term Saracen and the Rawwafa Inscriptions*. *Byzantine Studies* 4 (1977) 52–66. IDEM, *The Etymology of Saracen in Aramaic and Pre-Islamic Contexts*, in: *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, ed. P. FREEMAN – D. KENNEDY. Oxford 1986, II 603–632.

clear contemporary meanings. We argue that Saracen denoted the Arab-speaking neighbors of Byzantium while Persian stood for the Persian- and Turkish-speaking people of Asia Minor and the Near East.²³

Byzantine historical works written before the eleventh century which described the eastern neighbors of Byzantium before the arrival of the Turks did not use the term ‘Persian’ for Arabs. In the tenth-century history of Theophanes Continuatus, the Arabic-speaking Muslims of the Near East and North Africa are described as either Saracens (Σαρακῆνοι), Hagarenes (Ἀγαρηνοί),²⁴ Ishmaelites (Ἰσμαηλίται),²⁵ or Arabs (Ἀραβες).²⁶ He reserves the term ‘Persian’ for the Khurramites who entered the Byzantine service as soldiers after the revolt of Bābak against the Abbasids failed in 838, and the Buyids who ruled Baghdad after 945.²⁷ The Khurramites were Persian- or Kurdish-speaking people who moved from the region around Azerbaijan to Byzantium, and converted to Christianity.²⁸ The Buyids (*Al-Būwayhī* in Arabic; *Āl-i Būya* in Persian) were not Arab-speaking people either. They were an Iranian people who founded a Shiite dynasty in Daylaman (in northern Iran) in the early tenth century. They appropriated the ancient Persian traditions, and adopted Persian political symbols.²⁹ Likewise, Leo the Deacon (who died after 994) describes the tenth-century Muslim enemies of Byzantium (the Hamdanids, the Fatimids, and the Cretan Muslims) as Hagarenes (Ἀγαρηνοί) or Arabs (Ἀραβες), and employs toponyms to define specific Arab people (such as ‘Cretans’ for the Cretan Arabs and ‘Africans’ for the Fatimids).³⁰ The only occasion upon which he uses the term ‘Persian’ appears in his discussion of the fourth-century bishop of Nisibis, Jacob. Jacob defended the city “against the Persians who attacked Nisibis with a great army.”³¹ The Persians in question are the Sassanids of Iran. The same differentiation between Persians and Saracens is observed in the works of Symeon Logothete and the Continuator of the Chronicle by George the Monk.³²

²³ Some modern scholars assume that ethnic terms such as ‘Saracen’ were not specific at all. For example, Konstantinos Sathas equates ‘Saracen’ with Turks, Persians, and Muslims: Synopsis Chronike 667. Melville Jones writes that the word ‘Saracen’ was used in a very general way in the Byzantine texts, and that we cannot know their place of origin. (Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *The Capture of Thessaloniki*, ed. and trans. J.R. MELVILLE JONES [*Byzantina Australiensia* 8]. Canberra 1988, 222, no. 123). Not being able to identify where ‘Assyria’ could be in a ninth-century Byzantine text, Wilson writes that Atticism in Byzantine literature leads to confusion: Photius, *The Bibliotheca: a Selection*, trans. N.G. WILSON. London 1994, 26, no. 3. We hope that this present paper will help clarify what some of these ethnic terms stood for.

²⁴ For example, the Andalusian Arabs and the Fatimids of Egypt were called Saracen. Theophanes Continuatus V 53, VI 7 (ed. I. BEKKER, *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* [*CSHB* 33]. Bonn 1838, 290, 474). Theophanes Continuatus uses the term ‘Saracen’ 35 times, and ‘Hagarene’ 70 times in his work; and all of them refer to the Muslim Arabs.

²⁵ Theophanes Continuatus uses the term many times to describe the Abbasids during the reigns of Theophilus, Michael III, Basil I, and Leo VI. Theophanes Continuatus III 9, 23, 24, 26, 31, 38, IV 17, 23, 27, 33, V 38, VI 22 (97, 114, 116, 120, 127, 137, 167, 176, 186, 196, 267, 368 BEKKER).

²⁶ He describes the Cretan Arabs under Michael III’s reign and the Egyptian and Syrian Arabs under Basil I’s reign as Arabs. Theophanes Continuatus IV 39, V 68 (203, 308 BEKKER).

²⁷ Theophanes Continuatus III 19–38, VI 32 (110–136, 455 BEKKER).

²⁸ It was a religious and social movement championing the pre-Islamic Iranian religious traditions, such as Mazdaism. ‘Babak’ and ‘Khurramiyya’. *EI* I 844, V 63. On Mazdaism, see G.H. SADIGHI, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens*. Paris 1938, 229–280. B.S. AMORETTI, *Sects and Heresies*, in: *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. R.N. FRYE. Cambridge 1975, IV 494–519. For the Khurramites in Byzantium, see J. ROSSER, *Theophilus’ Khurramite Policy and its Finale: the Revolt of Theophobus’ Persian Troops in 838*. *Byzantina* 6 (1974) 263–271.

²⁹ The Buyids claimed descent from the Sassanid kings. ‘Buyids’, in: *Encyclopædia Iranica*, ed. E. YARSHATER. London 1982, IV 1, 584. On the Buyids, see M. KABIR, *The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad*. Calcutta 1964.

³⁰ For the term ‘Arab,’ see Leo the Deacon I 2, II 1, III 5, VI 8 (ed. C.B. HASE, *Leonis diaconi Caloënsis Historia libri decem* [*CSHB* 5]. Bonn 1828, 6, 18, 42, 103). For the term ‘Hagarene,’ see Leo the Deacon I 3, II 1, II 5, III 10–11, VI 7, X 7 (8, 17, 23, 51, 53, 100, 170 HASE).

³¹ Leo the Deacon X 1 (162 HASE).

³² The mid-tenth century writer Symeon Logothete uses the term ‘Persian’ for the ancient Persians, for the Sassanids, for the Khurramites led by Theophobos in Byzantium, and for Khurramite soldiers of Persian origin who entered Byzantine service under Michael III and Basil I. Symeon Logothete 46.1–19, 104.16, 106.4, 109.3, 130.27–29, 130.43–44, 131. 50–52, 132.2 (69–72, 144, 149, 157, 224–225, 231, 258–259, 261 WAHLGREN). Symeon employs the term ‘Hagarene’ 44 times and ‘Saracen’ 11 times in his history, and these terms refer to the Arabic-speaking people of the Near East and Africa from the seventh to the tenth centuries. In the Continuation of the Chronicle by George the Monk (*Georgius monachus continuatus*) Persians are the Khurramites under

Byzantine historical works covering the eleventh and the twelfth centuries would be the best sources to examine the distinction between the archaizing terms ‘Saracen’ and ‘Persian,’ since they talk about both the Arabs dominating the Near East in the tenth century and the Turks who appeared in the Near East and Asia Minor as a political power in the eleventh century. The following table presents what Byzantine historians and chroniclers meant by Saracens (Σαρακῆνοι) and Persians (Πέρσαι):

