

Occupying and transcending a provincial see: the career of Euthymios Malakes*

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Despite a distinguished reputation as an orator and bishop in his own time, comparatively little scholarship focuses upon Euthymios Malakes, metropolitan of Neopatras during the later twelfth century. Using his extant works and contemporary sources, this article reconstructs elements of Malakes' career in both Constantinople and Hellas. He was active in each, balancing his intellectual credentials, participation in synods, and elite connections to the capital, with immersion in more local contests. This combination allowed him to expand his pursuits and reputation beyond his minor see, in the capital and also in the province of his see.

Keywords: Euthymios Malakes; metropolitans; twelfth century; Neopatras; Hellas and Peloponnesos; Constantinople

Twelfth-century provincial bishops feature prominently in studies of Byzantium. These men shed light on broad administrative, ecclesiastical, and cultural issues of their day, while also serving as key witnesses to specific emperors, controversies, markets, networks, and literary communities. As such, episcopal figures – from Eustathios of Thessalonike, George Tornikes of Ephesos, and Michael Choniates of Athens, to the subject of this article, Euthymios Malakes of Neopatras in central Greece – inform the scholarship of, among others, Michael Angold,¹ Alan Harvey,² Anthony Kaldellis,³

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1 M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: a political history*, 2nd edn (London 1997) 260–93, 311–16; Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge 1995) 139–262.

2 A. Harvey, *Economic expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900–1200* (Cambridge 1989) 120–97.

3 A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: the transformations of Greek identity and the reception of the classical tradition* (Cambridge 2007) 225–316.

Alexander Kazhdan,⁴ and Paul Magdalino.⁵ These bishops have likewise been studied as individuals: Michael Choniates, in particular, has attracted significant attention.⁶ Likewise, Angold gave the profiles of eight provincial bishops at length, using their lives and experiences to demonstrate how ecclesiastical networks tied the empire together in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries.⁷ However, most twelfth-century episcopal scholarship is inherently fragmentary: historians can reconstruct aspects of prominent metropolitans' careers—e.g., administrative, oratorical, and/or judicial aspects—but seldom are there enough surviving sources to reconstitute a full portrait. Angold proposes that the only solution to this problem is to assemble multiple partial studies in order to reconstruct a broad understanding of the backgrounds, roles, and ideals of these bishops.⁸ To this end, scholars must collect as detailed information as possible on as many bishops as possible in order to reassemble the most accurate picture of episcopacy in the reigns of the Komnenoi and the Angeloi.

Among twelfth-century bishops with extant writings, one man in particular, Euthymios Malakes, metropolitan of Neopatras, has largely escaped sustained attention. Scholars have used him mainly as a source on Manuel I Komnenos, the Seljuk wars, and twelfth-century oratory.⁹ Moreover, he is also known in modern scholarship as the correspondent of Eustathios of Thessalonike¹⁰ and Michael Choniates.¹¹ Few studies have focused upon Malakes himself; the most direct biographical treatment of the author is a 1934 essay by Georg Stadtmüller, published as an appendix to his monograph on Michael Choniates—a place that inevitably positions Malakes as auxiliary to

4 A. Kazhdan and A. Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley 1985); Kazhdan and S. Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (Cambridge 1984) 115–95.

5 Magdalino, *The empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge 1993).

6 E.g., I. C. Thallon, *A medieval humanist: Michael Akominatos* (New Haven 1923); G. Stadtmüller, *Michael Choniates: Metropolit von Athen (ca. 1138–ca. 1222)* (Rome 1934); J. Hussey, *Church and Learning in the Byzantine Empire, 867–1185* (London 1937) 103–16; Angold, *Church and Society*, 197–212; A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 217–33; T. Shawcross, 'Golden Athens: episcopal wealth and power in Greece at the time of the crusades', in N. Chrissis (ed.) *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204–1453* (Aldershot 2014) 65–95.

7 Angold, *Church and Society*, 158–262. He profiles Theophylact of Ohrid, Michael Italikos, George Tornikes, Eustathios of Thessalonike, Michael Choniates, John Apokaukos, George Bardanes, and Demetrius Chomatenos.

8 Angold, *Church and Society*, 252–6.

9 E.g., Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 465–9 (Manuel), 454–8 (rhetoric); A. Stone, 'Dorylaion revisited: Manuel I Komnenos and the refortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion in 1175', *Revue des études byzantines* 61 (2003) 183–99; Kazhdan and Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, 171, 257 (Turks).

10 Angold, *Church and Society*, 193–5; Kazhdan and Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine Literature*, 115, 121, 138, 140–1; Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 315.

11 Angold, *Church and Society*, 201–3; Stadtmüller, *Michael Choniates*, 161–4.

the younger bishop.¹² Konstantinos Bonis published an edition of Malakes' extant works in 1937, with two additional speeches and extensive commentary published in 1949.¹³ The editions are valuable, but Bonis' biographical introduction on Malakes adds only minimally to Stadtmüller.¹⁴ In his commentaries, Bonis focuses much more substantially on the orations than the letters;¹⁵ this emphasizes the rhetorical aspects of Malakes' career over the episcopal ones. In the 1960s, Jean Darrouzès discussed Malakes in a series of articles, including identifying three 'new' orations by the bishop.¹⁶ However, Darrouzès' focus was primarily on the Tornikioi (especially Malakes' nephew, Euthymios Tornikes), rather than Malakes himself. He, too, focused on Malakes as an orator, although the discussion of Malakes' family connections to both the region of Neopatras and Constantinople is useful for framing the bishop as a figure occupying two worlds. Around the same time, Stergios Sakkos usefully examined Malakes' theological sympathies (more on this below), a minor point in a larger theological and synodal study on 1166.¹⁷ More recently, in the 1990s, Angold addressed Malakes in his profile of Michael Choniates,¹⁸ but included little beyond what was relevant for that other bishop. Here he also suggested that Malakes' episcopacy was a sinecure, a view that may apply to Neopatras but does not fully fit with Malakes' activities in wider Hellas. Andrew F. Stone is the only modern scholar to give significant attention to Malakes, albeit once again to his orations only rather than career or biography.¹⁹ As a bishop, Malakes remains relatively obscure.

Based on Malakes' extant writings – thirty-five letters, an unremarkable poem, and six orations – and those of contemporary authors, it is possible to reconstruct aspects of his career, both in Constantinople and Hellas. This information furthers modern understandings of Komnenian bishops by fleshing out a new partial portrait, à la Angold. Malakes serves as a fascinating simultaneous glimpse into both elite circles in Constantinople and a relatively minor see that otherwise appears infrequently within the historical record. Malakes demonstrates how a metropolitan might cultivate a reputation that transcended his see, especially as an orator and a vocal synod member. However, his interactions with fellow provincial prelates also highlight everyday administrative concerns throughout Hellas. Bishops served much longer in their offices

12 Stadtmüller, *Michael Choniates*, 306-12.

13 Euthymios Malakes, *Εὐθυμίου τοῦ Μαλάκη μητροπολίτου Νέων Πατρῶν (Υπάτης): τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. K. Bonis, 2 vols. (Athens 1937, 1949).

14 Bonis, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, I, 7-23.

15 Bonis, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, II, 55-91.

16 J. Darrouzès, 'Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès, Euthyme Malakès et Georges Tornikès', *Revue des études byzantines* 23 (1965) 148-67; Darrouzès, 'Les discours d'Euthyme Tornikès (1200-1205)', *Revue des études byzantines* 26 (1968) 73-75.

