

Sir Emanuel Asanes *alias* Sophianos of Tregoose, a fifteenth-century Greek émigré in Cornwall*

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This paper discusses the career of Emanuel Asanes Sophianos, a Byzantine refugee who settled in Cornwall in the aftermath of the fall of the despotate of the Morea to the Ottomans. It traces his later career in England and marriage to an English widow. The unusually detailed documentation for Asanes' later life aside, it is of particular interest on account of his association with one of the most notorious aristocratic law-breakers in the period.

In recent years, detailed research has quantified what had long been evident from anecdotal evidence: that far from being Shakespeare's 'little world', moated by the silver sea, medieval England was in fact rich in inhabitants who had crossed that sea, some for short sojourns, often occasioned by business or diplomacy, others for longer stays.¹ There were merchants who came to trade, foreign-born bankers who staffed English branches of their Italian houses, and artisans who brought skills sought after among the native population. Many of these immigrants formed their own communities, like the Hanseatic merchants of the London steelyard, and were indeed often forced to do so by legislation and regulations seeking to limit their activities; others integrated apparently seamlessly, like the allegedly Breton-born Salisbury merchant John Aport who (like his synonymous son after him) rose to become mayor of his city without ever being naturalized, or the Italian-born Christopher Ambrose who served as mayor of York in 1486 and 1497.²

* I am grateful to Dr Niccolo Fattori who initially alerted me to Asanes' likely background, and to Professor Jonathan Harris and Dr Simon Payling for their comments on a draft of this essay. I am further indebted to this journal's editors and anonymous referees for their helpful comments.

1 For an introduction to the subject and the extant literature, see W.M. Ormrod, B. Lambert, and J. Mackman, *Immigrant England, 1300–1550* (Manchester 2018).

2 The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Exchequer, E 136/198/1; B. Lambert, 'Citizenry and nationality: the participation of immigrants in urban politics in later medieval England', *History Workshop Journal* 90 (2020) 52–73, esp. 58–9.

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DOI: [10.1017/byz.2025.1](https://doi.org/10.1017/byz.2025.1)

If England's markets, by the 1460s recovering from the impact of the loss of the English King's French dominions and the wider economic downturn of the first half of the 15th century, continued to attract merchants from across the continent, the political upheavals of the Wars of the Roses served to deter others. In 1453 the country's long-serving ruler, King Henry VI (1422-71), of the Lancastrian line of the house of Plantagenet, had suffered a mental collapse which for a time deprived him of the ability to exercise his regal powers. By 1455 he had recovered sufficiently to resume his duties, but now faced an armed challenge from his second cousin, Richard, Duke of York, and the latter's associates, the Neville Earls of Salisbury and Warwick. The failure of the 'Love-day' ceremonies of May 1458, a final attempt to bring about a reconciliation of the respective supporters of Lancaster and York, in 1459 saw the country descend into open civil war. In March 1461, Henry VI was deposed and the duke of York's son installed on the throne as Edward IV. Victory at the battle of Towton in March 1461 saw the Lancastrian insurgency driven back to the kingdom's outskirts, while Edward's rule was accepted in its heartlands.

One group of refugees remained largely unaffected by England's internal turmoil. In the wake of the conquest of the last remaining fragments of the former Byzantine empire by the Ottoman Turks much of Christian Europe was awash with refugees, and a number of them crossed the Channel.³ Of these, a few came to raise ransoms for captured friends and relatives, others sought funds towards expeditions to recover lost territories, and some, having lost their homes, were here to stay.