Writer or work	Date	The Period covered	Saracens	Persians
George Kedrenos	12 th century	From the Creation to 1057	Arabs ³³	Khurramites, ³⁴ Daylamites ³⁵
John Skylitzes	Second half of the 11 th century	811–1057	Arabs ³⁶	Khurramites, ³⁷ Daylamites ³⁸
Skylitzes Continuatus	11 th century	1057–1079	Arabs ³⁹	Great Seljuk Turks ⁴⁰
Michael Psellos	Died after 1081	976–1078	Arabs ⁴¹	Great Seljuk Turks ⁴²
Nicephoros Bryennios	Died ca. 1136/37	1070–1079	Arabs ⁴³	Great Seljuk Turks ⁴⁴

Theophobos, while Saracens are the Arabs attacking the Aegean Sea and Sicily during Theophilos’ reign and the Arabs to whom the Byzantine commander of Sicily deserts under Theophilos’ rule, the Syrian fleet under Apodeinar’s command planning to attack Constantinople during Michael III’s reign and the Abbasids of Baghdad during Leo VI’s reign. For Persians, see Georgius monachus continuatus, *De Theophilo* 4 (ed. I. BEKKER, *Georgii monachi Vitae imperatorum recentiorum*, Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus [CSHB 33]. Bonn 1838, 793). For Saracens, see Georgius monachus continuatus, *De Theophilo* 3, 7, *De Michael et Theodora* 4, *De Leone Basilii* F. 39 (791–792, 794, 814, 867 BEKKER).

³³ Kedrenos used the term ‘Saracen’ for the Fatimids, the Arab emirate of Crete, the Abbasids, and people who came from the Arabic-speaking Near East. George Kedrenos 268, 336, 353–354, 502 (II BEKKER).

³⁴ In the middle-Byzantine period, Kedrenos used the term ‘Persian’ for the Khurramites (A Persian or Kurdish tribe) who escaped from the Abbasids and found refuge in Byzantium in the first half of the ninth century, and for the Empire of the Great Seljuks. George Kedrenos 131 (II BEKKER).

³⁵ Kedrenos called the Daylamites, who attacked the Buyid dynasty of Baghdad, ‘Persian.’ The Daylamites were Persian-speaking tribes living on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. George Kedrenos 439 (II 439 BEKKER). Concerning the Great Seljuks, Kedrenos does not call the Great Seljuks ‘Persians’; he calls them ‘Turks.’ However, he calls the Great Seljuk ruler Tughrul beg ‘Emperor of Persia.’ “ὁ Ταγγοράιπηξ ὑπὸ πάντων ἀναγορεύεται βασιλεὺς τῆς Περσίδος.” George Kedrenos 569–570 (II BEKKER).

³⁶ Skylitzes used the term Saracen frequently to name the Abbasids of the ninth century, the Sicilian Arabs of the later tenth century, the Syrian Arabs during the reign of Romanos III Argyros (1028–1034), and the Edessan Arabs during the reign of Michael IV Paphlagon (1034–1041). Ioannes Skylitzes 56–57, 98, 151, 266, 379, 403–404 (THURN).

³⁷ For the description of the Khurramites as Persians, see Ioannes Skylitzes 73–75 (THURN).

³⁸ Ioannes Skylitzes 332–333 (THURN), like Kedrenos, described the Daylamites who attacked the Buyid dynasty of Baghdad as Persians.

³⁹ Skylitzes Continuatus denotes the inhabitants of the Syrian cities as Saracens. He mentions them in the context of the campaign of Romanos Diogenes in Syria in 1068–1069. Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus 129, 132 (TSOLAKES).

⁴⁰ Skylitzes Continuatus generally uses the term ‘Turks’ for both the Great Seljuk Empire and the Turkish bands roaming in Asia Minor in the eleventh century. However, in one occasion he describes the Great Seljuks as Persians and the heartland of the Great Seljuk Empire as Persia. He relates that Romanos Diogenes moved with his army to attack the Persians (the Great Seljuks) in 1068–1069. Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus 126 (TSOLAKES).

⁴¹ Psellos talks about the Saracens who live in Syria Coele (Southern Syria). His remark shows that he calls the Arabs living in southern Syria by the name Saracen. Michael Psellos III 7 (ed. S. IMPELLIZZERI, *Imperatori di Bisanzio: [cronografia] [Scrittori greci e latini]*. Milan 1984, I 78).

⁴² Michael Psellos VII b 20 (II 338 IMPELLIZZERI).

⁴³ Bryennios mentioned Saracens (Σαρακηνοὺς) only when he talked about the Arab expansion in the seventh century. Nikephoros Bryennios I 7 (ed. P. GAUTIER, *Nicéphore Bryennios Histoire [CFHB 9]*. Brussels 1975, 89).

⁴⁴ Bryennios described Alparslan, the Great Seljuk ruler, as a ‘Persian Chief.’ Nikephoros Bryennios I 19 (121 GAUTIER).

Anna Komnene	Died ca. 1153/54	1081–1118	Arabs ⁴⁵	Great Seljuk Turks ⁴⁶
Michael Glykas	12 th century	Creation to 1118	Arabs ⁴⁷	Ancient Persians/Sassanids ⁴⁸
John Kinnamos	Died after 1185	1118–1176	Arabs ⁴⁹	Turks of Anatolia (including the Seljuks of Rūm) ⁵⁰
Eustathios of Thessaloniki	Died 1195/96	1185	Arabs ⁵¹	—
Niketas Choniates	Died 1217	1118–1206	Arabs ⁵²	Turks of Anatolia (including the Seljuks of Rūm) ⁵³
<i>Synopsis Chronike</i>	13 th century ⁵⁴	Creation to 1261	Arabs ⁵⁵	Ancient Persians/Sassanids Turks of Anatolia (including the Seljuks of Rūm) ⁵⁶
The Short Chronicles	Anonymous	From the tenth to the seventeenth centuries	Arabs ⁵⁷	Sassanids, Mongols, and the Seljuks of Rūm) ⁵⁸

⁴⁵ The Saracens that Anna Komnene mentioned in the Alexiad were predominantly Arabs from Syria and Palestine. Anna Komnene mentioned them in the context of the First Crusade. For example, she wrote that the Byzantine forces captured cities on the Syrian coast in their attack against Bohemond, a leader of the First Crusade. She added that these cities were formerly under Saracen rule, referring to Fatimid suzerainty. Anna Komnene, XI 11, 4 (ed. D.R. REINSCH – A. KAMBYLIS, *Annae Comnenae Alexias* [CFHB 40.1]. Berlin – New York 2001, I 354). There is not a single case in the Alexiad where the term ‘Saracen’ referred to a Turk.

