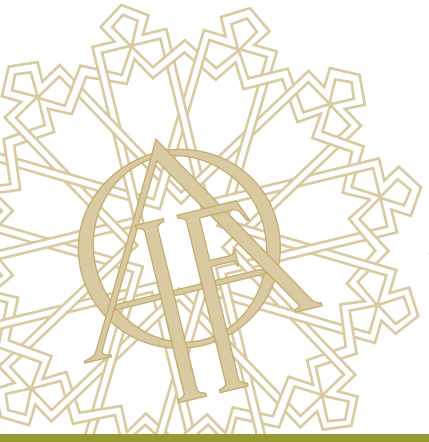
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ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz M. A. Ramaḍān

The Treatment of Arab Prisonersof War in Byzantium, 9th- 10th centuries.

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The Treatment of Arab Prisoners of War in Byzantium

9th–10th Centuries

Although Byzantine—Arab relations have attracted close attention of many scholars, few studies deal with the actual status and position of the Arab minorities in the Byzantine Empire. In 1998, two studies were published; in one of them Liliana Simeonova has discussed the presence of Arab prisoners of war at imperial banquets in early tenth century.[1] In the other study, Stephen W. Reinert has dealt with the Muslim presence in Constantinople from the ninth to the fifteenth century, concentrating only on the prisoners of war and tradesmen.[2] The conclusion of these studies is that "Muslim prisoners (in Byzantium) were indeed protected quasi-subjects",[3] and that "by the middle of the ninth century, the Byzantines had already begun to treat their Arab prisoners in a somewhat more humane, or at least non-homicidal, fashion".[4] More recently, Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki seems adopt the same view, particularly for the treatment of eminent Arab prisoners.[5]

1. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 75–104.
2. Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 125–150.
3. Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 129.
4. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 76–77.
5. Kolia-Dermitzaki compares between the captivity conditions of the Arab prisoners and the Byzantine officers/martyrs of Amorion who were executed by the order of Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim in 223/838, attributing this difference to "a tendency of the Byzantines to propagate the splendour of the Empire, the magnificence of its civilization and the benevolence of the Emperor" (Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 583–620, esp. 599–600 and no. 63).

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This view had previously reached its loudest tone in Arnold Toynbee's saying:

> "The esteem in which Eastern Muslims were held by their Byzantine antagonists showed itself still more strikingly when the Eastern Muslims whom the Byzantine Government had on its hand were prisoners of war. A noteworthy feature of the relations between the Byzantine Empire and the Eastern Muslims is the generosity with which the Byzantine Government treated its Eastern Muslim prisoners".[6]

Undoubtedly, these views were established on some Arabic and Byzantine texts, mainly Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, al-Muqaddasī, Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, the so-called *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, and the letter of Patriarch Nikolas I Mysticus to the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir. Nevertheless, these views, which largely depended on Vasiliev's partial translation of some Arabic texts,[7] did not rely on many other texts that were not included in Vasiliev's pioneering study and very important for presenting a comprehensive picture for this premise.

For the side of modern Arab scholars, al-Amin Abū Seʿada has entirely rejected this view and concluded that:

> "I cannot agree totally with the theories of modern western scholars who tend to accept that Muslim prisoners of war were treated well by the Byzantines. Re-reading the same Muslim sources already used by them supplies another interpretation of the story".[8]

Other Arab scholars, who dealt with the same topic, being confused by contradictions of the Arabic sources' narratives, have presented inconsistent opinions. Nonetheless, the reader of their studies may hardly understand that the treatment of Arab prisoners in Byzantium was changeable and inconsistent.[9]

6. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 383.

7. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, 2 vol. (Bruxelles, 1935). Arab. trans. Šʿīra, *al-ʿArab wa l-Rūm* (Cairo, n.d.).

8. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 193. A. A. Abū Seʿada also states that "it is undoubtedly the case that the Byzantines were notorious for their ruthlessness towards prisoners of war" (ibid., p. 189).