17 S. Sakkos, 'Ὁ Πατήρ μου μείζων μου ἐστίν': ἐριδες καὶ σύνοδοι κατὰ τον ἴβ' αἰῶνα (Thessalonike 1968) 32, 63-4, 69, 73-4.

18 Angold, *Church and Society*, 201-3.

19 A. Stone, 'Euthymios Malakes in theatron', *Byzantina* 30 (2010) 55-66 and continuing work.

than military or civil administrators and represented one of the key sources of authority in a province.²⁰ As such, Malakes' long career and writings illustrate the on-going nature of taxation tensions and local power struggles.²¹ As Teresa Shawcross recently demonstrated using the example of Michael Choniates, this intermediary role and its activities could be to the advantage of the provincial diocese as much as (or even sometimes more than) the interests of Constantinople.²² However, Malakes' career offers more than corroboration of the nature of metropolitans and the provincial value of Constantinopolitan connections; his combined literary and episcopal activities helped promote his reputation and administrative reach beyond tiny Neopatras, into both Hellas more broadly and among the intelligentsia of the capital.

Biographical overview

While Malakes' biography must always be incomplete, his own works and those of his contemporaries provide some basic information. Michael Choniates implied that Malakes was from Hellas;²³ indeed, he may have hailed from Thebes, given his affinity for the city and the fact that his sister married into the Tornikioi, a family associated with Thebes and Euripos.²⁴ In his monody for Eustathios, Malakes called himself 'coeval and fellow student' (συνηλικιώτης καὶ σύντροφος) of the archbishop.²⁵ If he was the same age as Eustathios, he was born roughly between 1115 and 1135, and received his Constantinopolitan education no later than the 1150s.²⁶ Malakes evidently excelled at his studies: Niketas Choniates remembered him as 'a great man in letters', emphasizing the bishop's academic credentials.²⁷ Malakes then became known as an orator by autumn 1161, when he delivered a speech for Manuel I during the visit to Constantinople of the Seljuq sultan Kiliç Arslan II.²⁸ Magdalino assumes that Malakes was not yet

20 J. Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis: authority across the Byzantine Empire* (Princeton 2013) 59–74, 88–91.

21 For parallels, Angold, *Church and Society*, 156–262; Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 177, 316–412.

22 Shawcross, 'Golden Athens', 68–93.

23 Michael Choniates, *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae*, ed. F. Kolovou (Berlin 2001) 31.

24 For Euripos, Darrouzès, 'Les discours d'Euthyme Tornikès', 50; the evidence for the Theban connection is limited, but historians have found it suggestive: Darrouzès, 'Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès', 159–60; Angold, *Church and society*, 201; Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 154.

25 Malakes, *Τὰ σφωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 83. All translations of Malakes' writings are my own.

26 Stadtmüller, *Michael Choniates*, 307; Kazhdan and Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine literature*, 115–21; R. Browning, 'Eustathios of Thessaloniki revisited', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 40 (1995) 84–5.

27 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten (Berlin 1975) 331; *O City of Byzantium!* trans. H. Magoulias (Detroit 1984) 183.

28 Malakes, *Noctes Petropolitanae*, ed. A. K. Papadopoulos-Kerameus (St Petersburg 1913) 162–87. Manuscript tradition attributes the oration to Euthymios Tornikes, Malakes' nephew and namesake, but Darrouzès makes a compelling argument, based on historical context, internal biographical clues, and rhetorical style, that the author was Malakes himself ('Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès', 155–8).

metropolitan of Neopatras at this time,²⁹ which corresponds with Darrouzès' proposal that this particular speech was given by a patriarchal official (and, incidentally, one speaking before the emperor for the first time).³⁰ If so, this speech may have advanced Malakes' career, as he next appears, five years later, as a metropolitan.

Malakes' first definitive episcopal appearance was in 1166, when he debated the meaning of the biblical passage 'The Father is greater than I' (John 14.28) at a patriarchal synod. The synod minutes record Malakes' presence and contributions there,³¹ while the historian John Kinnamos also noted the bishop in his account of the controversy.³² Over the next decades, Malakes surfaces periodically: he endorsed the decisions of the patriarchal synod of 1170³³ and delivered at least five more orations. His dateable works include: a monody on the death of Athenian metropolitan Nikolaos Hagiotheodorites in 1175;³⁴ a second encomium of Manuel I at Epiphany 1176, celebrating the rebuilding of Dorylaion during the emperor's so-called 'crusade' against the Turks;³⁵ a 1176 monody on the death of Alexios Kontostephanos, Manuel I's nephew;³⁶ and a monody on the death of Eustathios of Thessalonike, ca. 1195.³⁷ Additionally, Malakes delivered a third surviving speech to Manuel I;³⁸ the date of this work is unknown, although it predated the emperor's death in 1180. Magdalino proposes that Malakes may have performed it ca. 1176.³⁹ Malakes' correspondence also demonstrates some contact with imperial officials active during Manuel's reign, including Andronikos Kamateros and Leo Monasteriotes.⁴⁰

Malakes' career continued after Manuel's death. In the 1180s, Malakes appeared in northwest Asia Minor, debating the nature of the Trinity with Kinnamos in the company of Andronikos I Komnenos who threatened to throw both men into the

29 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 454-5.

30 Darrouzès, 'Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès', 157.

31 Τὰ πρακτικά τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει συνόδου τοῦ 1166, ed. Sakkos in 'Ὁ Πατήρ μου', 146, 152, 164; Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, in Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL (Paris 1865) 241C, 252A, 269A.

32 Ioannes Kinnamos, *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. Meineke (Bonn 1836) 254; *The deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, trans. C. Brand (New York 1976) 191.

33 L. Petit, 'Documents inédits sur la Council de 1166 et ses derniers adversaires', *Vizantiskū vremennik* 11 (1904) 479-93, esp. 488.

34 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 154-62. Also see Darrouzès, 'Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès', 158.

35 Malakes, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, II, 20-46. Also see Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 95-8 (historical context), 455-8, 466-8 (rhetorical context).

36 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 142-54; Darrouzès, 'Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès', 158-60. More on Kontostephanos below.

37 Malakes, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 78-83.

38 Malakes, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, II, 47-54.

39 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 466-8.

40 Malakes, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, 1:67-70. More on these men below.

Rhyndakos river.⁴¹ Furthermore, Malakes corresponded with his fellow churchmen, the patriarch Theodosios I Boradiotes, Michael Choniates, and Eustathios of Thessalonike, each of whom was active in the last decades of the twelfth century. Specific events and dates in Malakes' life become hazier in these later years, although he survived to 1202 or 1204, based on his nephew's funeral oration in his honour.⁴² Some general conclusions emerge from this survey, which will be further explored below: Malakes was repeatedly associated with Trinitarian theological debates, appeared reasonably often in Constantinople and before emperors, and had contact with the Constantinopolitan elite, even (or especially) after his appointment to Neopatras.

Constantinopolitan connections

Neopatras itself was relatively insignificant in the twelfth century; the city, modern Hypati near Lamia, was an ecclesiastical metropolis but not otherwise notable.⁴³ It ranked fiftieth among metropolitan sees and was therefore not even an especially important bishopric in the theme, let alone the empire.⁴⁴ However, Malakes' sphere of influence far outstripped Neopatras, particularly as he maintained ongoing associations with Constantinople. He achieved this through his office, as when he sat in synods, through his reputation as an orator, and through a network of Constantinopolitan associates.