⁴⁶ Anna Komnene I 1, 1, VI 3, 3, VI 9, 1, VI 12, 2 (I 11, 172, 186, 194 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

⁴⁷ In the chronicle of Glykas the term ‘Saracen’ denotes the Syrian and Palestinian Arabs of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Michael Glykas 582–583, 587 (BEKKER).

⁴⁸ ‘Persians’ for Glykas were the ancient Persians and the Sassanid Persians confronting Byzantium up to the seventh century. Michael Glykas 151, 243–244, 512 (BEKKER).

⁴⁹ Kinnamos narrated the expeditions of John II Komnenos against Saracens from Palestine and Shaizar. Both locations were populated and ruled by the Arabs. Ioannes Kinnamos I 8 (ed. A. MEINEKE, *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum* [CSHB 25]. Bonn 1836, 18, 20). Manuel Komnenos was attacked by Σαρακηνοί on his march in Cilicia and Syria in 1159. Ioannes Kinnamos IV 21 (188–189 MEINEKE).

⁵⁰ The references to the Turks of Asia Minor during the twelfth century in Epitome of Kinnamos are too numerous to cite here. There is not a single case of Turks being called Τοῦρκοι. Kinnamos always used the term ‘Persian’ to refer to the Seljuks of Rūm or other Turks in Asia Minor. For a few examples, see Ioannes Kinnamos I 2, I 5–9, II 1 (5, 13–24, 30–31 MEINEKE).

⁵¹ The only reference to the Saracens in Eustathios’s account of the Norman capture of Thessaloniki is the presence of Saracen soldiers in the Norman army: Capture of Thessalonike 136 (KYRIAKIDIS). Since the Normans came from Sicily, it is very likely that the Saracens in question were from among the Arab-speaking population of Sicily.

⁵² Choniates uses the term ‘Saracen’ 20 times, and in overwhelming majority of them refer to the Arabs of Syria, Palestine and Egypt. For example, Saracens are mentioned in the context of John Komnenos’ Syrian expedition of 1137–1138, Emperor Manuel’s attack against Damietta in 1169, and the Crusading armies in Syria and Palestine. Nicetae Choniatae historia pars prior, ed. J. VAN DIETEN (CFHB 11.1). Berlin – New York 1975, 30, 162–166, 417. For other examples of Saracens of Egypt and Syria, Niketas Choniates 395, 575 (VAN DIETEN). The other two contexts where the term ‘Saracen’ appears are related to an acrobatic show by a Saracen during the visit of the Seljuk sultan Kılıç Arslan in Constantinople in 1161 and to the sacking of the *mitaton* (warehouse) of the Saracens in Constantinople in 1204 by the Crusaders, Niketas Choniates 120, 553 (VAN DIETEN).

⁵³ There are over 50 references to the term ‘Persian’ in the History of Choniates, and all of them refer to the Turks of Anatolia in the twelfth century.

⁵⁴ Heisenberg had attributed its authorship to Theodore Skutariotes, a thirteenth century ecclesiastical official and the metropolitan of Kyzikos between 1277–1282 (A. HEISENBERG, *Analecta. Mitteilungen aus italienischen Handschriften byzantinischer Chronographen*. Munich 1901, 5–16).

⁵⁵ The term ‘Saracen’ appears 10 times in *Synopsis Chronike*. The references are either to the Arabs of the pre-eleventh century Mediterranean region, or to the Syrian and Palestinian Arabs with which the Crusaders had political and military contact. *Synopsis Chronike* 120, 144, 203, 365, 393, 397–398, 433, 439 (SATHAS).

⁵⁶ There are too many references to give here. For some examples, see *Synopsis Chronike* 4, 14, 17, 33–37, 47, 79, 105, 202–204, 219–220, 282–286, 327, 337–339, 510, 522–523 (SATHAS).

⁵⁷ For the use of the term for Arabs, see *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 45.1.20.24a.31.61, 62.1 (I 331, 333, 334, 335, 340, 461 SCHREINER). For the use of the term for the Mamluks, see *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 28.2.5.8 (I 208–210 SCHREINER). For the use of the term for the troops of Saladin, see *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 32.5, 33. 1, 65.1, 66.1, 67.1 (I 228, 241, 502, 513, 517 SCHREINER).

⁵⁸ For the use of the term for the Sassanids of the seventh century, see *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken* 61.1 (I 461 SCHREINER); for the Timurids, see 53.9 (I 380 SCHREINER); for the Mongols, see 7.25 (I 70 SCHREINER); and for the Seljuks, see 14.74, 15.19, 17.4 (I 144, 161, 170 SCHREINER).

As the table above shows, the archaizing term ‘Saracen’ (Σαρακῆνοι) was never used for a Persian- or Turkish-speaking person or state during the period under investigation in this paper. In the same vein, the archaizing term ‘Persian’ (Πέρσαι) was not applied to Arabs or states in which the ruling elite was Arab. Moreover, other terms to denote the Turkish-speaking people of Asia Minor and the Near East, such as Parthians (Πάρθοι),⁵⁹ Persoscythians (Περσοσκυθῶν),⁶⁰ and Scythopersians (Σκυθοπέρσαι),⁶¹ Persoturks (Περσοτούρκοι), and Turcopersians (Τουρκοπέρσαι)⁶² show how the Byzantine writers associated Turks with Persians.⁶³ The clearest differentiation between the words Saracen and Persian can be traced in a statement that was repeated in the works of Kedrenos, Skylitzes and Nikephoros Bryennios. While describing the rise of the Great Seljuk Turks in the Near East in the eleventh century, each author gives a brief historical lesson on the decline of the Persian Empire at the hands of the Arabs in the seventh century. They write of the time “when the domination of the Persian passed to the Saracens, and when the Saracens became the masters of not only Persia, Media, Babylonia and Assyria ...”⁶⁴ The authors in question clearly had Arabs in mind when they use the word ‘Saracen’.

In view of these observations, Moravcsik’s statement that the term Saracen was used for medieval Turks should be questioned. In his *Byzantinoturcica*, he argues that the term Saracen denoted the Muslim Turks, particularly the Seljuks and the Ottomans, in medieval Byzantine sources.⁶⁵ The argument does not seem to hold water: first, none of the Byzantine sources that we examined above uses the term Saracen for Turks; secondly, the evidence that Moravcsik presents is not convincing enough to accept that the term Saracen meant Turk.

The scholar makes use of three groups of sources to prove his case. First, he mentions two acts from the Lavra Monastery dated to 1079 and 1086 in which ‘Saracens’ appear as Byzantine soldiers among other ethnic groups, and argues that the Saracen soldiers were Turks.⁶⁶ There is no reason why we should assume that the soldiers were ethnically Turks. Soldiers of Arab origin could be found at Byzantine service in the eleventh century.⁶⁷ Secondly, Moravcsik presents as a proof a correspondence between Hilarios, the *protos* of Mt. Athos, and Emperor Alexios Komnenos from around 1110 in which the Saracens appear as foes attacking Mt. Athos.⁶⁸ There is again no internal evidence in the document that the Saracens in question should be Turks. The Aegean Sea was open to Arab raids in the tenth and eleventh centuries. For example, the Byzantine historian Skylitzes dates a ‘Hagarene’ attack on the Cyclades Is-

⁵⁹ Michael Psellos VII 50, 63 (II 240, 258 IMPELLIZZERI).