9. Ḥāmid Zayān was the only Arab scholar who paid attention to Arab prisoners of War in Byzantium. In his study, he indicates that the Byzantines adopted ill-treatment against the Arab prisoners, stating that: "The Byzantines were not only charged of their ill-treatment and carelessness of the Muslim prisoners, but also they restrained their religious freedom, forced them to renounce Islam and adopt Christianity". He also writes that: "The life of Muslim prisoners in Byzantium was not entirely full of suffering and pain, but there were other sides indicated the Byzantine well-treatment of them, for example they were not forced to eat pork and had free movement throughout the Byzantine state. The Byzantines also abandoned means of torture with them". Zayān, who mainly depended on the texts of Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, al-Muqaddasī and Patriarch Nikolas I Mysticus's letter adressed to the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir, was not acquainted with many other Arabic and Byzantine texts. See: Zayān, *al-Asrā al-Muslimūn*, p. 9–24, esp. 13, 22–23. Also, there is another Arabic study shortly dealt with the topic, but was not acquainted with any of the Byzantine texts, only presented a review of some Arabic narratives, specifically those of Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, al-Muqaddasī and al-Tanūḫī. Its final conclusion was full of misunderstaning and contradictions. Despite that its writer refers to some Arabic evidences concerning the Byzantine religious pressures over the Arab prisoners, he states, according to the only statement in which he expressed his own view, that: "The Byzantine state pursued the Islamic traditions in its treatment of the Muslim prisoners of war, and did not force them to do anything against these traditions". See: Ḥasan, *al-Maʿārik wa l-Asr*, p. 161–176, esp. 163, 165–167.

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These views may focus only on one side of the premise, and neither ask nor answer an important question: when and why did the Byzantines resort to whether mercy or cruelty in their treatment with Arab prisoners? In other words, what are the motives and considerations which formed the Byzantines' attitudes towards the Arab prisoners of war? The recent study aims at to re-examining the available Arabic and Byzantine pieces of evidence, discussing views of modern scholars, and attempting to find an answer to these questions.

Torture and Execution

Many pieces of evidence indicate that the Byzantines tended to practice an ill-treatment with the Arab prisoners. Torture and execution are the most familiar means which were frequently mentinoned in Arabic and Byzantine sources. In an unnoted passage by modern scholars, Ibn Ḫurdāḏbah (d.c. 300/912), states that:

> "The *Patrikoi,* those who take charge of Constantinople's affairs and the King's retinue, are unsheathing the sword against sons of Ismāʿīl to kill them. Also, they may beat prisoners with swords, stones, and throw them in a burning furnace".[10]

During the ninth and tenth centuries, the Byzantine-Arab wars witnessed a harsher treatment of captives on both sides, their execution seemed to be an usual punitive practice. In 165/781, Hārūn al-Rashīd ordered to kill 2,090 Byzantine prisoners.[11] During the capture of Amorion in 223/838, al-Muʿtaṣim ordered to kill thousands of prisoners.[12] Also in 345/956, the Hamdanid Amīr of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla, executed the Byzantine prisoners in order to escape after his defeat by Leo Phokas.[13] On the Byzantine side, when Emperor Theophilos attacked Sozopetra and Melitene in 223/838, according to Arabic sources, he "severely punished Muslim prisoners, teared out their eyes, and cut their ears and noses".[14] During the Byzantine reconquest of Northern Syria in the second half of tenth century, Arabic sources record great numbers of Arab captives who were executed by Nicephoros Phokas' hands.[15]

10. Ibn Ḫurdāḏbah, *al-Masālik wa l-Mamālik*, p. 109.
11. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, VIII, p. 153.
12. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, VIII, p. 69–70 (records 6000 executed men); Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, Arab. trans. Armaleh, *Ta'rīḫ al-Zamān*, p. 33 (says that "When al-Muʿtaṣim saw the great number of the Byzantine captives, he ordered to kill 4000 from them"); al-Masʿūdī, *Murūǧ al-Ḏahab*, III, p. 143 (records 30,000 executed prisoners). On the problem of these numbers see the elaborate analysis in: Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 590–592. Also, Ibn al-ʿAdīm records another story of a revengeful execution of 400 Byzantine prisoners by Sayf al-dawla b. Ḥamdān in 346/957, after he discovered a conspiracy of some of his servants (*ġilmān*) with the Byzantines to capture him (*Zubda*, I, p. 124).
13. Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 242; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 204.
14. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 55; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 39; Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīḫ*, II, p. 581 (records that Theophilos captured and killed all Sozopetra's Population); Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 27 (says that Theophilos killed all Sozopetra's women and youths); al-Masʿūdī, *Murūǧ al-Ḏahab*, III, p. 141 (states that he killed the young and the old).
15. Ibn al-Aṯīr records 400 executed prisoners at the frontier zone in 315/927; 400 men and a great number of women and youths at ʿAyn Zarbī, near Maṣṣīṣa, during Nicephoros Phokas's attack in 351/962; also, great