An example of the latter category was a Greek émigré whose name was variously rendered in English records as Emanuel Assanus, Assianus, Essanes, Sanes, or Suffianus. What makes him noteworthy is above all that he was part of a relatively select group of aliens who found a place among the upper echelons of English society, and whose careers are thus documented in a degree of detail. Moreover, where many Greek exiles led peripatetic lives, not settling anywhere for any length of time, Assanes' progress was rather more purposeful. Alongside a small group of foreign-born ladies who married into the English nobility below the ranks of the royal family, such as Lucia Visconti, Countess of Kent, or Marie of Maine, Countess of Devon,⁴ there were also one or two foreign-born

3 J. Harris, *Greek Émigrés in the West, 1400–1520* (Camberley 1995); M. Couderc, *Identités subies, identités intégrées: les Grecs dans l'Europe du Nord-Ouest (XV^e-XV^e Siècle)* (Paris 2023); for a recent discussion of the evidence from Scotland, A.C. Grant, 'Scotland's "Vagabonding Grekes", 1453–1688', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 46 (2022) 81–97; for the Low Countries, Hendrik Callewier, "'For help and comfort and to resist the enemy of God": Greek refugees in the Burgundian Low Countries', *Journal of Medieval History* 50 (2024) 119–39; and for lists of refugees see N. Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins* (Cambridge 2009) 305–6, and Couderc, *Identités subies*, 434–590.

4 H. Bradley, 'Lucia Visconti, countess of Kent (d.1424)', in C.M. Barron and A.F. Sutton (eds.), *Medieval London Widows* (London 1994) 77–84; J. Mackman, "'Hidden gems" in the records of the common pleas: new evidence on the legacy of Lucy Visconti' in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century VIII: rule, redemption and representation in late medieval England and France* (Woodbridge 2008) 59–72; M. Cherry, 'Courtenay, Thomas, thirteenth earl of Devon', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

knights who found their place in English society. Of these, the Silesian Sir Hartung von Clux, admitted to the Order of the Garter by Henry V in 1421, is perhaps the best known, but there were also others, such as the Dane Sir Andrew Ogard who fought for the English in France (including at the great victory at Verneuil in 1424, where he was knighted) and successively married into two East Anglian families.⁵ Unlike these men, or indeed their counterparts at the Burgundian court, Emanuel Asanes did not, as far as it is possible to tell, become established in England through his service to the English Crown.⁶ Nor, however, was he merely a temporary visitor. Unlike many of his erstwhile compatriots, he did not wander through a succession of northern European states and territories, but – as far as it is possible to tell – came to England and made his new home there.⁷

As with many of the Greeks scattered across the west following the fall of the Byzantine empire and its satellites, the man's origins are difficult to establish for certain, but letters of denization, granted him by Edward IV on 25 July 1467, claimed that he hailed from the Peloponnese.⁸ Following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Despotate of the Morea, the political entity comprising of this peninsula, had been allowed to continue as an Ottoman vassal state, ruled in uneasy cohabitation by Demetrios and Thomas Palaiologos, the surviving brothers of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI. Before long, the activities of the rulers and aristocracy of the Morea in plotting a reconquest of Constantinople persuaded Sultan Mehmed II to put an end to its independence, and in a two-year campaign lasting intermittently from 1458 to 1460 he proceeded to conquer the territory remaining to the two Palaiologoi. The despot Demetrios allowed himself to be pensioned off by the sultan, but Thomas fled, first, in July 1460, to Corfu, and subsequently, in November of the same year, to Italy.⁹

Emanuel Asanes Sophianos' dual surnames supported his claim to Peloponnesian origins, as well as to his noble birth, for the Asanes and Sophianoï were two of the leading families of the Morea.¹⁰ The Asanes traced their line back to the

5 F.B. Fahlbusch, 'Hartung von Klux: Ritter König Heinrichs V., Rat Sigismunds' in F.B. Fahlbusch and P. Johanek (eds.), *Studia Luxemburgensia: Festschrift Heinz Stoob zum 70. Geburtstag* (Warendorf 1989) 353–403; R.A. Griffiths, 'Sir Hartung von Klux', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; C.E. Moreton, 'Sir Andrew Ogard', in L. Clark (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The Commons 1422–61* (Cambridge 2020), V, 702–8.

6 Couderc, *Identités subies*, 274–5.

7 Couderc, *Identités subies*, 133–4.

8 Such letters conferred upon the recipient a legal status akin (albeit not identical) to that of a native Englishman.

9 D.A. Zakythenos, *Le despotat grec de Morée*, 2 vols (Paris 1932–53) I, 285–97, esp. 287–8; Necipoğlu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins*. For Thomas in exile see Harris, *Greek Émigrés*, 111–12; S. Ronchey, 'Orthodoxy on sale: the last Byzantine, and the lost crusade' in E. Jeffreys and F.K. Haarer (eds.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London 21–26 August 2006* (Farnham 2006) 313–42; [R.C. Fowler and R.F. Isaacson (eds.)], *Calendar of the Patent Rolls, 1467–77* (London 1900) 65.