⁶⁰ Theodore II Laskaris in his *enkomion* of his father John III Vatatzes, composed sometime between 1250 and 1254, describes the Seljuk Turks as Persoscythians. Theodore II Laskaris, In laudem Iohannis Ducae Imperatoris 107 (ed. A. TARTAGLIA, Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris. *Opuscula Rhetorica*. Munich – Leipzig 2000, 28).

⁶¹ Michael Holobolos, teacher and an orator who died in c. 1314, describes the Anatolian Seljuks as Scythopersians in his *enkomion* of the Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos. Manuelis Holoboli orationes, ed. M. TREU. Potsdam 1906, 34, 48.

⁶² Both Persoturks and Turcopersians appear in the following section: Ducas XXII 9 (ed. V. GRECU, *Istoria Turco-Bizantina* (1341–1462) [*Scriptores Byzantini* 1]. Bucharest 1958, 163–165). In the History of Ducas, both ‘Persoturk’ and ‘Turcopersian’ denote the Akkoyunlu state, a Turcoman federation ruling eastern Anatolia, Armenia and western Iran 1379 to 1508.

⁶³ MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* II 359.

⁶⁴ George Kedrenos 767 (II 566 BEKKER): “τῆς δὲ τῶν Περσῶν ἀρχῆς εἰς Σαρακηνούς διαλυθείσης, καὶ τῆς τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἐπικρατείας μὴ μόνον Περσίδος καὶ Μηδίας καὶ Βαβυλῶνος καὶ Ἀσσυρίων κυριευούσης, ...”. Ioannes Skylitzes 442 (THURN). Nikephoros Bryennios I 7 (89 GAUTIER).

⁶⁵ MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* II 252.

⁶⁶ MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* II 268. Moravcsik’s source is *Actes de Lavra* I 31, 41 (ed. G. ROUILLARD – P. COLLOMP [*Archives de l’Athos* 1]. Paris 1937, 82–85, 110–112), see now P. LEMERLE – A. GUILLLOU – N. SVORONOS, *Actes de Lavra*, I 38, 48 (*Archives de l’Athos* 5.1). Paris 1970, 217–219, 258–259.

⁶⁷ Marius Canard provides a number of cases from the ninth to the eleventh centuries in which Arab soldiers were part of the Byzantine army. He argues that some of these soldiers must have been prisoners captured while some others must have been Arabs, mostly Christianized, who immigrated to the Empire. M. CANARD, *Quelques ‘à-côté’ de l’histoire des relations entre Byzance et les Arabes*, in: *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient*. London 1973, 109.

⁶⁸ MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* II 268, I 211. Moravcsik’s source is *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster*, ed. Ph. MEYER. Leipzig 1894 (Reprint Amsterdam 1965), 177.

lands to the reign of Constantine VIII (1025–1028).⁶⁹ The third piece of evidence that Moravcsik presents is from the Chronicle of Leontios Machairas, who was attached to the court of the Lusignans in Cyprus (died after 1432). His chronicle covers the history of the island from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. Contrary to what Moravcsik claims, Leontios actually means the Mamluks of Egypt, not the Turks of Asia Minor, when he speaks of the Saracen invasions of the island in 1424 and 1426.⁷⁰ In short, the only historical work that Moravcsik presents contradicts his claim, and supports our argument that the term ‘Saracen’ stood exclusively for Arabs in Byzantine historical writing.⁷¹

In addition to the consistent use of the term ‘Saracen’ for Arab-speaking people and ‘Persian’ for Persian- and Turkish-speaking people, there were three terms commonly used to denote Muslims in general. They were Hagarenes (Ἀγαρηνοί), Ishmaelites (Ἰσμαηλίται), and Muslims (Μουσουλμάνοι).⁷² These terms represented religious affiliation and had no ethnic connotations; they were employed for Turks and Arabs without distinction. In relating the discussion between the Orthodox Church and Manuel Komnenos about the content of the abjuration of Islamic faith by Muslim converts, Niketas Choniates uses the term Hagarene to denote Muslims.⁷³ Similarly, Anna Komnene writes that Peter (Peter the Hermit) wanted to save Jerusalem from the ‘Hagarenes’ when he was treated badly by ‘Turks and Saracens’ during his pilgrimage in the Holy Land in the late eleventh century.⁷⁴ It is clear that she means both Muslim Turks and Arabs when she writes of the Hagarenes. The Byzantine chronicler Ephraim of Ainos

⁶⁹ Ioannes Skylitzes 373 (THURN). Another proof of Arab attacks on the Aegean islands comes from an act of sale between two monasteries in the year 992. According to this document, ‘Saracens’ raided the island of Gymnopelagesion for 12 days in that year. Actes de Lavra I 10 (ed. P. LEMERLE – A. GUILLOU – N. SVORONOS [Archives de l’Athos 5.1]. Paris 1970, 124). For Gymnopelagesion (today Pelagos island in the Sporades Islands), see *TIB* I 168. Some might argue that later Saracens in question were Turkish raiders under the leadership of Tzachas (Çaka) who appeared in the Aegean Sea in the very last decade of the eleventh century. Even if Çaka was responsible for leading the raids on Mt. Athos, it was very unlikely that his men were Turkish. The Turkish forces that invaded Anatolia would definitely not have been competent at raising sea raids. The fact that Çaka employed Christians to construct a fleet at Smyrna around 1088–91 supports our argument. H. AHRWEILER, *Byzance et la mer: La marine de guerre, la politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe–XVe siècles (Bibliothèque byzantine. Études 5)*. Paris 1966, 184–186. The following story from Anna Komnene’s *Alexiad* shows that Arabs were present in Çaka’s Smyrna in the eleventh century. Right after Byzantine admiral took Smyrna from Çaka, a citizen of Smyrna came to the admiral to complain about a ‘Saracen’ who stole his 500 golden coins. Anna Komnene calls this ‘Saracen’ a few sentences later ‘Syrian.’ Anna Komnene XI 5, 4 (I 337 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS). On the other hand, Anna refers to the forces of Çaka as Turks. Anna Komnene VII 8, 3–4 (I 223 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS). The subject calls for a further research.

⁷⁰ Leontios Makhairas V 651–660, 671–695 (631–639, 651–673 DAWKINS). Makhairas also speaks of a Saracen slave who escaped from Cyprus to Egypt in 1424 and told the Egyptian sultan how the Lusignan ruler of Cyprus, Philip Picquigny, bought the spoils that pirates got from Muslim Syria. This was the cause of the Mamluk attack on Cyprus. Leontios Makhairas V 651 (630 DAWKINS). On the chronicle, see R.M. DAWKINS, *The Nature of the Cypriot Chronicle of Leontios Makhairas (The Taylorian lecture 1945)*. Oxford 1945.