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Certainly, the severe nature of the Arab-Byzantine battlefields leads us not to expect a merciful attitude toward the enemy's prisoners of war on both sides. Nonetheless, the cruelty and desire of revenge were not always the only motives to execute the prisoners. For the Byzantines, the strategic necessity of the battlefield sometimes made it inevitable to adopt this choice. Military manuals frequently advised that the officers and the cavalrymen must keep their minds on the battle and must not get involved in capturing prisoners, but that their attendants and the soldiery who were to perform this task.[16] The author of *Skirmishing*, in the second half of tenth century, advised that "prisoners of war should be killed or sent on ahead, so our men can move out quickly".[17] Practically, Emperor Basil I, in one of his campaigns against the Arabs in 265–266/879, had to kill a great number of prisoners because he lacked enough soldiers to secure and guard them.[18]

However, if the previous cases can be attributed to the hostile nature or the strategic necessity of the battlefield, many pieces of evidence proved that the Arab prisoners were sometimes subjected to torture and execution far from the battlefield, even in the Byzantine territory itself, and for other different motives. In 247/861, Basil I (867–886) tried to horrify the sailors of the Byzantine fleet by an example of the severe punishment of desertion, taking Arab prisoners as a scapegoat. According to Genesios, he secretly took thirty captives *Agarenoi* from the prison and gave them to the *Droungarios* of the Vigla, ordering him that:

> "The breads of the thirty *Agarenoi*, as well as their hair, be tarred and set on fire. He also had their faces smeared with soot and their feet tightly tied with a double chain. On a certain hour of a pre-arranged day he had them severely whipped in the Hippodrome as though they were deserters from the navy. They then suffered the ridicule imposed on convicted runaways, namely, they were carried through the city naked and mounted on mules all the way to the Golden Gate. Then they were taken to Methone to be impaled as cowardly deserters of war".[19]

numbers of captives at Maṣṣīṣa in 354/965 and Antioch in 359/970: Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 35, 273, 278, 318; Ibn Miskawayh, *Taǧārib al-Umam*, p. 211. According to Arabic sources, in 351/962, Nicephoros Phokas ordered to kill 1,200 prisoners as a revenge for his nephew whom was killed by a Daylamite man near the gate of Aleppo's castle in 963: Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 134; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 63; al-Ḏahabī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Islām*, XXVI, p. 7–8 (states that the executed prisoners were from the glorious). Ibn al-ʿAdīm gives another number of 12,000 executed prisoners, but it seems to be an exaggeration (*Zubda*, I, p. 132–133).

16. *Praecepta Militaria of the Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas*, p. 27, 49; *The Taktika of Nikephoros Ouranos*, p. 131.

17. "Skirmishing", in: *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, p. 185.

18. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 283; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 142–143; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 121–122. Kolia-Dermitzaki points out that *jus belli*, i.e. just wars, allowed the execution of captives, if imposed by circumstances such as difficulties in their transportation, need to demoralize the enemy, and revenge. She cites that Nicephoros Phokas ordered to execute a number of Arabs in front of the walls of Candax, the central city of Crete, during its siege in 960–961, to demoralize its besieged population (Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 586 and no. 11).

19. *Iosephi Genesii Regum libri quattor*, p. 84; trans. Kaldellis, *On the Reigns*, p. 105. Cf. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 302–303.

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Concerning the same incident, Cedrenus refers to "*triginta quippe de captivis qui in Praetorio*".[20] If this is true, it means that the thirty captives *Agarenoi*, who were executed in 861, were brought from the *Praetorium*, a prison that seems to be only allocated to the glorious and eminent Arab prisoners. Some other Arabic and Byzantine texts explicitly refer to other cases of the eminent prisoners' execution. In 249/863, after the Byzantines had achieved a decisive victory over the Arabs, the *thema* commanders celebrated a splendid entry into Constantinople, and exposed the head of a captured Arab Amīr to public ridicule in a Constantinoplitan square.[21] In 354/965, both Muslim and Byzantine armies around Ṭarsūs, in revenge and counter revenge, executed prisoners on both sides. The Byzantines killed 100 eminent prisoners, in order to demoralize the besieged population of the city, who executed 3,000 Byzantine prisoners in retaliation.[22] These cases might partially disagree with Kolia-Dermitzaki's view that "keeping the eminent prisoners alive was the usual practice of both Byzantines and Arabs, and they (the Byzantines) did not execute them but kept them imprisoned till the time of their exchange".[23]