Malakes' participation in the patriarchal synod of 1166 is documented in two places: in Kinnamos' coverage of the event and in the official acts, preserved in both independent manuscripts and Niketas Choniates' *Dogmatike Panoplia*.⁴⁵ This synod convened in March 1166 to discuss the meaning of Christ's statement 'The Father is greater than I' (John 14.28). The Trinitarian implications of the passage had caused a controversy in 1165 after Demetrios of Lampe, a Byzantine diplomat to the West, returned to Constantinople after exposure to lively western theological debate about the nature of the Trinity. Demetrios began to question the belief that Christ could be simultaneously equal to *and* lesser than the Father.⁴⁶ The issue was not academic for the Byzantines; it revived Christological disputes from earlier in the twelfth century that Manuel and his grandfather

41 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dielen, 331.

42 Stadtmüller, *Michael Choniates*, 312; Bonis, *Τὰ σφωζόμενα*, 22-3; Euthymios Tornikes, 'Μονωδία εἰς τὸν ὑπέριτον Νέων Πατρῶν', 'Les discours d'Euthyme Tornikès (1200-1205)', ed. J. Darrouzès, *Revue des études byzantines* 26 (1968) 76-89.

43 Bonis, *Τὰ σφωζόμενα*, I, 5-7; T. Gregory, 'Neopatras' in A. Kazhdan (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford 2005).

44 Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 68, 93 n.13. For comparison, Neopatras ranked below Corinth (27th), Athens (28th), and Naupaktos (35th), though above Thebes (57th).

45 On the manuscripts: Sakkos, 'Ο Πατήρ μου', 107-14; for a critical edition: *Τὰ πρακτικά*, ed. Sakkos, 120-80.

46 P. Classen, 'Das Konzil von Konstantinopel 1166 und die Lateiner', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 48.2 (1955) 339-68; G. Sideris, 'Ces gens ont raison: La controverse christologique de 1165-1166, la question des échanges doctrinaux entre l'Occident latin et Byzance et leur portée politique', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 24 (2012) 174-6, 180-1.

Alexios I had pushed the Church to deem heretical. Re-opening debate was therefore dangerous for the emperor: his status as the arbiter of orthodoxy could be at stake if the theological premises behind Demetrios' view gained ground.⁴⁷

The elites of the empire, who also functioned as rival 'guardians of orthodoxy',⁴⁸ evidently sympathized with Demetrios enough that it alarmed Manuel I. The emperor tried to silence Demetrios' view lest it provide opportunity for political dissent;⁴⁹ when he was unsuccessful, he sponsored a public theological debate against Demetrios in February 1166. The winner was a Latin bishop, Manuel's advisor Hugo Eteriano, who won by explaining that in *humanity* Christ was lesser while in *divinity* he was equal to the Father, contrary to Demetrios' primary focus on the Son's divinity.⁵⁰ However, Hugo and Manuel's position remained contentious enough that the emperor induced the patriarch of Constantinople, Loukas Chrysoberges (r. 1157–69/70), to summon a synod. Niketas Choniates' *History*, in a hostile account, claimed that Manuel called the meeting in order to foist his (unorthodox) opinion on the Church;⁵¹ Kinnamos, in a more pro-Manuel and anti-Demetrios version, suggested that the emperor called the synod as a last resort.⁵²

Prior to the synod, many Byzantine churchmen were sympathetic to Demetrios. Kinnamos, in an anecdote meant to illustrate how persuasive Manuel was over the course of the controversy, notes that only the patriarch and six deacons initially shared Manuel's position—and that, of these, the patriarch accepted the imperial view only because he was cowed by the emperor.⁵³ Malakes was one of the clergymen, including many of the deacons at the Hagia Sophia, who disagreed with Manuel.⁵⁴ This group swore to avoid personal meetings with the emperor, as they feared he would browbeat them individually into changing their position.⁵⁵ Malakes, however, evidently *did* meet privately with the emperor, and after initial silence revealed the extent of clerical opposition. Manuel was furious and threatened to throw Malakes over a cliff for believing the

47 Sideris, 'Ces gens ont raison', 182–90.

48 Sideris, 'Ces gens ont raison', 188–90, which draws on Magdalino's 'guardians of orthodoxy' (*Empire of Manuel I*, 316–412).

49 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 290. The minutes for the 1166 synod (Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 201B–81B; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 120–80) do not mention Demetrios by name, but they clearly address the spread of his ideas. Also see Kinnamos, ed. Meineke, 251–52; G. Thetford, 'The christological councils of 1166 and 1170 in Constantinople', *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 31 (1987) 143–6.

50 Thetford, 'The christological councils', 144; A. Dondaine, 'Hugues Etherien et le concile de Constantinople de 1166', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1958) 477–83.

51 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 211–3; trans. Magoulias, 120–1. For discussion of Choniates' hostile historical treatment of the 1166 controversy (in contrast to his milder theological treatment in the *Dogmatike Panoplia*), see A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: a historiographical study* (Oxford 2013) 42–5.

52 Kinnamos, ed. Meineke, 252–6; trans. Brand, 189–92.

53 Kinnamos, ed. Meineke, 253; trans. Brand, 190–1.

54 Sideris, 'Ces gens ont raison', 190; Sakkos, 'Ὁ Πατήρ μου', 30–2.

55 Kinnamos, ed. Meineke, 253–4; trans. Brand, 190–1; Angold, *Church and Society*, 83–5.

emperor would be on the wrong side of orthodoxy!⁵⁶ Malakes' role here is notable: he clearly opposed the emperor's theology, to the extent of refusing to discuss doctrine at all and enraging the emperor. Faced with a clerical rebellion against his theological position, the emperor forbore violence and called a synod.

Malakes appears at the synod's March 2 session at the Great Palace. Manuel attended, too, along with multiple imperial nephews and officials, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem, and thirty-six metropolitans.⁵⁷ 'Euthymios of Neopatras' was the twentieth-ranked metropolitan of those present. The bishops' discussion survives; their interpretations varied over *why* the Father was greater than Christ, depending on the exact relationship between Christ's divinity and humanity. Malakes was one of sixteen metropolitan proponents of *kenosis*, the idea that Christ had been temporarily 'emptied' of divinity as part of the Incarnation.⁵⁸ This becomes evident in his testimony at the synod: 'I think that this humble phrase, *the Father is greater than I*, thus speaks of the Only-Begotten in accordance with His speech and the rest of the more humble speeches given about Himself, clearly proving His condescension (οἰκονομίαν) and that He truly came into being as a human'.⁵⁹ That is, Malakes separated the divine and human natures of Christ in order to explain the greater/lesser dynamic. The remaining bishops offered their opinions; Manuel's side finally won out, and the metropolitans were asked to endorse the lesser-and-equal interpretation.⁶⁰ Malakes agreed, though once again with the qualification that the text specifically addressed Christ's *incarnate* humanity: 'the bishop of Neopatras said that he added to the last phrase of his judgment: 'assuming the created and come-into-being flesh, according to which He also suffered.'⁶¹ While the emendation helped to clarify that Malakes was not a Monophysite,⁶² ultimately he still resisted Manuel's theology.

The synod next met on March 6, when the bishops heard Manuel's view and formally endorsed the decision from March 2.⁶³ Malakes was present and subscribed his name to the judgment.⁶⁴ This ruling became part of the *Synodikon* of Orthodoxy on

56 Kinnamos, ed. Meineke, 254; trans. Brand, 191.

57 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 236A-7B; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 141-3.

58 Sakkos, "Ο Πατήρ μου", 60-1, 63-4, 69; for *kenosis* also see Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 43.

59 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 241C; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 146. Translations of the synod texts are my own.

60 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 241C-9D; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 146-52. See also Petit, 'Documents inédits', 468-72.