⁷¹ SAVVIDES, *Some Notes* 95, writing on the meaning of the term Saracen, agrees with Moravcsik and takes the term Saracen to represent Muslim Turks as well as Muslim Arabs of the Middle Ages. However, he does not go further than referring the reader to Moravcsik’s evidence, which we presented above. He also admits that the Byzantine Short Chronicles edited by Schreiner “do not record a single case mentioning either Seljuks or Ottomans as ‘Saracens’, a term here denoting the Arabs of Africa and Sicily, the Ayyubids of Saladin and the Mameluks.”

⁷² The available corpus of Byzantine histories using these terms is too large to cover in this article. Examples on the use of these terms for the Seljuk Turks, Ottomans, and Tatars can be found in MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica* II 55, 142, 198. For the term ‘Hagarene/Agarene,’ who was the mother of biblical Ishmael, see Hagar, in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Detroit 2003, VI 608–609. I. SHAHID, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*. Washington, D.C. 1989, 174, 345. Arabs. *ODB* I 149. The term ‘Ishmalite’ is used for followers of Ishmael, son of Abraham. *Ishmaelite*. The Anchor Bible Dictionary III 513–521; *Ismail*. *EI* IV 184. The terms ‘Hagarene’ and ‘Ishmaelite’ were much more common in the early and middle Byzantine period, as opposed to ‘Muslim’ which appeared mostly in late Byzantine texts. For the instances of the use of Hagarene for Arabs, see Ioannes Skylitzes 42, 47, 147, 156, 181, 270, 284, 286 (THURN). Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, *De administrando imperio* 22 (94 MORAVCSIK) describes the Arabs of the tenth century Near East both as Hagarenes and as Arabs.

⁷³ He uses the term Hagarene for both Turks and Arabs, see Niketas Choniates 70, 117, 27–28 (VAN DIETEN) Manuel Komnenos wanted the anathematization to be removed from the abjuration of Islamic faith, which was instituted by the Orthodox Church, because he claimed that Hagarenes should not be forced to blaspheme God while converting. The church officials told him that the anathema was against the prophet Mohammad, not God. Niketas Choniates 213 (VAN DIETEN).

⁷⁴ Anna Komnene X 5, 5 (I 297 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

used the term ‘Hagarene’ first for Arabs in his account of Byzantine wars with the east in the tenth century, then for Turks penetrating Asia Minor during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁷⁵ The term Ishmaelite was employed for Muslims in general as well. While John Skylitzes used the term for Arab-speaking Muslims of the Near East, Anna Komnene meant Turks of the eleventh-century Asia Minor when she used this designation.⁷⁶

Having shown that ethnonyms for eastern people were not used randomly in Byzantine historical writing, but had clear and consistent meanings, we now attempt to examine how archaizing terms were transformed into contemporary signs by simultaneous use of contemporary and archaizing terms for the same ethnic group in the same text. The purpose of using archaizing and non-archaizing terms simultaneously was twofold: to specify which contemporary ethnic groups the archaizing term denoted, and to make use of the cultural and historical associations that the archaizing term raised in reader’s mind. The relationship between archaizing and non-archaizing ethnic terms in historical texts can be summarized as follows.

The first method of juggling contemporary and archaic terms was to associate the archaizing term with the non-archaizing term right away, at the first mention of the ethnic group in question. Sometimes the author used the contemporary term first and then explained it with an archaizing term. For example, Attaleiates writes that Turks are Hephthalite Huns (Οὔννοι Νεφθαλίται) when he refers to the Turks invading Asia Minor for the first time in the text.⁷⁷ Kedrenos writes that “Pechenegs are a Scythian race from the so-called royal Scythians,” and the Oghuz Turks are a Hunnic people.⁷⁸ Similarly, Kinnamos introduces Serbs as “the Serbs, a Dalmatian nation” (Σέρβιοι, ἔθνος Δαλματικόν).⁷⁹ At other times, authors would use the archaizing term first and later explain it with a contemporary term. Thus, Attaleiates wrote of “Persians, who are now called Turks” (οἱ Πέρσαι, Τούρκους δὲ τούτους νυνὶ ὁ λόγος οἶδε καλεῖν).⁸⁰ Likewise, Kinnamos defines one group of soldiers as “Ligurian knights whom we call Lombardian.”⁸¹ After giving both ancient and contemporary terms, authors usually used both terms interchangeably. Attaleiates, after saying Turks were Hunnic people, sometimes employed Τούρκοι and sometimes Οὔννοι to describe Anatolian Turks in later parts of his history.⁸²

In addition to mentioning the archaizing or contemporary terms for the ethnicity when the group was first mentioned in the text, there was another method that the historians employed, which I call ‘random explanation.’ It is random because the explanation comes later at the text, long after the name of the ethnicity has already been given many times. The anonymous author of Synopsis Chronike, a world chronicle which comes down to 1261, mentions Turks (Τούρκοι) twice in the context of Romanos Diogenes’ campaigns in the east in the second half of the eleventh century. On the third time he mentions them, he establishes a connection between Turks and Persians by using the following phrase: “Turks whom we also call Persians.”⁸³ Another example comes from Skylitzes, who spoke of Pecheneg individuals (Πατζινάκοι) many times in his history, and only at a very late point wrote that “Pechenegs are

⁷⁵ Ephraim of Ainos 3167, 3937, 6783, 6937, 6945 (ed. O. LAMPSIDES, Ephraem Aenii Historia chronica [CFHB 27]. Athens 1990, 118, 145, 241, 246).

⁷⁶ Ioannes Skylitzes 69, 76, 98, 102, 135 (THURN). Anna Komnene X 5, 7 (I 298 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

⁷⁷ Michael Attaleiates, Historia 33–34 (ed. I. PÉREZ MARTÍN) [Nueva Roma 15]. Madrid 2002). The Hephthalite Huns (White Huns) were a nomadic confederation from Central Asia that attacked Persia in the fifth century and India in the sixth century. B.A. LIVINSKY, The Hephthalite Empire, in: History of Civilizations of Central Asia, ed. A.H. DANI *et alii*. Paris 1999, III 135.

⁷⁸ George Kedrenos 581–582 (II BEKKER).

⁷⁹ Ioannes Kinnamos I 5 (12 MEINEKE). Nikephoros Gregoras gives an account of the origins of the Bulgarians the first time he mentions them. He writes that Bulgarians were originally Scythian people. Nikephoros Gregoras II 2 (ed. I. BEKKER – L. SCHOPEN, Nicephori Gregorae historiae Byzantinae [CSHB 6–8]. Bonn 1829–1855, I 26).