While the previous cases can be interpreted in the light of the Byzantines' desire to secure their victory over the Arabs or for their ecstatic feelings after victory, but at least they reveal that the eminent Arab prisoner's sometimes were subjected to torture and execution like others. However, only when the Arab prisoners, whether eminent or ordinary, proved to be profitable, the Byzantines did not tend to execute them. The *Taktika* of Leo VI advises the General of the army not to kill the prisoners, especially the eminent, before the end of the war. The rationale behind this, as the text indicates, is the possibility of using them in order to redeem the Byzantine prisoners in the enemy's hands, and obtaining some of them as allies and friends against the enemies (mainly as spies or mercenary fighters).[24]

Imprisonment

The tenth-century geographer Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn explicitly states that Constantinople has great churches (for the Byzantines) and mosques for Muslims, and that the Byzantines "are charitable to the Muslim prisoners, provide them with rations".[25] His contemporary geographer al-Muqaddasī also focuses on this well-treatment by saying "the Muslim prisoners may practice business among themselves and gain money. The Byzantines do not force any

20. Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, II, p. 129.
21. *Georgii Hamartoli Continuatus*, p. 734; Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 77.
22. Al-Ḍahabī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Islām*, XXVI, p. 18.
23. Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Martyrs of Amorion", p. 141–162, esp. 142; Kolia-Dermitzaki herself cites another case of the eminent Arab prisoners' execution. Bardas Phokas executed all the relatives of Sayf al-Dawla that were in his hand after the death of his son Constantine. See Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 241; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 204; Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 586 and n. 11.
24. Leo VI, *Taktika*, cols. 669–1094, esp. col. 909.
25. Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ākām*, p. 36. S. Reinert appropriately suggests that Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn's information on the number of mosques in Constantinople seems to be wrong, and only one can be securely identified the one that mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the *De Administrando:* Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 128.

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of them to eat pork, and they do not slit their noses or tongues".[26] These statements dealt with the Byzantine treatment of Arab prisoners as a whole, and did not make a distinction between the eminent and the common. One can find this distinction in another statement of al-Muqaddasī, who openly states:

> "When Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik attacked Constantinople, he imposed on the Byzantine Emperor to build a house near his palace for the noble and eminent prisoners to be under his care, the later accepted and built *Dār al-Balāṭ*. None of the Muslim prisoners is housed in the *Dār al-Balāṭ* except the eminent. They are maintained, looked after, and entertained there".[27]

According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, "at the request of Maslama, was built the mosque of the *Sarakēnoi* in the imperial *Praetorium*".[28] This evidence neither refers to a prison for Muslim prisoners, nor identifies the class of the *Sarakēnoi* for whom the mosque was built, but at least it refers to a building that was dedicated to the Arab prisoners in the imperial *Praetorium*. Other pieces of evidence derived from the *De Ceremoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and the so-called *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, which deal with the Arab prisoners' attendance at the imperial banquets during celebrations of some religious and diplomatic occasions, explicitly confirm that there was a prison for the Arab prisoners in the *Praetorium*. Therefore, modern scholars tend to think that the *Praetorium* itself was the *Dār al-Balāṭ* of the eminent Arab prisoners, and it was almost the same place of Constantinople mosque.[29]

Other Arabic sources refer to other prisons in which the Arab prisoners were confined. The tenth century Arab geographer Ibn Ḥawqal states: "aside from the *Dār al-Balāṭ*, there are four imperial prisons in which the Emperor's captives are confined. These are the *Tarqsīs*, the *Obsīq*, the *Buqlār*, and the *Nūmera*".[30] Modern scholars have identified the first three prisons with these of the *themata* of Thrakesion, Opsikion, and Boukellarion.[31] The *Nūmera* could be identified with the imperial Palace prison τα Νούμερα in which, as Toynbee sugests, a regiment of the *tagmata* appears to be stationed.[32] According to Theophanes Continuatus, the *Nūmera* was one of three prisons inside the palace, the others were τα Χαλκή (the *Khalkē*) and τα Πραιτωριομ (the *Praetorium*).[33] According to Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, who was captured and moved to Byzantium

26. Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm*, p. 138.
27. Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm*, p. 137–138.
28. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando*, p. 93.
29. Canard, "Expéditions", p. 61–121, esp. 95 (states that "bien que Mukaddasi ne le dise pas, il est probable que cette maison devait contenir une mosquée ou tout au moins une salle de prières"). Cf. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 182 (states that "It seems safe to assume that the Constantinople mosque and the special prison for the Arab elite in the *Praetorium* were almost the same place, inside the imperial complex, on the grounds that Muslim mosques do not require special buildings or special arrangements, just a big space and a place for washing").
30. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, p. 178.
31. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 386; Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 127.
32. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 386.
33. Theophanes Continuatus, *Cronographia*, p. 175.