10 An impression of Sir Emanuel's seal which might shed further light on his origins appears to be attached to Devon Record Office, Fortescue of Castle Hill MSS, 1262M/TC/79, but is preserved in a protective cloth cover. In July 2022 the seal was found by archive staff to be too fragile to be unwrapped and examined.

thirteenth-century imperial family of Bulgaria, the last representative of which, Ivan Asan III, had fled to the court of Constantinople in 1280. Both through Ivan's marriage to Irene, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, and later matches made by his descendants, the family were closely connected with the Palaiologan imperial dynasty. In the 1450s, Matthias Asanes who served as the governor of the strategically important city of Corinth tightened his bond with the Palaiologoi by the marriage of his sister Theodora to the despot Demetrios. The Sophianoï, although less directly connected with the imperial family, were nevertheless among the principal landowners in the Morea and in the ranks of the *archontes*. Following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople and the Morea, various members of both families took refuge in Italy.¹¹

Emanuel Asanes Sophianos' place within the pedigrees of the two families remains obscure, but it is likely that his double name indicated a connection with both, a practice popular among the Greek nobility in the fifteenth century.¹² He was apparently part of the circle of the despot Thomas Palaiologos, perhaps indeed part of the entourage with whom he sailed for Italy in late 1460.¹³ By a – sadly undated – letter, Thomas recommended Emanuel, 'a noble, and – before leaving our homeland – a rich man, but now through common misfortune unlucky', to Ludovico Gonzaga, Marquess of Mantua.¹⁴ Asanes' mission to the marquess was the raising of funds for the recovery of the Morea, and it is possible that it was a similar mission that first took him to England. While Henry VI had taken some interest in Pius II's plans for a crusade to recapture Constantinople from the Ottomans and had sent ambassadors to the Council of Mantua, the outbreak of the latest round of the fighting in the ongoing wars of the Roses from 1459 to 1461 had effectively ruled out English participation in such an enterprise on any substantial scale. The relative pacification of the kingdom after Edward IV's accession and victory at Towton may have held out renewed hope that England and its young king might be prevailed upon to contribute to an expedition to the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁵

One possibility is thus that Asanes initially came to England in the early 1460s at his master's behest to solicit support and funds for Pope Pius II's planned crusade. If so, he

11 Zakythenos, *Le despotat grec*, I, 122, 256–60; II, 110–11, 117, 174, 212, 214; E. Trapp, R. Walter and H.-V. Beyer (eds.), *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit* (Vienna 1976–2000), nos. 1484, 1490, 1508, 1510, 26396.

12 J. Harris, 'Despots, emperors and Balkan identity in exile', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 44 (2013) 643–61 (646).

13 Zakythenos, *Le despotat grec*, I, 288.

14 '*virum nobilem et ante nostre patrie ammissionem locupie tum nunc autem ob communia infortunia infelicem*': Zakythenos, *Le despotat grec*, I, 290. The letter is printed by S.P. Lambros, *Παλαιολόγεια και Πελοποννησιακά* (Athens 1912–30), IV, 238. The letter is dated at Rome, on 15 March, and thus post-dates Thomas Palaiologos' arrival there on 7 March 1461.