61 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 252A; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 152.

62 Sakkos, "Ο Πατήρ μου", 69.

63 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 251C-61B; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 153-9.

64 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 255A, 260B; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 155, 158.

March 13.⁶⁵ The next session was March 20, when the bishops reconvened to enforce their ruling; here, Malakes was one of several figures asked to clarify and confirm their orthodoxy. Those who had endorsed *kenosis* were particular targets: five of the seven bishops who signed the clarification had supported *kenosis* during the synod.⁶⁶ Malakes agreed to sign.⁶⁷ Shortly after this, Manuel published an edict, codifying the decisions of the council into imperial law;⁶⁸ Malakes was present when the edict was read out.⁶⁹ After edict and *Synodikon*, all that remained for the synod was to discipline a few remaining opponents, which occurred on April 6 and May 6. Malakes was present at the latter session, although his name does not appear on the list of signatories to the disciplinary decisions reached that day. While his absence on April 6 and his missing signature on May 6 could indicate a lack of desire to punish the last dissenters, the similarly spotty records of his fellow metropolitans at these final sessions make such an inference uncertain.⁷⁰

Kinnamos and the synodal acts together highlight Malakes both as a metropolitan and a theological dissident. Malakes was one of the relatively small number of Byzantine metropolitans to participate actively in this synod.⁷¹ Perhaps the inconsequence and peace of Neopatras enabled him to be absent from his see so (presumably) early in his episcopate; this could corroborate Angold's view of Malakes as a bishop without much to do in Neopatras.⁷² Once the synod was finished, any metropolitan's job would have been to bring the synod's decisions back to his suffragan bishops, so that they too could endorse it.⁷³ A metropolitan was by nature an intermediary between the patriarchs and the suffragan bishops, the capital and his own diocese; by his presence, Malakes illustrates this function in action. Second, Malakes' role in this synod was more significant than that of the average metropolitan: he opposed the emperor's theology to the extent that he was named in both Kinnamos and the acts. Sakkos even calls Malakes a leader of the *kenosis* faction.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Malakes' dissident beliefs put him in the company not only of other metropolitans but also Constantinopolitan elites,

65 Petit, 'Documents inédits', 469; C. Mango, 'The conciliar edict of 1166', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963) 320. For the ecclesiastical decrees, J. Gouillard, 'Le *synodikon* de l'Orthodoxie: édition et commentaire', *Travaux et mémoires* 2 (1967) 75–7; trans. Thetford, 'The christological councils', 157–9.

66 Sakkos, "Ο Πατήρ μου", 75; Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 44.

67 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 269A; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 164; V. Grumel, *Les Regestes des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople* (Paris 1947) N. 1064.

68 Mango, 'The conciliar edict of 1166', 320–30;

69 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 273A; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 173–4.

70 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 269B, 276C, 281B; Τα πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 165, 175–6, 178–80; Sakkos, "Ο Πατήρ μου", 100–1.

71 Darrouzès, 'Listes synodales et notitiae', *Revue des études byzantines* 28 (1970) 66–7.

72 Angold, 'Church and Society', 201. Although, as below, Malakes still remained active in wider provincial matters.

73 Petit, 'Documents inédits', 472–3, 477–8.

74 Sakkos, "Ο Πατήρ μου", 64, 69, 75.

e.g., Kinnamos' Hagia Sophia deacons, Niketas Choniates,⁷⁵ and the emperor's own nephew, Alexios Kontostephanos.⁷⁶ Malakes was not simply a metropolitan doing his duty but also an active member of a significant opposition movement involved in the debate. Indeed, his full endorsement of the emperor's view came only after it had become orthodoxy.

Malakes continued to express orthodox views when the debate re-erupted a few years later. Constantine, metropolitan of Kerkyra, a participant in the earlier synod, had never been happy with the emperor's position. In 1166, this bishop had stoutly disagreed with the lesser-and-equal theology but promised to accept whatever position the patriarch took.⁷⁷ When Chrysoberges died, Constantine reverted again. A second synod was convened in 1170, with the emperor, the new patriarch Michael III Anchialos, many high-ranking imperial officials, and forty-three metropolitans present. The primary purpose of this synod was to discipline Constantine for heresy; he was duly deposed and anathematized.⁷⁸ Malakes was not present at the formal sessions but he did subscribe after the fact to Constantine's unanimous January 30 deposition, along with all of the attending metropolitans. In this, Malakes was one of ten additional metropolitans to add their names to the decision.⁷⁹ The fact that Malakes subscribed to the decision despite not having attended the session may indicate that he may still have harboured reservations about that synod's conclusions. Darrouzès proposes that either Malakes was not invited to the new synod or refused to attend on account of his earlier arguments.⁸⁰ It is certainly suggestive that so many of the bishops who signed the 1170 synodal acts without attending had opposed Manuel's views at the earlier synod. Five of the ten late signatories had been present in 1166, and of these four had been partisans of *kenosis*.⁸¹ However, the late signatures could additionally be interpreted as these metropolitans' efforts to reaffirm their suspect orthodoxy to the synod by condemning Constantine.⁸² As much as the metropolitans continued to uphold the 1166 judgement officially, this controversy had not been entirely settled.

John 14.28 continued to haunt Malakes: Niketas Choniates mentioned that Malakes and Kinnamos argued over the same controversial passage over a decade later, during the reign of Andronikos I. The story lacks details, as Choniates' goal was to denigrate Andronikos' explosive temper rather than to report the debate or to evaluate the emperor's orthodoxy.⁸³ However, given both Kinnamos' relatively sympathetic stance

75 Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 212; trans. Magoulias, 120-1. See Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 43-4.

76 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 217.

77 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, PG CXL 252B; Τὰ πρακτικά, ed. Sakkos, 152.

78 Petit, 'Documents inédits', 474-6, 479-93; Sakkos, 'Ο Πατήρ μου', 84-94; Thetford, 'The christological councils', 146-8.

79 Sakkos, 'Ο Πατήρ μου', 104; Darrouzès, 'Listes synodales', 79; Grumel, *Les Regestes*, N.1112.

80 Darrouzès, 'Listes synodales', 75-6.

81 Sakkos, 'Ο Πατήρ μου', 60-1.

82 His interpretation of John 14.28 had been different than theirs: Sakkos, 'Ο Πατήρ μου', 60.

83 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 331; trans. Magoulias, 183.

in his history toward the synod's ruling and Malakes' initial dissatisfaction with the interpretation,⁸⁴ it is once again possible that Malakes continued to question the synod's ruling privately even after signing his name to synodal decrees. If so, Malakes provides a useful illustration of how bishops could officially promote the interests of the larger Church—or their own careers—over their personal beliefs.

Michael Choniates offers further evidence of Malakes' dealings in the capital, beyond the theological controversy. In a letter, Choniates called upon Malakes in Constantinople to intervene on behalf of a monk called Ephraim, who had been an abbot in Davleia, near Mount Parnassos, until a second monk ousted him, against canon law but with the permission of the emperor, probably Alexios III Angelos.⁸⁵ This incident emphasizes Malakes' presence in Constantinople as someone capable of influencing the regular synod or the emperor. In another letter, ca. 1185,⁸⁶ Choniates reminded a suffragan bishop that 'not only many bishops like us, but also patriarchs and emperors themselves value the goodwill and friendship of the bishop of Neopatras very much'. They specifically prized 'his prudence and wisdom and manifold virtue during every sitting synod'.⁸⁷ This description reinforces Malakes as a member of the ecclesiastical elite and as an important contact for his fellow provincial bishops; the Constantinopolitan activities could actually benefit the provinces. It perhaps also suggests that he participated in regular *endemousa* synods as well as major patriarchal ones.