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at the late ninth century, there were four prsions in the vestibule of the imperial palace, one of them was dedicated to the Tarsans and the other was for the common Muslims.[34]

The previous pieces of evidence indicate that Arab prisoners of war were confined in at least two prisons inside the Great Palace. Nonetheless, if the forementioned statement of Hārūn b. Yaḥyā refers to these two prisons, i.e. the *Dār al-Balāṭ* and the *Nūmera*, one may find it difficult to define which of the two was dedicated to the Tarsans or the other Muslims. But the exceptional reference to the Tarsans, instead of the others, seems to suggest that "the Tarsans" may be another name which was rarely used by the Arabs for the *Dār al-Balāṭ* or the *Praetorium* prison, and the other prison that was dedicated to the other Muslims was the *Nūmera*.

The last sugestion could be confirmed depending on the fact that on the 31st of May 946 the Amīr of Ṭarsūs sent an embassy, officially of the Abbasid Caliph, to the Byzantine court to negotiate for an exchange of prisoners and for peacemaking. On sunday 9th of August, after the feast of the Transfiguration which fell on Saturday 8th of August, the Muslim guests, who were two Tarsan envoys and their retinue, were invited to an imperial banquet in the *triklinos* of Justinian II. Forty prisoners were brought out the *Praetorium* to attend this banquet.[35] Few days later, in the 30th of August 946, three Muslim envoys were sent to Byzantium as representatives for the Daylamite Buwayhid Government, the Amīr of Amida and the Hamdanid Amīr of Aleppo, Sayf al-Dawla. Muslim envoys were invited to a similar imperial banquet, this time in the great *triklinos* of the Magnaura, but none of the Arab prisoners was present at this banquet.[36] This may suggest that the forty prisoners who attended the first banquet were mainly Tarsans, and that their attendance was considered, according to Toynbee's words, as "a gesture of good will on an occasion on which peace talks were on the agenda".[37] One can also suggest another possible interpretation, while one of the most important tasks of the Tarsan embassy was to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, and in light of the fact that Ṭarsūs was usually the common place where the frequent Byzantine-Arab exchanges took place, this may suggest that the Tarsan prison itself was the same *Dār al-Balāṭ* or the *Praetorium* prison, and the Arab prisoners confined in the *Praetorium* were the eminent who were expected to be exchanged in the near future, so they were called the "Tarsans".

According to Ibn Ḥawqal, the prisons of the *Tarqsīs* and the *Buqlār* were more comfortable than those of the *Obsīq* and the *Nūmera*. Ibn Ḥawqal made a special reference to the *Nūmera* prison, rather than the others, saying that "the prisoners lodged in the *Dār al-Balāṭ* begin their imprisonment in the *Nūmera*, and then they are transferred to the *Dār al-Balāṭ*. The *Nūmera* prison is harsh, depressing and dark".[38] This evidence may reveal that the eminent Arab prisoners did not completely enjoy special living conditions in the Byzantine prisons. On the contrary, they had to suffer in the *Nūmera* before being moved to the *Dār al-Balāṭ*, most probably when the time of their exchange seemed to be imminent.

34. Ibn Rustah, *al-Aʿlāq al-Nafisa*, p. 120.
35. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 584–585, 592.
36. Ibid., p. 593–594.
37. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 503.
38. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, p. 178.