15 C. Head, 'Pope Pius II and the Wars of the Roses', *Archivum Historiae Pontificae* 8 (1970) 139–78; M.M. Harvey, *England, Rome and the Papacy, 1417–64* (Manchester 1993) 193–213.

might have been overtaken there by the deaths in quick succession of the pope and Thomas Palaiologos in 1464 and 1465. Alternatively, he might have remained in Italy until Thomas' death, and only set out for England when his lord's demise had left him bereft of a master.¹⁶

Whatever the truth of the matter, it seems clear from his decision to seek denization that by the summer of 1467 Asanes had resolved to make England his permanent home. The chronology of his life in England is at least partly conjectural, but if he initially gravitated to London it may have been at this early stage that he took chambers in New Inn, one of the inns of Chancery on the western outskirts of the city. While the primary function of the legal inns in London's western suburb was to provide a base for communities of lawyers and the training of law students, it is clear that in many instances they were also used by members of the gentry as prototype gentlemen's clubs, convenient and congenial surroundings in which to take residence when in the capital.¹⁷ A good deal of what is known of the membership of particularly the smaller inns in the period is derived from later litigation over unpaid rents (known as pensions) to the inns, and it is from such records that we know of Asanes' association with New Inn: between 1482 and 1488 he was named among the men sued by successive principals of the inn for debt; that is, the payments outstanding for his membership.¹⁸

16 In a recent article, Jonathan Harris has suggested that members of the Neville family, the prolific aristocratic family dominant in English politics between 1460 and 1471, may have provided a focal point for a number of Greek refugees: 'Refugees and international networks after the fall of Constantinople (1453–1475)', *English Historical Review* 137 (2022) 362–85. No direct connection between Asanes and the Nevilles has been established, but it may be at least suggestive that George Neville, chancellor of England from 1460 to 1467 was from 1455 to 1465 bishop of Exeter, the diocese that included Sir Emanuel's future home in Cornwall: M. Hicks, 'Neville, George (1432–1476)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. In this context, it is interesting to speculate whether Asanes might have known another Emanuel, the learned scribe 'Emanuel of Constantinople' who is thought to have been employed by two successive chancellors of England, William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, and George Neville, Bishop of Exeter and subsequently Archbishop of York: M.R. James, 'The Scribe of the Leicester Codex', *Journal of Theological Studies* 5 (1904) 445–7 and 'Two more manuscripts written by the scribe of the Leicester Codex', *Journal of Theological Studies* 11 (1910) 291–2; P.S. Allen, 'Bishop Shirwood of Durham and his Library', *English Historical Review* 25 (1910) 445–56 (446); H.L. Gray, 'Greek visitors to England in 1455–56', *Anniversary Essays by Students of Charles Homer Haskins* (Boston 1929) 81–116; S. Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity* (Cambridge 1968) 289; J.W. Bennett, 'John Morer's Will: Thomas Linacre and Prior Sellyng's Greek Teaching', *Studies in the Renaissance* 15 (1968) 70–91 (84); D.M. Nicol, 'Byzantium and England', *Balkan Studies* 15 (1974) 173–203 (201); L. Orlandi, 'Da Bologna all'Inghilterra: un codice di Leida, Emanuele da Costantinopoli e l'Anonymus Ly Harlfinger', *Scriptorium* 73 (2019), 281–306; J. Harris, 'Greek scribes in England: the evidence of episcopal registers', in R. Cormack and E. Jeffreys (eds.), *Through the Looking Glass: Byzantium through British Eyes* (Aldershot 2000) 121–6 (125); Couderc, *Identités Subies*, 303.

17 J.H. Baker, *The Men of Court*, 2 vols [Selden Soc. suppl. ser. 18] (London 2012), I, 10–11; *idem*, *The Inns of Chancery, 1340–1660* [Selden Soc. suppl. ser. 19] (London 2017), 34–7.

18 Baker, *Men of Court*, I, 129–30; TNA, Court of Common Pleas, plea rolls, CP 40/880, rot. 466; CP 40/881, rots 240, 258; CP 40/888, rot. 249; CP 40/889, rots 206, 349; CP 40/905, rot. 482.