Malakes certainly had access to the imperial milieu over the course of his career. He performed at least three orations before Manuel between 1161 and 1180. As above, two commemorated recent events: the visit of Kiliç Arslan II (1161) and the rebuilding of Dorylaion (1176).⁸⁸ The third, possibly also from 1176, responded to Manuel's recent *silention* and made references to a future military expedition, possibly Myriokephalon.⁸⁹ Magdalino suggests that although Malakes makes a 'compliment of Manuel's lack of formal education' in this address he may have held a different attitude to the emperor's education and rhetoric;⁹⁰ for all that Malakes enjoyed repeated appearances at court, he could have a healthy scepticism for the emperor — as with Manuel's theology. Regardless of what Malakes may have thought of the emperor, oratory provided the bishop with a unique opportunity to enjoy the emperor's attention: the phenomenon of imperial *encomia* 'directly reflected the power of educated men to lobby the emperor in pursuit of their individual and collective interests', as well as allowing them to win honour from the court and literary elite.⁹¹ The lapse in the dates between the first and

84 However, the date of Kinnamos' text is unknown, so that it is unclear whether the historian maintained consistently sympathetic views on the ruling.

85 Michael Choniates, ed. Kolovou, 99, 94*.

86 Kolovou, *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae*, 61*.

87 Michael Choniates, ed. Kolovou, 25.

88 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 162-87 (1161); *Tà σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, II, 20-46 (1176).

89 Malakes, *Tà σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, II, 46-54, especially 47-9, 53; Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 466-8.

90 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 468.

91 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 427-34, at 427.

second orations may be noteworthy. However, if, as Darrouzès proposes, Malakes fell out of favour after the 1166 synod,⁹² it may have taken him until 1176 to recover his position at court.

Andronikos I was unenthusiastic about Malakes' verbal skills,⁹³ but the metropolitan's appearance by the Rhyndakos river attests that he continued to have access to the emperor. Malakes held a certain cachet among the Angeloi as well, as evidenced by both personal connections and individual prestige. The metropolitan's brother-in-law, Demetrios Tornikes, was *logothetes tou dromou* under the Angeloi,⁹⁴ while Malakes appears with the title *hypertimos* in the later decades of the twelfth century. This was an honour probably bestowed by Isaac II Angelos or his brother Alexios III.⁹⁵ The imperially-granted title elevated its episcopal holders in honour above the position of their sees;⁹⁶ this was public confirmation that the emperors considered Malakes' connections and accomplishments to be more significant than his metropolitan ranking and that he had overcome any stigma lingering after 1166.

Determining Malakes' relationships with other Constantinopolitan elites is more difficult, especially as the evidence largely depends on one-sided extant correspondence.⁹⁷ Malakes appears to have had contact with one patriarch: a letter survives to Theodosios I Boradiotes, patriarch of Constantinople in 1179–83. The metropolitan congratulated Boradiotes for regaining his office after being temporarily removed in 1181.⁹⁸ The letter goes on to thank the patriarch for his personal prayers for Malakes' recovery from an illness and credits his prayers for his return to health.⁹⁹ This sentiment may indicate a reciprocal relationship between the two, or it may simply be evidence of Malakes seeking to cultivate an acquaintance with the senior ecclesiastical figure. There is, admittedly, no evidence of Malakes associating with any of the other patriarchs, despite Michael Choniates' allusions.

The connections between Malakes and aristocrats prominent in the military and civil administration are stronger and somewhat easier to corroborate. One associate was Andronikos Kamateros, *me gas droungarios* under Manuel, an imperial relation,

92 Darrouzès, 'Listes synodales', 75-6.

93 Above, and Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 331.

94 Darrouzès, 'Les discours d'Euthyme Tornikès', 86 n.18.

95 Darrouzès, 'Les discours d'Euthyme Tornikès', 76 n.1; Kolovou, *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae*, 63*.

96 V. Phidas, 'The ecclesiastical title of "hypertimos and exarch"', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 44 (1999) 221-4; V. Grumel, 'Titulature de métropolités byzantines: II. métropolités hypertimes', in *Mémorial Louis Petit: mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines* (Bucharest 1948) 160-4.

97 See M. Mullett, 'The detection of relationship in middle Byzantine literary texts: the case of letters and letter networks' in W. Hörandner and M. Grünbart, *L'épistolographie et la poésie* (Paris 2003) 66-72.

98 Malakes, *Tà σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 66-7. For context, C. Brand, *Byzantium confronts the West, 1180-1204* (Cambridge 1968) 35-7.

99 Malakes, *Tà σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 67.

and member of a highly influential family at the time.¹⁰⁰ Two incomplete letters by Malakes to Kamateros survive; one playfully mocks the too-long lapses in their correspondence, while the other is a petition complaining about taxation and quips that the metropolitan expects financial relief only from the heavenly emperor, not from the emperor on earth. The former letter, while engaging in an epistolary trope, may suggest that there was some form of additional correspondence between the two men; the latter implies that Malakes hoped Kamateros would sympathize with his plight, and perhaps intervene with the emperor.¹⁰¹ The nature of the relationship is not clear from the letters, but the two men certainly participated in the same intellectual and theological circles, which may have made him a useful contact. Kamateros was a prominent literary patron,¹⁰² and attended the synods of 1166 and 1170.¹⁰³ Shortly afterward, he edited the *Sacred Arsenal*, an anthology of patristic texts that staunchly supported Manuel as an orthodox emperor against the Latin and Armenian churches.¹⁰⁴ It is striking that Kamateros pointedly sidestepped John 14.28 and the synods in the *Sacred Arsenal*,¹⁰⁵ an omission that suggests that these synods were not unquestioned victories useful to his purpose, despite their favourable outcomes. Malakes' and Kamateros' lives and occupations overlapped in notable ways, making it probable that they knew each other.

Another noteworthy aristocrat associated with Malakes was Alexios (Komnenos) Kontostephanos, Manuel's nephew. Kontostephanos was active in the mid-twelfth century. He attended the synods of 1157, 1166, and 1170; as above, in 1166 he also initially resisted Manuel's theological views. He led a military campaign against Hungary in 1161–62 and was governor of Crete in 1167.¹⁰⁶ There is no extant correspondence between him and Malakes, but the bishop wrote a touching monody at Kontostephanos' death from illness in 1176, ahead of the Myriokephalon campaign.¹⁰⁷ This speech initially highlights Kontostephanos as a soldier, fighting Turks multiple times and

100 For Kamateros' relationship to Manuel, Kinnamos, ed. Meineke, 210; trans. Brand, 160. For the Kamateroi, A. Bucossi, *Andronici Camateri, sacrum armamentarium, pars prima* (Turnhout 2014) xx-iv; Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 26-9; G. Stadtmüller, 'Zur Geschichte der Familie Kamateros', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 34.2 (1934) 352–8.

101 Malakes, *Τὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 69-70.

102 Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 344-5.

103 Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, Migne, *Patrologia graeca* CXL 253C; *Τὰ πρακτικά*, ed. Sakkos, 154; Petit, 'Documents inédits', 479.

104 A. Bucossi, 'Dialogue and anthologies of the *Sacred Arsenal* by Andronikos Kamateros: sources, arrangements, purposes' in P. van Deun and C. Macé (ed.), *Encyclopedic trends in Byzantium?* (Leuven 2011) 269–84; Bucossi, 'New historical evidence for the dating of the *Sacred Arsenal* by Andronikos Kamateros' *Revue des études byzantines* 67 (2009) 111-30; Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 259-60. The text's critical edition is Bucossi, *Andronici Camateri*.