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Kolia-Dermitzaki, who believes in the Byzantine special treatment of eminent prisoners, writes that "one of the most characteristic examples [of this special treatment] is that of the poet Abū Firās, who was captured during the fall of Ierapolis (Manbiğ) in 351/962, and remained in excellent conditions in Constantinople for four years until he was exchanged in 355/966".[39] But on the contrary of this view, Abū Firās himself expressed his suffering in the Byzantine captivity, stating that "we are living in stone, destroying stones and can not change our woollen clothes".[40] Whether Abū Firās refers here to the conditions of eminent prisoners in the prison of *Nūmera* or that of *Dār al-Balāṭ*, one may wonder why the Byzantines treated Arab prisoners in the first instance harshly and then modified their attitude towards them. Was it only for the good treatment of the Arab prisoners that would have given the Byzantines leverage in the peace negotiations, and prisoners-exchanges, with the Arabs? I think we can find another answer if we understand the Byzantine various needs that Arab prisoners were expected to fulfil.

Enslavement

The Byzantine and Arabic sources reveal that slavery seemed to be one of the natural fates of the majority of Arab prisoners of war in Byzantium. The *Taktika* of Leo VI recommended that, though the common practice should be selling prisoners into slavery, some of them must be kept in hand so as to exchange for Byzantine prisoners.[41] According to Leo the Deacon, when Nicephoros Phokas entered Mopsuestia in 965 with all his troops and captured it, he "sent the surviving *Barbaroi* into slavery".[42]

According to the available pieces of evidence, enslavement of the Arab prisoners usually begins as soon as the battle comes to an end. Apparently, these prisoners were regarded as the largest and most lucrative part of the war booty, which could be used as an incentive and reward for the soldiery. Division of the Arab prisoners among the victorious generals and soldiers usually takes place outside the Golden Gate, from where the triumphal entry of the victorious Emperor, the public parade of prisoners and other booty usually begin. Constantine Porphyrogentius, in his describtion of the victorious return of Emperor Theophilos from a campaign against the Cilician Saracens, states:

> "From the Golden Gate to the Chalkē, the soldiers of the different units took their own prisoners, separately and in order, along with the booty and weapons, and proceeded triumphally through the City".[43]

39. Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Martyrs of Amorion", p. 142; id., "Some Remarks", p. 599–600.
40. Abū Firās, *Dīwān*, p. 80.
41. Leo VI, *Taktika*, col. 909.
42. Leo the Deacon, *History*, p. 102.
43. Constantine Porphyrogentius, *Three Treatises*, p. 149.

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Kolia-Dermitzaki has suggested that the Byzantines, for the advantage of being able to exchange their own eminent prisoners, "did not sell the eminent Arab prisoners as slaves".[44] Also, McGeer has suggested that while the majority of Arab prisoners were sold as slaves, the prisoners of sufficient wealth or prestige could hope one day to be ransomed or exchanged.[45] But there is Byzantine evidence implying that the fate of slavery sometimes extended to the eminent prisoners. According to Constantine Porphyrogentius, when Emperor Basil I returned from a campaign in the regions of Tephrikē and Germanikeia (Marʿaš), and on the meadow outside the Golden Gate:

> "Tents were set up, and they (the soldiers) brought over the noble and important Hagarene prisoners together with the best of the booty of war, banners and weapons. When it had been deposited in the tents, this was divided up and paraded triumphally along the Mesē from the Golden Gate to the Chalkē of the Palace".[46]

Also, Arabic sources reveal that it was one of the main objectives of Byzantine commanders leading campaigns along the eastern frontier to acquire great amount of booty, including captives for the purpose of enslavement. According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, when Nicephoros Phokas attacked ʿAyn Zarbī in 351/962, "he executed all its population except those who could be enslaved".[47] In the light of this event, one can interpret what the Arabic sources reflect about the Byzantine concern for capturing mainly the Arab young women and men. In 238/852–853, the Byzantines attacked Damietta and captured 600 women.[48] Also, when Nicephoros Phokas attacked Aleppo in 351/962, he executed most of its men, kept the women and children, and moved 10,000 young women and men to Byzantium.[49] In 358/969, after his attack against many parts of Northern Syria, he returned to Byzantium with 100,000 prisoners, according to Arabic sources: "He executed many, released the old, and did not take with him except the young men and women".[50] In the following year, he captured Antioch and executed many of its population, allowed children and the old people to go outside the city, and moved more than 20,000 boys and girls to Byzantium.[51]

44. Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Martyrs of Amorion", p. 142.
45. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 365.
46. Constantine Porphyrogentius, *Three Treatises*, p. 141–143.
47. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 273.
48. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 194 (said that they were 150 Muslims and 450 Christians); Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 117.
49. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 274; Ibn Miskawyh, *Taǧārib al-Umam*, p. 193; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 132, 134; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 62.
50. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 313–314. According to Bar Hebraeus, Nicephoros Phokas captured about 1,000 young men and women from the regions between Homs and Aleppo, and he "did not capture the old, but killed some of them and released the others": *Chronographia*, p. 66. Ibn al-ʿAdīm records that the number of Muslim prisoners reached 100,000 before he entered Antioch in the following year: *Zubda*, I, p. 149.
51. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 318; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 149; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 66.