⁸⁰ Michael Attaleiates 80 (PÉREZ MARTÍN). He also described Pechenegs as “Scythians, who are called Petchenegs in vulgar language.” Michael Attaleiates 24 (PÉREZ MARTÍN): “Σκύθαι δέ, οὓς Πατζινάκους οἶδεν ὁ δημῶδης λόγος καλεῖν”.

⁸¹ Ioannes Kinnamos V 9 (228 MEINEKE): “τὸ Λιγούρων εἶτ’ οὖν Λαμπάρδων ἐτροπώσατο ἔθνος ...”.

⁸² Michael Attaleiates 44–45, 59, 102, 119, 191 (PÉREZ MARTÍN).

⁸³ Synopsis Chronike 183 (SATHAS).

Scythian people.”⁸⁴ After mentioning the term Oghuz (Οὐζοί) three times in his discussion of Romanos Diogenes’ army moving towards the east in 1068–1069, Skylitzes Continuatus describes the Oghuz mercenaries in Diogenes’ army finally as “Scythians, I mean the Oghuz.”⁸⁵ The same mechanism is at work in the definition of Hungarians in the history of Niketas Choniates. Choniates first described Hungarians as ‘Huns’; later in text, he mentioned “Pannonians whom they call Hungarian and Huns.”⁸⁶

In addition to the direct approaches that provided clarification of reference, a more indirect method was to juxtapose the archaizing and contemporary terms without directly equating them. I call this method ‘implied explanation’ because the meaning was transferred to the reader without explicit guidance as to what the archaizing or contemporary terms stood for. Many histories in our list employed this method. In the description of a campaign of John Komnenos, Niketas Choniates first used the term ‘Persian’ in reference to Anatolian Seljuk soldiers, then a few sentences later used the term Turks (Τούρκοι) to identify the same soldiers.⁸⁷ Neither Ephraim nor Nikephoros Gregoras had qualms about alternating usage of the terms ‘Persian’ and ‘Turkish’ for the same people.⁸⁸ The mechanism of implied explanation is not peculiar to references to Turks. Anna Komnene employs the terms Kelts (Κελτοί) and Latins (Λατίνοι) interchangeably for the western European people.⁸⁹ The confusing designation of ‘Scythian,’ which Byzantine historians used to define various tribes of the North, seems less confusing when we look for interchangeable use of archaizing and non-archaizing terms. For instance, Niketas Choniates used the word ‘Scythian’ for both Pechenegs and Cumans in his history, but he also included contemporary appellations in order to alleviate the degree of confusion about the identity of the Scythians. Choniates gave a long account of the ‘Scythians’ passing the Danube and attacking the Byzantine Empire in 1121/22; in this section, the reader finds out that the Scythians in question were Pechenegs, because Choniates writes at the very end of his account: “Having achieved such a glorious victory over the Scythians, and having raised a huge trophy, he [John II Komnenos] offered prayers to God, establishing what we call today as the festival of Pechenegs as a remembrance and thanksgiving for these deeds.”⁹⁰ The reader realizes that the Scythians in question were Pechenegs because the victory over the Scythians was celebrated as the festival of Pechenegs. Likewise, the identity of the Scythians (Σκύθαι), who together with Vlachs attacked the Byzantine Empire in the last two decades of the twelfth century, becomes clear to the reader because Choniates calls these Scythians ‘Cuman’ (Κομάνοι) and ‘Scythian’ interchangeably.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Ioannes Skylitzes 455 (THURN).

⁸⁵ Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus 135 (TSOLAKES): “Παριόντων δὲ τῶν στρατιωτῶν καὶ τοῦ μισθοφορικοῦ τῶν Σκυθῶν, τῶν Οὐζῶν φημί, ...”. For previous references, see Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus 114, 115, 125 (TSOLAKES). ‘Ouzes’ were a confederation of the Oghuz Turks that moved west of Volga under the Cuman pressure in the tenth century. They crossed Danube in 1064, and many Oghuz became Byzantine mercenaries. Uzes. *ODB* III 2147–2148. P. GOLDEN, *The Migrations of the Oğuz*. *Archivum Ottomanicum* 4 (1972) 80–84.

⁸⁶ Niketas Choniates 17, 100 (VAN DIETEN).

⁸⁷ Niketas Choniates 12–13 (VAN DIETEN). For another example of interchangeable use of the terms ‘Persian’ and ‘Turkish,’ see Niketas Choniates 175–176 (VAN DIETEN).

⁸⁸ Ephraim of Ainos 4093, 4104, 4106, 4279 (150, 151, 157 LAMPSIDES). Nikephoros Gregoras I 3–4 (I 17–20 SCHOPEN).

⁸⁹ While narrating the war with the Normans in 1081–1082, Anna calls Robert’s army both ‘Kelt’ and ‘Latin’. Anna Komnene IV 6, 2–6 (I 133–134 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS). Speaking of the arrival of the armies of the First Crusade, Anna Komnene X 5, 4–5 (I 297 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS) describes them as ‘Kelt’ in one sentence, as ‘Latin’ in another. And when Bohemond of Tarent asked for hostages from Alexios Komnenos, the emperor sent the Neapolitan Marinus and the Frank Roger, who were both “well versed in Latin customs,” and Adralestos “who understood the Celtic language.” Anna Komnene XIII 9, 1 (I 408 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS). It is impossible not to see the juxtaposition of the terms ‘Latin’ and ‘Celtic’ in the last example.

⁹⁰ Niketas Choniates 16 (VAN DIETEN): “Τοιαύτην νίκην περιφανή κατὰ Σκυθῶν ὁ Ἰωάννης ἀράμενος καὶ μέγιστον στήσας τρόπαιον τὰς εὐχὰς θεῷ ἀποδίδωσι, τὴν τῶν Πετζινάκων λεγομένην ἐς ἡμᾶς τελετὴν εἰς ἀναμνηστήρια τῶν πεπραγμένων ἀποτάξας καὶ χαριστήρια”.

⁹¹ Choniates described Cumans as ‘Scythians’ when they and the Vlachs attacked Isaak Angelos’ army in 1187. Niketas Choniates 397 (VAN DIETEN). A few pages later he called them ‘Cuman.’ Niketas Choniates 428 (VAN DIETEN). In the rest of his narrative on the Cuman attacks on the Empire, Choniates used the terms ‘Cumans’ (Κομάνοι) and ‘Scythians’ (Σκύθαι) in alternation. Niketas Choniates 455, 487, 500–501, 522–523, 629 (VAN DIETEN).

Apart from the interchangeable use of archaizing and contemporary terms, references to the location and ruler of the people in question could help the reader associate the ancient term with contemporary reality. For example, John Kinnamos described the Anatolian Seljuk ruler Kılıç Arslan II as “the sultan who ruled Lykaonia.”⁹² For Choniates, the Danishmendid ruler Tanismanios was a ‘Persarmenian,’ and the Anatolian Seljuk enemies against whom John Komnenos sent a division of his army in the expedition of 1137–39 were “Persians of Ikonion.”⁹³ In the examples above, the archaizing terms ‘Persian’ and ‘Persarmenian’ find their contemporary meaning with the help of the name of the ruler and the location.