105 Bucossi, *Andronici Camateri*, xxxii.

106 Darrouzès, *George et Démétrios Tornikès*, 57-62.

107 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 142-54, esp. 145-6, 149; Darrouzès, 'Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès', 158-60.

‘unnatural barbarians’ in Hellas.¹⁰⁸ It seems that the latter was especially important to Malakes, whose roots and see were both in that province. Later, Malakes switches gears and commemorates Kontostephanos as a literary patron, lover of books, and friend.¹⁰⁹ Theodoros Prodromos reveals that Kontostephanos was his patron, too,¹¹⁰ confirming the aristocrat’s literary interests. Interestingly, Malakes’ monody praises Kontostephanos’ surviving siblings as well as their dead brother;¹¹¹ the bishop may have sought to maintain the family as his patrons. A reference in Euthymios Tornikes’ monody for Malakes highlights that Malakes was successful in circulating his writings at some point in his career,¹¹² no doubt helped by some well-connected literary patron in the capital.

Two other known aristocratic contacts were Leo Monasteriotes and Demetrios Tornikes. Monasteriotes was a high-ranking judge to whom Malakes wrote at least one letter. Both he and Tornikes attended the 1166 synod.¹¹³ The marriage of Malakes’ sister to Tornikes cemented the bishop’s ties to that family of prominent civil administrators, which included two *logothetai tou dromou*.¹¹⁴ There is not enough evidence to flesh out these relationships in more detail, but it is telling that Malakes either associated or sought to associate himself with the imperial and aristocratic elite. These connections could reinforce the bishop’s prestige and professional opportunities in the capital, as well as his ability to exert influence in Hellas.

Malakes’ career, while metropolitan of Neopatras, took him beyond clearly his provincial see. Even early on, he travelled from Neopatras to participate in the patriarchal synods, and, according to Michael Choniates, perhaps later become influential in the regular synods. As part of his job, he debated orthodoxy in the capital and transmitted the synod’s decisions to his see. However, the same could be said for any of Malakes’ colleagues who had the time and health to leave their dioceses. What makes Malakes significant is the extent to which he threw himself into the theological controversies of the day, while also ultimately sacrificing his beliefs in favour of appearing orthodox. This permitted him to become both professionally prominent and to enjoy a long career. Moreover, Malakes received recognition from many emperors, performed oratory at court, and sought out high-ranking members of the imperial administration and Church, as well as well-known literary patrons. Malakes was not unique in any of this, but these experiences and connections enabled him to cultivate an enduring and distinguished career as both a metropolitan and a member of the capital’s elite.

108 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 142-5 (Turks throughout; barbarians at 145).

109 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 150-1.

110 Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner (Vienna 1974) 444-8.

111 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 148, 153.

112 Tornikes, ‘Μονοδία’, ed. Darrouzès, 79.18-21, 80.5-27.

113 Malakes, *Τὰ σφροδόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 67; Niketas Choniates, *Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei*, PG CXL 253D; *Τὰ πρακτικά*, ed. Sakkos, 155.

114 Darrouzès, *Georges et Dèmètrios Tornikès*, 35-9.

In Hellas

Even as Malakes associated himself with Constantinople, he remained invested in his native Hellas. Beyond the metropolitan office, twelfth-century Neopatras itself was quiet, small, and poor.¹¹⁵ In a sense, Malakes benefited from his lowly diocese, as it may have enabled him to spend more time in the capital than many of his peers.¹¹⁶ Neopatras itself barely warrants a mention in his entire correspondence, but Malakes did not ignore his episcopal responsibilities. He was occupied with administrative matters ranging from taxes to suffragan bishops to supervision of monasteries, as well as less ecclesiastical concerns. Thessaly no longer faced the Vlach revolts and Norman incursions of the later eleventh century, but Malakes did complain about bandits in the nearby mountains in his eulogy of Kontostephanos; Magdalino suggests that they may have been Vlach highlanders.¹¹⁷ Malakes' fellow administrators in the region represented another source of unrest.¹¹⁸ Malakes was one of many prelates in the theme of Hellas and Peloponnesos, which encompassed the area between Sparta and Larissa. His episcopate territorially overlapped with the authorities of various civil and military officials, and his metropolitan see was one of several within the theme. During the twelfth century, the number of bishoprics had actually increased;¹¹⁹ Malakes was in an especially crowded landscape. His letters address common concerns shared by—and conflicts between—him and other administrators. Furthermore, the letters demonstrate the means by which a provincial bishop with both local and Constantinopolitan connections could advance his own interests and the influence of his see, both through cooperation with and domination of his neighbours.

For all that Malakes had close ties with Constantinople, his relationships with lesser imperial officials in the provinces were strained. Taxation was an especially thorny issue, as it set the interests of the capital against those of the provinces. Malakes was frankly one of many bishops frustrated by taxes: Theophylact of Ohrid, Eustathios of Thessalonike, and Michael Choniates all ran afoul of local tax collectors,¹²⁰ while Balsamon notes that Nikolaos of Amykleion resigned his see and became a monk rather than face such officials any longer.¹²¹ Likewise, Nikolaos Mouzalon, archbishop of Cyprus 1107–11 repeatedly cited troubles with tax collectors and local officials before similarly abdicating and moving to a monastery (before later becoming patriarch of Constantinople 1147–52).¹²² Taxation worries and skirmishes between competing

115 Gregory, 'Neopatras'.

116 Angold, *Church and Society*, 201-3.

117 Malakes, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 145; Magdalino, *Empire of Manuel I*, 133.

118 J. Fine, *The late medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor 1994) 33–8.

119 Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 103-10.

120 Angold, *Church and Society*, 162-3, 191, 195, 204-5; Michael Choniates, ed. Kolovou, 68-70; Shawcross, 'Golden Athens', 81-2, 91-3; Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 75-7.

121 G. A. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων* (Athens 1852) III, 145; Angold, *Church and Society*, 156.

122 Angold, *Church and Society*, 257-60.

provincial authorities were prevalent beyond Malakes' lifetime, too, as illustrated by the experiences of John Apokaukos.¹²³ Malakes' surviving letters include one to a tax collector, Bardas, whom the bishop accused of lacking mercy and 'base covetousness for profits'.¹²⁴ Malakes claimed that the diocese's funds had been drained away by taxes, 'so that not three obols' remained.¹²⁵ While no doubt exaggerated for rhetorical effect, the struggle was real: the tax assessments of the later twelfth century were flawed, leading to incorrect taxation and overly-heavy burdens on the people of Hellas.¹²⁶ In order to retain resources within his diocese and relieve the people under his pastoral care, Malakes stood up to Bardas and sided with his province against the servants of the capital.

However, Malakes had relatively few resources with which to resist Bardas: imperial officials had every right to collect taxes in Hellas.¹²⁷ Therefore, Malakes turned to his skill with words to persuade the official that he had gone too far. In a mixture of supplicating hyperbole and acerbic wit, he asked the tax collector to 'withdraw your whips' and to give back the money he cruelly extracted from the people of Neopatras, so that they might redeem their homes and so that Bardas might in turn enter heaven.¹²⁸ Failing this, Malakes had one other option: as seen in his letter to Andronikos Kamateros, he could also sidestep the tax collectors and petition the imperial administration directly, a tactic also used by Theophylact and Michael Choniates.¹²⁹ While Malakes admittedly was not optimistic about relief in that letter,¹³⁰ the fact that he wrote about taxes to a man who had the emperor's ear suggests he attempted to alleviate his problems using his Constantinopolitan network. It is unclear whether Malakes obtained any help this way, but the conflict with Bardas illustrates the challenges facing a rural metropolitan and the ways in which he attempted to address these.