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The previous figures seem to be exaggerated, but the Byzantine sources itself attest that the Byzantine wars against the Arabs carried out great numbers of prisoners to the Byzantine territory. According to Theophanes Continuatus there were about 25,000 prisoners from Emperor Theophilos' expedition against the Arabs during 216/831.[52] Leo the Deacon describes Leo Phokas' victory over Sayf al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān (303–356/916–967) at Adrassos in November 349/960, and his arrival at Byzantium with myriads of Agarene prisoners.[53] Skylitzes records that, after Leo Phokas' return, "the number of prisoners of war was so great as to fill the urban households and the farms with slaves".[54]

However, the last statement of Skylitzes may reveal one of the fields in which the Byzantines used to exploit the Arab prisoners of war. The *novella* of Emperor John Tzimiskes, concerning the tax on slaves taken in war, reveals that Byzantine soldiers, of both low and high ranks, often sent their slaves (prisoners of war) to their own households and properties or even to their relatives, and sometimes sent some of them as a gift to persons living in the capital or residing outside.[55] From other Byzantine sources, one can identify the name of two Arab prisoners who most likely were used to serve as slaves in the Byzantine aristocratic households. Constantine Porphyrogenitus refers to the Arab Chase (Ġāzī) "the slave of the *Patrikios* Damian, who sprang from the race of the *Sarakēnoi* and continued a true *Sarakēnos* in thought and manners and religion".[56] Also, Byzantine Sources refer to the famous Arab Samonas, the *parakoimômenos* of Emperor Leo VI's court, who began his splendid career at Constantinople as a servant in the house of Stylianos Zaoutzes, the second man in the Empire and the father of Leo's wife, Empress Zoe.[57]

On the side of Arabic sources, Ibn Ḫurdāḏbah's forementioned statement implies that the enslavement of Arab prisoners in *parikoi*'s households might be a common practice. Also, in a lengthy story of an Arab prisoner, bearing the hagiographical nature of exaggeration and fantasy, the tenth century judge al-Tanūḫī refers to a Byzantine Emperor adopted a policy of moving Arab prisoners to serve in twelve *patrikoi*'s households by mean of random selection.[58]

For the Byzantine Government, Arab prisoners of war seemd to be a source of revenue to the Empire. According to Arabic sources, the frequent exchanges of prisoners between the Byzantine and the Arab authorities indicate that the number of Arab prisoners of war was greater than the Byzantine prisoners. Therefore, the later frequently had to spend much money

52. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 114.
53. Leo the Deacon, *History*, p. 76.
54. Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 250; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 211.
55. *Novella of the Emperor John*, trans. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 367–368. McGeer appropriately suggests that it is most likely that Tzimiskes issued this decree after his expedition against Nisibis in 972 or his advance through Syria and Palestine in 974–975, for both of which netted large numbers of captives (ibid., p. 368).
56. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando*, p. 243.
57. *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP*, p. 55. L. Rydén wrote an important study on Samonas, but he could not interpret "how he had come to Constantinople?". Now, it is evident that he most likely was a prisoner of war; See his "Portrait of Samonas", p. 101–108, esp. 101.
58. Al-Tanūḫī, *Kitāb al-Faraǧ*, p. 145–153, esp. 145.