It is improbable that the inn represented to Asanes anything other than a London home: he is unlikely to have had any experience of the English common law, and by the second half of the 1460s was probably too old to seek full training in it. He thus had to build a new life for himself by other means, and he appears to have found an opportunity to do just that not long after his denization: he married a wealthy widow. The bride in question was Amy, the daughter of John Tregoose, a landowner from central Cornwall; her brother Richard was one of the most notorious lawbreakers in Cornwall of the troubled reign of Henry VI. Richard's death by an assassin's arrow in 1452 had left Amy as sole heir to the family property, which she brought to a first husband, the Camborne lawyer Richard Penpons who in turn had died in 1467.¹⁹

Neither the exact date of the marriage, nor the circumstances in which it came about, are recorded, but it had certainly taken place by the start of 1474, when Asanes' address was given as his wife's ancestral home of Tregoose in the Cornish parish of St Columb Major,²⁰ and perhaps rather sooner, possibly not long after Richard Penpons' death. About the circumstances, some speculation is possible. Much as Asanes might lay claim to having once been rich and powerful, in England he was little more than a penniless refugee. While it is possible that he turned Amy Penpons' head with tales of his ancestry and noble status, he had nothing tangible to offer. It is thus, perhaps, not too fanciful to suppose that the marriage was a love match, but there is no concrete evidence to support such a conclusion. Amy Tregoose for her part was no longer a young woman. As her father had died in 1406, she must have been at least sixty at the time of Richard Penpons' death and may have been flattered by the attentions of an exotic stranger. At the same time, this was hardly a *maritagium diabolicum* between a youthful interloper and an elderly noblewoman, like that between John Wydeville, brother of Edward IV's queen, and the septuagenarian Duchess of Norfolk which about the same time sent the compiler of the *Annales* apoplectic with indignation.²¹ Thomas Palaiologos was himself born in 1409, and allowing that Asanes was his master's near-contemporary, it is possible that Emanuel and Amy were much of an age.

Whatever the circumstances of the match, it did provide Asanes with a respectable estate in the Cornish parishes of St Columb Major, St. Mewan, St. Austell, and Colan.

19 For the Tregoses and Penpons, see L.S. Clark, 'John Tregoose' in J.S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The Commons 1386–1421* (Stroud 1992), IV, 643–4; and the following contributions by H. Kleineke: 'Richard Tregoose' in Clark (ed.), *The Commons 1422–61*, VII, 137–42; 'Richard Penpons', *ibid.*, VI, 118–23; 'Poachers and gamekeepers: four fifteenth-century Westcountry criminals' in J.C. Appleby and Paul Dalton (eds.), *Outlaws in Medieval and Early Modern England* (London 2009), 129–48 (134–6); 'Why the West Was wild', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century III: authority and subversion* (Woodbridge 2003), 75–93 (83–8). The exact date of Richard Penpons' death is not known, but his widow and son were engaged in the execution of his will by the early weeks of 1468: TNA, CP 40/826, rot. 400d.

20 TNA, Court of King's Bench, plea rolls, KB 27/854, rot. 27.

21 J. Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry the Sixth, King of England*, 2 vols in 3 (London 1861–4), II(2), [783].

He established himself at the ancestral seat of Amy's family at Tregoose in St Austell and must have been in possession when the antiquary William Worcestre visited in 1478 and noted the 'tower that had formerly belonged to John Tregoose, esquire'.²² In the first instance, however, and conforming to a pattern that was familiar to their English contemporaries, Sir Emanuel and his wife had to secure their title to the property against Richard Penpons' feoffees. Proceedings in the court of Chancery were under way by about 1478, when one of the feoffees, Richard Powle, a yeoman from St. Columb Major, appeared and declared himself ignorant of any enfeoffment (the legal procedure used to place lands in the hands of trustees), but ready to abide by its terms, if they could be established.²³ At that time, Asanes did not, apparently pursue the matter further, and the court thus found against him by default and awarded Powle damages. He could not, it seems, be coerced into paying these, and in 1480 began a fresh suit before the Chancellor, claiming that the feoffees' claim against him was mere extortion. Two of the feoffees, Powle and the St Columb gentleman and landowner William Michell, now responded, pointed to Asanes' earlier failure to follow up his claim, and suggested that his repeated law suits were entirely vexatious. Whether this was indeed so, or whether Asanes was simply unfamiliar with the processes of the English law (an unlikely scenario in the light of his apparent connexions among the legal community), the émigré once again defaulted, and in the autumn of 1480 a writ of *sub poena* (a royal command ordering the appearance in court of a defendant under pain of a substantial fine in the event of non-compliance) ordering him to appear in Chancery was issued.²⁴ In parallel, Asanes also brought separate suits against two other Penpons feoffees, Richard Tomyowe and John Oo.²⁵ No outcome of the matter is recorded, but significantly, Richard Powle was among a band of local men led by the local gentleman Richard Tregennowe who in early 1484 were accused of having assaulted Asanes at St Columb Minor.²⁶