When a civil administrator was patently in the wrong, for example meddling in ecclesiastical affairs, metropolitans could use their official weight to resolve conflicts. In an incident recorded in a letter from Michael Choniates to Malakes, the metropolitans skirmished with a *protokentarchos*, a low-ranking regional military commander, over the appointment of an abbot at a monastery at Myrrinion. Malakes had removed the original abbot there because he was a layman not a monk; he chose a more appropriate replacement. However, the reason for Choniates' letter was to inform Malakes that another rival abbot, backed by the *protokentarchos*, had ousted the replacement as soon as Malakes had left for Constantinople.¹³¹ The matter dragged on, and Choniates

123 Angold, *Church and Society*, 219-22.

124 Malakes, *Tà σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 49.

125 Malakes, *Tà σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 50.

126 Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 75-6.

127 Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 59-102, esp. 74-7 and 88-9.

128 Malakes, *Tà σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 50.

129 Angold, *Church and Society*, 163, 204-5.

130 Malakes, *Tà σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 70.

131 Michael Choniates, ed. Kolovou, 99. On *protokentarchoi*, Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 79-80.

finally sought help from Manuel, metropolitan of Thebes,¹³² in whose diocese the theme's civil administration was based.¹³³ While it is not clear how Manuel resolved the conflict, perhaps he pressured the governor of the province in Thebes to command his underling to step away from the monastery. The system was far from perfect; after all, Choniates had been unsuccessful at using persuasion or other means before consulting Manuel of Thebes – but cooperation between metropolitans offered a way to enforce episcopal influence more effectively against rival administrators.

Taxation likewise brought provincial bishops together in sympathy, as illustrated in a pair of letters by Malakes to Constantine, metropolitan of Patras. Here, Malakes repeated the same criticisms as in the letter to Bardas, lamenting that both bishops were suffering at 'the illegal burden of government affairs and both the barbaric raids and Scythian foraging of our own brothers and neighbours, discharged wickedly by the tax collectors and the monthly or even daily tax gathering'.¹³⁴ While expressing confidence that evildoers would meet their just deserts at the conclusion of his first letter,¹³⁵ Malakes' advice in a second was far more stoical. After another indignant discussion of financial troubles stemming 'from men uneducated and ignorant of God', Malakes concluded that his colleague must accept the situation as best he could. He reminded Constantine: 'Bear these things nobly ... knowing that a reward that cannot be taken away is dispensed by God to those who endure trials thankfully'.¹³⁶ In addition to reaffirming the tensions between Malakes and the local tax collectors, these two letters emphasize that such problems were widespread in the theme, in Patras as well as Neopatras. Again, these complaints were neither new nor unique, but the language of the letters confirms that Malakes was Constantine's ally against the civil authorities, with the bishops furthermore characterizing themselves as the more educated, reasonable, and righteous parties.

Malakes also travelled to other nearby episcopal sees, not just to Constantinople. Since his and Eustathios' schooldays, the two had maintained a long-standing correspondence as bishops,¹³⁷ and Malakes also visited Eustathios in Thessalonike at least once.¹³⁸ One of Eustathios' letters also reveals that Malakes spent time in the Macedonian city of Servia,¹³⁹ a suffragan see of Thessalonike.¹⁴⁰ It is unknown why Malakes was there, but as Eustathios was extremely ill at the time,¹⁴¹ Malakes may have

132 Michael Choniates, ed. Kolovou, 114.

133 Herrin, *Margins and metropolis*, 61.

134 Malakes, *Τὰ σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 52-3.

135 Malakes, *Τὰ σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 53.

136 Malakes, *Τὰ σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 54.

137 Malakes, *Τὰ σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 68-9, 75-6; Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Die Briefe des Eustathios von Thessalonike*, ed. F. Kolovou (Munich 2006) 122-8, 169*-70*.

138 Malakes, *Τὰ σφζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 75.

139 Eustathios, ed. Kolovou, 127-8.

140 Kolovou, *Die Briefe des Eustathios*, 172*.

141 Eustathios, ed. Kolovou, 127-8.

travelled to Serbia professionally on the archbishop's behalf, just as Michael Choniates had handled problems in Myrrinion while Malakes was absent. Again, the metropolitans cooperated and in doing so could reach beyond their own dioceses.

With so many different bishops in Hellas, however, professional tensions could arise. The hostile relationship between Malakes and Balsam, the bishop of Euripos in Euboeia is a case in point. Around 1185, Malakes sought to exert episcopal rights over some monasteries in Euripos, it seems because of a connection of the Tornikioi to nearby lands.¹⁴² Balsam complained that Malakes' encroachment was illegal, as Euripos was a suffragan diocese belonging to Athens rather than Neopatras. Matters quickly escalated. On the one side, Balsam championed his rights over Euripos using disruptive crowds who chanted 'the bishop is holy' to influence popular opinion in Athens;¹⁴³ on the other, Malakes accused Balsam of stealing from his own congregation, inflicting corporal punishment on churchmen and laymen alike, and breaking canon law.¹⁴⁴

Michael Choniates, as metropolitan over Euripos, duly investigated the conflict and brokered peace. He seems to have upheld the rights of his suffragan, but also insisted that Balsam and the people of Euripos should honour Malakes for his merits and reputation.¹⁴⁵ The larger episode is obscure, but the approaches to it of the two metropolitans are revealing. Malakes found it natural enough to extend his authority beyond the borders of his metropolitan see, perhaps especially given his familial ties to the area; as a local, his authority extended into the personal realm as much as the official. Furthermore, Malakes had no qualms about his actions: he denigrated both Balsam and Choniates when questioned, branding the former as a liar and the latter as a dupe.¹⁴⁶ Choniates, however, could not ignore Malakes' incursion into his suffragan's see and had to weigh a cooperative relationship with Malakes against his own metropolitan rights. By balancing these interests, Choniates, too, emphasized that personal influence could distort strict observance to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, a problematic reality in a province already riddled with competing authorities.

Malakes' aggressively active episcopal behaviour fits with his combination of local, imperial, and intellectual influence. Euthymios Tornikes, in his funeral oration for Malakes, memorialized his uncle as a notable orator and writer, as well as an active bishop visiting prisoners, giving alms in Neopatras, and attending the synod in Constantinople.¹⁴⁷ These depictions were almost certainly idealized, but the dual roles, intellectual and bishop together, were exactly what Malakes himself valued. In his own monody for Eustathios of Thessalonike, he focused upon Eustathios as a consummate

142 Kolovou, *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae*, 61*; Darrouzès, 'Les discours d'Euthyme Tornikès', 50.

143 Malakes, *Τὰ συζηόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 40, 72; Angold, *Church and society*, 202-3.

144 Malakes, *Τὰ συζηόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 73-4.

145 Michael Choniates, ed. Kolovou, 25-6; however, the letters do not discuss the result of the original conflict.

146 Malakes, *Τὰ συζηόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 41-3, 73.

147 Tornikes, 'Μονωδία', ed. Darrouzès, 78-80, 84-7.

wordsmith and teacher who also provided strong leadership to Thessalonike, and emphasized how intertwined the two roles were.¹⁴⁸ With such pragmatic and cultural authority,¹⁴⁹ as well as that of the episcopal office itself, a Malakes or Eustathios theoretically became a triple threat. Moreover, with local influence via his family and connections to elite circles in the capital, it is unsurprising that Malakes might consider himself more influential than his see and his opinions weightier than those of some peers, even if he had lost out in the synod of 1166 and struggled to win against his various rivals in Hellas.