Having examined the mechanisms by which the ancient name is associated with the contemporary, I would like to bring out a peculiar case where the ancient and contemporary terms for one ethnicity did not mean exactly the same thing. The examples that I provided about the Turks so far equate Turks (Τούρκοι) with Persians (Πέρσαι). We might ask, however, if there was actually a distinction between ‘Turks’ and ‘Persians’. There was a distinction in the works of Byzantine historians who gave accounts of both the Great Seljuks of the Near East and the Turks of Asia Minor in the eleventh century. They used the term ‘Persian’ to denote the Great Seljuks while employing the term ‘Turkish’ to denote the Turks of Asia Minor. There was no need to apply such a distinction for Byzantine historians who referred only to the Great Seljuk Turks and not to the Anatolian Turks in their works. For example, Michael Psellos, writing in the eleventh century, called the Great Seljuk sultan the ‘the sultan of the Persians,’ while he did not refer to the Turkish incursions at all.⁹⁴ On the other hand, Nikephoros Bryennios and Anna Komnene differentiated between the Great Seljuks and the Turkish invaders in Anatolia by using the terms ‘Turk’ and ‘Persian’. Bryennios from the early twelfth century called the Great Seljuk ruler Alp Arslan a ‘Persian Chief’ with ‘Persian forces,’ and the territory of his empire ‘Persia’,⁹⁵ while he called the Turks of the eleventh century Anatolia ‘Τούρκοι,’ not ‘Πέρσαι.’⁹⁶ Similarly, the twelfth-century writer Anna Komnene intended to refer to the Great Seljuks every time she used the word Persian in the *Alexiad* (6 times). The Turkish invaders of Anatolia, those who established the Anatolian Seljuk state in Nicaea, and other political actors and armies in the peninsula are all called Turks (more than 50 times). They are never called Persian.⁹⁷ For example, Anna describes the forces of Turkish amir Sulayman that roamed around Bithynia in 1081 as ‘Turk’, while a few sentences later, she calls the Great Seljuk Alp Arslan a ‘Persian Sultan.’⁹⁸

On the other hand, historians such as Niketas Choniates, John Kinnamos, and George Akropolites, who all lived in and wrote about the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, employed the terms ‘Persian’ and ‘Turkish’ interchangeably for the Turks of Asia Minor, because there was no longer any need for a dis-

⁹² Ioannes Kinnamos VI 12 (288 MEINEKE): “καὶ τοῦ Λυκαονίας ἡγεμονεύοντος σουλτάν”. Other Byzantine writers used location names to define people or states as well. For instance, Leo the Deacon I 2 (6 HASE) calls the rule of Cretan emirate “τὴν τῶν Ἀραβιτῶν Κρητῶν δυναστείαν”. Likewise, in his *enkomion* for the metropolitan of Chonai, Michael Choniates describes the Seljuk Turks of Anatolia who came for trade to the fair of Chonai in the twelfth century as ‘Barbarian Ikonians.’ Michael Akominatou *του Choniatou ta sozomena* (ed. S. LAMPROS). Athens 1879–80, I 56).

⁹³ Niketas Choniates 19 (VAN DIETEN): “Περσαρμένιος Τανισμάνιος.” Niketas Choniates 31 (VAN DIETEN): “στέλλει κατὰ τῶν Ἰκονιέων Περσῶν ἀπόμοιράν τινα τοῦ στρατεύματος”. Likewise, Theophanes Continuatus V 53 (290 BEKKER) uses the word ‘οἱ δὲ ἐξ Ἀφρικῆς Σαρακηνοί’ to define the Fatimids. In this example, the reference of the term Saracen becomes much clearer with the help of the geographical epithet ‘Africa’.

⁹⁴ Michael Psellos VII b 20 (II 338 IMPELLIZZERI).

⁹⁵ Nikephoros Bryennios I 19, I 25, I 14, I 13 (121, 137, 111, 105 GAUTIER). In the work of Bryennios, the Great Seljuks were described both as Turks and Persians while the Turks in Asia Minor were called only ‘Turks’ (Τούρκοι).

⁹⁶ Bryennios described the Turkish invaders in the eleventh century Asia Minor only as ‘Turks’ (Τούρκοι). Nikephoros Bryennios I 7–10, I 15–17, IV 10–14 (89–99, 111–119, 275–281 GAUTIER).

⁹⁷ Anna Komnene used the term ‘Persian’ specifically for the Great Seljuk armies and sultans. Anna Komnene I 1, 1, VI 3, 3, VI 9, 1, VI 12, 2 (I 11, 172, 186, 194 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS). It is important to note here that she used the term ‘Turk’ for both the Great Seljuks of the Near East and the Turks of the eleventh-century Anatolia. However, she reserved the use of the term ‘Persian’ exclusively for the Great Seljuks.

⁹⁸ Anna Komnene VI 9, 1 (I 186 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

inction between the Great Seljuk Turks and the Turks of Anatolia at that time.⁹⁹ The Great Seljuk Empire was no longer active in the political affairs of Asia Minor by the twelfth century, and the Seljuks of Rūm had by then fully established themselves in Konya/Ikonion. The Seljuks of Rūm were the new Persians. However, even though we observe a transformation of the term Persian from Iranian to Anatolian context in a century, the same transformation never took place for the toponym ‘Persia’ (Πέρσις). For all of the historians from the eleventh to the late thirteenth centuries, Persia was a territory to the east of Asia Minor and Armenia, i.e. today’s Iran. In other words, the land of the ‘Persians’ in Anatolia never became Persia.¹⁰⁰

In conclusion, archaizing terms for ethnic groups were connected to contemporary realities that were constructed in the Byzantine historical works of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Archaizing ethnonyms for the eastern neighbors of Byzantium, which had already consistent references to certain contemporary people, acquired more specific meanings by the help of the non-archaizing ethnonyms. As I have tried to show, the terms ‘Saracen’ and ‘Persian’ were not vague categories used loosely for easterners, but represented certain foreign ethnic groups: Saracens were the Arabic-speaking people of the Islamic world, while Persians were Iranian-speaking people or people who fell under the influence of Persian culture and language, such as the Khurramites, the Buyids, and the Turks.

This provides counterevidence for the argument put forth by Bosworth, who writes that Saracen “was a vague term used in the West for the Arabs and, eventually, other Islamic peoples of the Near East, in both pre-Islamic and medieval times.”¹⁰¹ This might have been true for Western Europe, but ‘Saracen’ was not a term used for Islamic peoples other than Arabs in Byzantium in the Middle Ages, as the research presented here demonstrates. In addition, when there was a need to differentiate among the ‘Persians,’ the term ‘Persian’ acquired even a more specific meaning. Byzantine historians talking about eleventh-century Asia Minor therefore assigned the term ‘Persian’ to the Great Seljuks, while ‘Turkish’ was a term used for Turkish adventurers who roamed Asia Minor at that time.