Perhaps not surprisingly, Asanes sought to establish connections among the leading gentry of his adopted region. For this, the political situation at the time of his arrival was singularly inauspicious. The head of the greatest family of resident landowners, Sir John Arundell (*d.*1473) of Lanherne, feudal overlord of some of the Penpons' landholdings harboured long-established Lancastrian loyalties, fought for Henry VI's queen, Margaret of Anjou, at Tewkesbury, and was subsequently fined the immense sum of 6,000 marks by the victorious Edward IV.²⁷ Asanes thus set his sights on another powerful, if mercurial, local man, Sir Henry Bodrugan. Unlike Sir John Arundell,

22 Kresen Kernow, Arundell manuscripts, AR2/434; William Worcestre, *Itineraries*, ed. J. Harvey (Oxford 1969) 23.

23 TNA, Court of Chancery, ancient petitions, C 1/55/103–104. Curiously, the suit calls Asanes' wife Joan, rather than Amy or Amice.

24 TNA, C 1/51/199–200.

25 TNA, C 1/53/99, 168.

26 TNA, CP 40/887, rot. 98.

27 L.S. Clark, 'John Mone (Mohun), in Clark (ed.), *The Commons 1422–61*, V, 499–503 (502).

Bodrugan had impeccable Yorkist credentials. His early liaison with a daughter of Sir Philip Courtenay of Powderham had been a source of enduring public scandal, as she had at the time been married to the landowner William Beaumont, and their son (Beaumont's heir) was widely held to have been fathered by Bodrugan. Yet, a second marriage after 1470 to Margaret, Dowager Viscountess Lisle, a daughter of Edward IV's friend William Herbert (*d.*1469), earl of Pembroke, placed Bodrugan at the very heart of the Yorkist establishment.²⁸

Edward IV's dual victories at the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in the spring of 1471, and the subsequent death of King Henry VI in the Tower had allowed Edward to consolidate his position on the throne, and – by inference – Bodrugan's in his locality. First questions over his loyalties seem to have arisen in late 1473, when the die-hard Lancastrian John de Vere, earl of Oxford, occupied the island fortress of St. Michael's Mount off the Cornish coast. On the King's instructions, Sir John Arundell and Bodrugan laid siege to the mount, but within a few weeks, Arundell died, and Bodrugan was left in sole charge. In December Edward IV relieved Bodrugan of his command of the siege, which was taken over by the sheriff of Cornwall, John Fortescue. Bodrugan, it was claimed, had been too lenient in his conduct, preferring to negotiate with the insurgents, and had in the process allowed them to resupply the fortress to such a degree as to potentially extend any siege by several months.²⁹ Nor were these the only charges against Bodrugan. The King's justices heard repeated complaints from a range of local men, including Asanes' own stepson, John Penpons, that Bodrugan had been guilty of gratuitous acts of violence, house-breaking and assault, accusations serious enough to come before Parliament in the early summer of 1474.³⁰ Such was the man with whom Asanes now made common cause; but as a newcomer he perhaps had little choice. Not only were his landholdings concentrated in the heartland of Bodrugan influence around Truro, but the death of Sir John Arundell had left Bodrugan, in the words of the chronicler John Warkworth, the 'chief reuler of Cornewall'.³¹

If, as the available evidence suggests, Asanes arrived on the Cornish scene in or around 1473, it raises the possibility that he was himself present at the siege of St Michael's Mount, although concrete evidence is lacking. Certain, by contrast, is his participation in some of Bodrugan's other ventures about the same time. At the heart of many disputes among the Cornish gentry was the valuable tin mined in the county, and this was also what Bodrugan and his associates sought.³² If a man of Bodrugan's

28 For Bodrugan, see Kleineke, 'Poachers and gamekeepers', 136–42; A.L. Rowse, 'The turbulent career of Sir Henry de Bodrugan', *History* 29 (1944), 17–26; J. Whetter, *The Bodrugans* (St Austell 1995), 135–91.