Twelfth-century metropolitans faced a landscape crowded with other prelates. They needed to advocate both for their sees and for themselves, especially in the face of competition with local civil authorities.¹⁵⁰ While Malakes' provincial actions are less opaque than those in Constantinople, the bishop was certainly both busy within Hellas and vigorous in his assertion of authority there, even if sometimes this was not strictly warranted. Malakes used rhetoric, the significance of his office, experiences, his personal network and the one he aspired to, and education to enhance his prestige amid his local struggles. Moreover, as much as Malakes engaged in rivalries with other administrative and ecclesiastical figures, he also clearly worked with his fellow metropolitans to advance mutual interests or to resist common threats. Malakes is not alone in either his experiences or his role as a capital-trained metropolitan, but his combination of powerful local connections and Constantinopolitan prestige speak to the uniquely influential role he was able to play despite his appointment to a relatively minor see. In fact, his see itself hardly enters the picture: Malakes' field is Hellas and neighbouring areas as much as Neopatras. Ultimately, Malakes' see seemed to have allowed him to balance his intellectual and synodal career in the capital at the same time as he continued to immerse himself in local controversies and contests. He may have been absent often from Neopatras but he was quite active as a provincial metropolitan.

Conclusions

While only some of his works survive, from the extant evidence it is possible to conclude that Malakes' career as a twelfth-century metropolitan enabled him to be an involved local administrator while also serving as a member of synods, an orator, and a member of the intellectual elite of the capital. On the one hand, Malakes' correspondence illustrates his role as a provincial prelate in contact with administrators across the region and as someone active in local financial and religious affairs. On the other, his speeches and the external references to him in histories and records produced in the capital attest to his continued activity among the highest ecclesiastical and imperial circles. Supported

148 Malakes, *Tὰ σωζόμενα*, ed. Bonis, I, 70, 80, 82.

149 E.g., C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: the nature of Christian leadership in an age of transition* (Berkeley 2005) 23–55, 178–82.

150 Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis*, 77–84.

by an education that allowed him to move between these worlds, Malakes spent his career as an intermediary between capital and province, and Church and imperial government. His office was not necessarily a sinecure, however; though he absented himself from small, uneventful Neopatras, he remained engaged in administrative concerns and struggles in his home theme.

With his combination of Constantinopolitan and provincial pursuits, both ecclesiastical and rhetorical, in many ways Malakes' career paralleled those of other bishops educated in the capital during the twelfth century. For example, while becoming archbishop too late to be involved in the Demetrios of Lampe affair, Eustathios likewise involved himself in theological debates with the emperor, as when he offended Manuel by vehemently objecting to a relaxation of the anathema against the god of the Muslims in 1180.¹⁵¹ Indeed, synods were inherently made up of provincial bishops, so Malakes' experiences echo those of many peers.¹⁵² Furthermore, Malakes was not alone in maintaining an oratorical career after becoming a bishop: Eustathios, too, travelled and continued to give speeches before emperors, and maintained his academic career after becoming an archbishop.¹⁵³ Malakes' provincial concerns and actions were also largely in line with those of his colleagues. As above, he was in good company with his complaints about imperial taxation. Moreover, Malakes was, again, not the only bishop to use his Constantinopolitan network to assist with problems within his diocese: Choniates used his connections to benefit Athens, Eustathios depended on the capital to quell unrest in Thessalonike, and George Tornikes called upon elite friends in the capital to help Ephesos.¹⁵⁴

However, certain differences between Malakes' career and those of his peers are telling. First, while both Malakes and Eustathios travelled, making trips that had no ostensible connection to their sees, some metropolitans remained extremely immersed in their sees, as did Michael Choniates.¹⁵⁵ Teresa Shawcross is correct to emphasize the provincial interests of metropolitan bishops,¹⁵⁶ though comparisons between Choniates, Malakes, and Eustathios indicate that local loyalties could vary in intensity. Malakes ultimately represents a metropolitan with significant interests in the capital, despite promoting and defending the people of his diocese. He may be a native son of Hellas, but his interests were split. This is not surprising, as the size and relative tranquillity of Neopatras meant that Malakes could be active in both places without sacrificing his authority in either. An 'imported' figure in a larger see, like Choniates at Athens, could not afford such divided attentions. Second, the (admittedly limited) surviving records of Malakes' career suggest that he did not encounter severe problems during his decades as metropolitan. While Eustathios faced a Norman occupation as well as

151 Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dielen, 216-8; trans. Magoulias, 122-3.

152 J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire*, 2nd edn (Oxford 2010) 318-23.

153 Kazhdan and Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine literature*, 133-5.

154 Shawcross, 'Golden Athens', 82; Angold, *Church and Society*, 177, 180.

155 Shawcross, 'Golden Athens', 78-85.

156 Shawcross, 'Golden Athens', 65-95.

hostility from the people of Thessalonike,¹⁵⁷ and Choniates withstood a siege by Leo Sgouros and ultimately was forced out of Athens by the Latin conquest,¹⁵⁸ Neopatras appears to have been relatively tranquil during Malakes' occupancy, apart from relatively ordinary administrative tensions and minor raids. The experiences of bishops of less populous or significant communities would naturally deviate from those of major commercial or pilgrimage centres like Thessalonike or Athens. Therefore, Malakes sheds light on what could be a less exceptional episcopal career and diocese and one where he was as willing to cooperate with his fellow metropolitans as to challenge them, a situation sometimes overlooked in scholarship on administrative rivalries.

The distinction between types of bishop and bishopric is important, especially given that fewer records survive for uneventful and relatively insignificant dioceses like Neopatras. Part of Malakes' historical value comes from the very obscurity of his see. Indeed, scholars know relatively little about many other contemporary metropolitans elsewhere in Hellas before 1204: Constantine of Patras and Manuel of Thebes corresponded with Malakes and Choniates respectively, but left little trace of their own careers. Malakes' history partially survives because he made his name in the capital, as an orator, member of literary circles, and contentious theologian, in addition to his more than three decades as a metropolitan. Niketas Choniates and John Kinnamos alike remembered him by name in their imperial histories and some of Malakes' writings survived after his death,¹⁵⁹ belying the experiences of many now-unknown provincial metropolitans.

Malakes' very combination of careers allows him to serve as an additional partial portrait of the activities of a Komnenian bishop, corroborating and expanding upon both the episcopal profiles in Angold and the understandings of episcopal rule in Hellas outlined by Herrin and Shawcross. He confirms the ways in which bishops could move between several roles, professionally and geographically, aided by literary credentials and elite connections. However, he is perhaps noteworthy in the degree to which he balanced his worlds: he was closely tied to Hellas *and* a notable figure in the capital. He used his handle on local affairs to allow him time in the capital while bringing that Constantinopolitan influence back to help him in Hellas. Despite his small diocese, tendency to infuriate emperors, and his attention split between capital and province, Malakes emerges as an energetic provincial administrator, an able yet circumspect theologian, and noted intellectual whose career lasted decades and transcended his modest see.

157 Kazhdan and Franklin, *Studies on Byzantine Literature*, 134-7; Angold, *Church and Society*, 180-90

158 Angold, *Church and Society*, 207-12; Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 605-6; Shawcross, 'Golden Athens', 85-9.

159 For the manuscript history of the surviving works, Bonis, *Tὰ σωζόμενα*, 24-35.