Moreover, archaizing terms were not definitions frozen in time, but were allocated new meanings in response to changing political situations. The shift in the meaning of ‘Persian’ – from a term defining the Great Seljuks of the Near East to a term denoting Anatolian Seljuks – in the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries was a result of the shift in the political power relations along the eastern border of the Byzantine Empire. At the same time, ideology played an influential role in the formation of or survival of the meanings of archaizing terms. The fact that Byzantine historians never described Seljuk Asia Minor as Persia is one manifestation of the continuing Byzantine political claim on this lost territory at the linguistic level.

Byzantine historians provided the reader with sufficient clues to help reduce the anarchic polysemantic potential of the text into a manageable form. The reader was not always informed from the beginning as to which specific people a particular archaism referred. The reader himself was forced to determine which people were meant by Persian or Scythian in the text. Archaizing ethnic terms in their dialogue with contemporary realities created a frame of reference in which the reader interpreted the text; at the same time, subsequent text could change his or her original understanding. Interchangeable use of archaizing and contemporary ethnic terms for the same people, ‘random explanations’ that appear in the

⁹⁹ The following are a few selected references since all three authors speak of Turks of the twelfth century very frequently in their works. Ioannes Kinnamos I 5–6, II 5–7, VII 2 (13–15, 38–39, 41–44, 52–54, 295–297 MEINEKE). Niketas Choniates 12–15, 175–176 (VAN DIETEN). George Akropolites 65, 71, 77 (ed. A.D. PANAGIOTOU, *Chronike syngraphe [Keimena Byzantines historiographias]* 12]. Athens 2003, 228–232, 248, 264). Historian Nikephoros Gregoras, who died in the mid-fourteenth century, describes the Seljuks of Konya both as Turks and Persians. Nikephoros Gregoras I 3–4 (I 17–20 SCHOPEN).

¹⁰⁰ For the term ‘Persia’ representing Iran, see George Kedrenos 567 (II BEKKER). Nikephoros Bryennios I 7–9, I 13 (89, 95, 105–107 GAUTIER). Anna Komnene VI 12, 4, XIV 3, 8, XV 10, 5 (I 195, 437, 493 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS). Michael Glykas 613 (BEKKER). Skylitzes Continuatus relates that Romanos Diogenes moved with his army towards Persia to attack the Persians (the Great Seljuks) in 1068–1069. Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus 126 (TSOLAKES). On three more occasions the center of the Great Seljuk Empire is described as ‘Persia’. Ioannes Skylitzes continuatus 129, 157, 177 (TSOLAKES).

¹⁰¹ Saracen. *EI* IX 27.

middle of the text, and contextual clues (such as geographical references and name of the ruler for the ethnic group in question) were provided by the writer to help concretize the meaning in histories. To give one example of how this could work, when Anna Komnene wrote towards the end of the *Alexiad* that the Byzantine Empire was surrounded by Scythians in the north, Kelts in the west, Saracens in the south, and Ishmaelites in the east, her reader could construct from the totality of her history that the Scythians were Pechenegs, Kelts were Western Europeans, Saracens were Arabs, and Eastern Ishmaelites were Muslim Turks.¹⁰²

In this article, I investigated the process by which Byzantine historians gave contemporary meaning to archaizing ethnonyms in historical texts. In other words, it was tried to show that Byzantine writers could contextualize the archaizing terms in time and space. Some readers of this article might be disappointed by the focus of the present work, criticizing me for not seeing the extremely rich semantic possibilities that the dialogue between the archaizing and non-archaizing terms created in the text. The criticism would be well taken. It was not always the archaizing ethnonyms that needed contextualization. On many occasions, Byzantine historians employed an archaizing term to make sense of the name of an obscure foreign tribe. For instance, when John Skylitzes wrote that the Rhos (Ῥῶς) were a merciless and savage race of Scythians, he made use of the connotations that the word ‘Scythian’ raised.¹⁰³ These connotations in turn inform the meaning of the term ‘Rhos’ in the mind of a Byzantine reader.

The archaizing terms were also turned into contemporary signs in hybrid forms, informing the reader much more than an endonym could. The fifteenth-century historian Doukas referred to the tribal federation of Akkoyunlu, who ruled over western Iran and eastern Anatolia in the fifteenth century, as ‘Persoturks’ (Περσοτούρκοι)¹⁰⁴ because this term, made up of the archaizing term ‘Persian’ and non-archaizing term ‘Turk,’ reflected the nature of the Akkoyunlu state very well. The Akkoyunlu were a Turkish tribal federation led by the members of the Oghuz clan, and at the same time Iranian influences were dominant in their method of government and culture.¹⁰⁵ The connotations that the archaizing term ‘Persian’ raised contributed to the establishment of contemporary meaning in case of ‘Persoturks.’ Therefore, a thorough investigation of the role of archaisms in creating meaning requires us to see the multiple levels at which the archaizing and the non-archaizing influenced each other.

¹⁰² “Ἄμα γὰρ κατὰ ταῦτόν καὶ Σκύθης ἀπὸ βορρᾶ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐσπέρας Κελτὸς καὶ ἐξ ἀνατολῶν Ἰσμαὴλ ἐτετάρακτο, χωρὶς τῶν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης κινδύνων, ἄνευ τῶν θαλασσοκρατούντων βαρβάρων, ἄνευ τῶν πειρατικῶν ἀναρίθμων νηῶν ἅς ἢ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἐτεκτόνευσε μῆνις, ἅς ἢ τῶν Οὐρετόνων συνεπλέξατο πλεονεξία καὶ κατὰ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς βασιλείας δύσνοια.” Anna Komnene XIV 7, 2 (I 450 REINSCH – KAMBYLIS).

¹⁰³ Ioannes Skylitzes 107 (THURN): “ἔθνος δὲ οἱ Ῥῶς Σκυθηκόν, περὶ τὸν ἄρκτῶν Ταῦρον κατῳκημένον, ἀνήμερόν τε καὶ ἄγριον”.

¹⁰⁴ Ducas XXII 9 (163–165 GRECU).

¹⁰⁵ İ.H. UZUNÇARŞILI, Osmanlı devleti teşkilâtına medhal: Büyük Selçukiler, Anadolu Selçukileri, Anadolu beylikleri, İlhâniler, Karakoyunlu ve Akkoyunlularla Memlûklerdeki devlet teşkilâtına bir bakış [Introduction to the Organization of Ottoman State: A Look at the State Organization among Great Seljuks, Seljuks of Rûm, Anatolian Principalities, Akkoyunlu, Karakoyunlu and Mamluks]. Istanbul 1941, 286–287. For more on the Akkoyunlu, see J.E. WOODS, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire: A Study in 15th/9th Century Turko-Iranian Politics*. Minneapolis 1976.