29 L.M. Matheson (ed.), *Death and Dissent: The Dethe of the Kynge of Scotts and Warkworth's Chronicle* (Woodbridge 1999), 122–3.

30 TNA, C 1/55/42–44; C 1/58/34; C. Given-Wilson *et al.* (eds.), *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275–1504* (Woodbridge 2005), XIV, 281–96.

31 Matheson (ed.), *Death and Dissent*, 122.

32 Kleineke, 'Why the West was wild'.

status could often get away with bullying and robbing the county's merchant tanners – Amy Penpons' own brother, Richard Tregoose, had been notorious for his brutality in doing just that – occasionally a victim might strike back and seek the protection of the law. This was true of Robert Cuthbert, a tenant of lands at Truro Vean, who in early 1475 appeared in the court of King's Bench at Westminster to complain that a band of men headed by Bodrugan, his natural son John Beaumont, and Asanes, had waylaid him in the town of Truro on the afternoon of 25 April 1474 and had robbed him of a piece of tin weighing some 300lb of a value of almost £4. Not content with this plunder, they had also deprived him of his horse, sword and dagger, and more than £6 in cash.³³ About the same time, Asanes also headed a band of men, once again including Bodrugan and his son, appealed of robbery by another local man, Thomas Raulyn.³⁴

Interestingly, there is no clear evidence of bad blood between the Asanes and the one man who might reasonably have felt aggrieved at their marriage, Amy's son John Penpons. Already faced with the unpalatable prospect of having to await his mother's death before he could come into his inheritance, her remarriage meant that he had to stand by while an outsider, and an alien refugee at that, took control of it.³⁵ In view of his mother's advanced age, John Penpons had no need to fear that she would have issue by Asanes to whom parts of his inheritance might be alienated and who would give the Byzantine a life-interest by the courtesy of England (a convention under which a man who fathered a child on an heiress might keep hold of her lands for term of his life, even if the offspring subsequently predeceased him) in the Penpons lands,³⁶ but the actions of a dowager and her second husband could do damage to an heir's prospects in other ways. Even as late as the summer of 1493 Amy's grandson, another John Penpons, was forced to go to law against John Adam, a chaplain, who had acquired a title to some two hundred acres and four tinworks of the Tregoose property in and around St Austell through the good offices of Sir Emanuel.³⁷ By contrast, several other settlements, while ostensibly to John's detriment, were apparently designed for the wider benefit of the Penpons family. In 1480 the Asanes settled property in Penryn on John Penpons' sister Joan, the wife of Richard Kendale.³⁸ In a further settlement made in the summer of 1482, and in return for quarterly rents of 46s. 8d., Sir Emanuel and his wife granted a group of properties in and around Tregoose to John Penpons' daughter Alice and her husband, John Arundell of

33 Kresen Kernow, AR/2/1337/7; TNA, KB 27/854, rot. 27.

34 TNA, KB 27/854, rot. 59.

35 The standard discussion of the impact of long-lived dowagers on the prospects of the heirs of landed estates remains R.E. Archer, 'Rich old ladies: the problem of late medieval dowagers' in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History* (Gloucester 1984) 15–35.

36 I owe this point to my colleague Dr Simon Payling.

37 Devon Record Office, 1262M/TC/79; TNA, CP 40/925, rot. 323d.

38 Devon Record Office, 1262M/TC/79; J.S. Vivian, *The Visitations of Cornwall* (Exeter 1887) 258. By 1484 Joan was widowed and had descendants of her own.

Tolverne, and their heirs in perpetuity, while holdings at Tregoose were settled on the couple for the duration of Amy's life and sixteen years thereafter; after which they were to revert to Amy's heirs, at that point probably represented by her son's male descendants.³⁹ While the possibility that the Asanes' alienation of large parts of John Penpons' inheritance was motivated by personal enmity cannot be discounted, a more likely explanation seems to be that John, who disappears from the records after 1477, had died by 1480, and that Amy was seeking to secure her patrimony for her descendants during the heir's minority.

In the second half of the 1470s Bodrugan and his erstwhile associates one by one secured general pardons from King Edward IV. Asanes was among the last of them to do so, purchasing his letters as late as 11 June 1480.⁴⁰ Sadly, information on Asanes' career gradually peters out thereafter. In the spring of 1484 he was still defending his landholdings against a range of incursions by local men,⁴¹ but subsequent references to him are increasingly limited to charges over the non-payment of his fees at New Inn. In late 1486, Sir Henry Bodrugan rebelled against Henry VII and in the following year was attainted by Parliament. Whether he met his end in the dramatic circumstances suggested by some of the sources, was simply killed in the fighting at Stoke (where Henry VII crushed the supporters of the pretender Lambert Simnel), or – even less glamorously – eventually died in exile of old age is uncertain; but both he and his natural son John Beaumont who had been party to many of his exploits were removed from the Cornish scene, thus depriving Asanes of his principal ally. The Greek refugee's own feelings at the dynastic squabbles that shook his adopted country, in the light of his own experience in the Morea more than two decades earlier, can only be guessed at. In any event, he also may not have lived on much longer. He is last heard of in the summer of 1488, when he was last sued by the principal of New Inn, and thus perhaps died about that time.⁴² Since he had no landholdings other than those of his wife, no inquisition *post mortem* was either ordered or taken. If he made a will, it is not known to survive, and the place of his burial is likewise obscure.

The career of Emanuel Asanes is a rare example of that of a Greek émigré whose fortunes after leaving the ruins of the Byzantine world can be mapped in some detail. Unlike the activities of many Greek refugees who make brief appearances in the records of their eventual host countries, those of Asanes may be traced from his service as an envoy of the despot Thomas Palaiologos, via his denization in England, to his later career as a provincial landowner and law breaker. It is impossible to be certain to what extent his experiences were paradigmatic, and it is reasonable to suppose that they were not. Unlike, for instance, his contemporaries, the brothers Effamatos, two

39 TNA, Court of Common Pleas, feet of fines, CP 25(1)/34/44/32; Vivian, *Visitations of Cornwall*, 6.

40 [R.C. Fowler and R.F. Isaacson (eds.)], *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, 1476–85 (London 1901) 198; TNA, KB 27/875, rex rot. 2d.

41 TNA, CP 40/887, rots 97, 98.

42 TNA, CP 40/905, rot. 482.

Greek-born goldwire drawers who established themselves in the arguably more congenial, and more cosmopolitan mercantile centre of London, Asanes made his home in the far west, in Cornwall.⁴³ Did others do likewise? If so, they were not numerous. It may, nevertheless, be worth wondering whether any dimly remembered tradition of Asanes' career in Cornwall played a part when two centuries later an immigrant from Italy was buried in the church of Landulph (in the east of the county) and had his funeral monument adorned with an elaborate (and probably spurious) genealogy tracing his descent from Thomas Palaiologos.⁴⁴

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43 J. Harris, 'Two Byzantine craftsmen in fifteenth-century London', *Journal of Medieval History* 21 (1995) 387–403. On London's immigrant community, see e.g. J. Lutkin, 'Settled or fleeting? London's medieval immigrant community revisited', in M. Allen and M. Davies (eds.), *Medieval Merchants and Money: Essays in Honour of James L. Bolton* (London 2016) 137–55, and the literature cited there.

44 Harris, 'Despots, emperors and Balkan identity', 657; J. H. Adams, 'Theodore Palaeologus', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 6 (1970) 103–4; Zakythenos, *Le despotat grec*, I. 295–7; V. Jago, 'Some observations on a monumental inscription in the parish church of Landulph, Cornwall', *Archaeologia* 18 (1817) 83–104. The passing mention in the parish records of St. Columb Major of a 'Grecian' in receipt of a payment in 1615 to date remains unexplained: T. Peter, 'The St. Columb Green Book', *Supplement to the Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 19 (1912–14), 1–90 (89).