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to redeem their prisoners.[59] On the unofficial levels, the Byzantine Government apparently permitted selling of the Arab prisoners and imposed taxes on it. Emperor John Tzimiskes's *novella*, concerning the tax on slaves taken in war, indicated an active trade in which Byzantine soldiers had a free choice of selling their own prisoners to provincial officials, merchants and sailors in the markets and villages of the Byzantine territories.[60] More striking, the common Arabs seemed to be involved in this trade. Al-Muqaddasī, who saw that it is imperative to describe the roads that lead to Constantinople, justified this necessity by the Muslims' need of going to it in order to "purchase prisoners, sending embassies, and for conquests and trades".[61] Practically, al-Tanūḫī narrates a story of a man, living in the frontier zone, who resorted to an eminent person's mediation to get help from his Amīr to redeem some of his captured relatives in Byzantium. Finally, he was given forty *dīnār*-s.[62] The story of the famous poet Abū Firās (d. 357/968), relative of Sayf al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān, gives the impression that the Byzantine Government itself granted the eminent Arab prisoners the chance of redeeming themselves. Abū Firās, who became desperate of Sayf al-Dawla's intervention to redeem him, had to resort to correspond with the Amīr of Ḫurāsān to redeem him. Also, some other Arab prisoners could write to their relatives for the same aim.[63] One can wonder how the Arab prisoners in Byzantium remaind keeping in touch with their homeland. It might have happened through Arab merchants or envoys who frequently visited Constantinople.

Moreover, the Byzantine Government itself apparently utilized the Arab prisoners in its factories and agricultural farms. According to al-Muqaddasī, "the commons of the Muslim prisoners [in Byzantium] are enslaved and employed in manufacturing industries. So, when the witty prisoner is asked about his craft, he does not expose it".[64] In the exchange of 246/860, al-Ṭabarī refers to two goldsmith prisoners, who converted to Christianity and remained in Constantinople, practicing their craft there.[65] Also, in one of his poems (*al-Rūmiyyāt*), Abū Firās expressly refers to employment of the imprisoned captives in the governmental stone pits.[66] Unfortunately we have not got any other Byzantine pieces of evidence on the employment of

59. In the exchange of 231/845, Caliph al-Wāṯiq was obliged not only to buy out from their masters all the Byzantine prisoners that had already been sold, but also to dispose of all the Byzantine women prisoners, who had been kept at his personal service in his palace. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 142; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 36. In 304–305/917, Caliph al-Muqtadir sent an embassy to Emperor Constantine VII with 170,000 golden *dīnār*-s to redeem the Arab prisoners who, according to Bar Hebraeus, "were much greater than the Byzantine prisoners" (Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 51–52). For the same reason, in the exchange of 355/966, Sayf al-Dawla b. Ḥamdān had to pay about 500,000 *dīnār*-s to redeem the Arab prisoners (83 *dīnār*-s for each prisoner). See al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-Muḥāḍara*, p. 136. For other cases, see Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 602–603.

60. *Novella of the Emperor John*, trans. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 367–368.

61. Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm*, p. 137.

62. Al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-Muḥāḍara*, p. 166.

63. Al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-Muḥāḍara*, p. 112.

64. Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm*, p. 138.

65. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 220.

66. Abū Firās, *Dīwān*, p. 80.

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the Arab prisoners in the governmental factories.[67] However, a short text in the *De Ceremoniis* of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, that prescribes the subsidies and exemptions granted to Arab prisoners who have been baptized and installed in plots of lands or households, reveals that the employment of Arab prisoners in the service of whether landowners or the State, seemed to be a common practice. More important, this evidence may indicate to what extent does the fate of Arab prisoners could be completely changed when they were converted to Christianity and integrated within the Byzantine society.[68]

Forced Conversion to Christianity

Modern scholars have incidentally and briefly noted that the desire of converting Arab prisoners of war to Christianity is one of the motives which stimulated the Byzantine attitudes towards them. Toynbee, in few words, has justified his view point concerning what he called the "generosity" with which Byzantine Government treated its Arab prisoners by "its aim and hope to win them for the Empire by persuading them to apostatize".[69] Also, McGeer has noticed that the majority of Arab prisoners in Byzantium were either forcibly converted to Christianity and settled in Byzantine territory, or else sold as slaves.[70] Reinert, on his side, has noted that "for some of these prisoners, incarceration was corridor to conversion and settlement in the Empire", but he also has found that "the precise dynamics of this are unclear".[71] Nevertheless, Simeonova and Abū Seʿada have tried to define one of the methods and dynamics which Byzantines might adopt to convert their Arab prisoners. Each of them has presented a different interpretation that may need to be re-examined in its details.

Arabic sources provide some references on frequent Byzantine attempts to compel Arab prisoners to adopt Christianity by means of terror. The first earlier was a failing attempt of Emperor Heraklios to baptize some Arab prisoners in 19/639, one of them was a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, called ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥuḏāfa al-Sahmī. Heraklios ordered to throw one of them in a vessel filled with boiled oil, the others were agonized by crucifixion, throwen by arrows, and prevented from food and water for many days to be obliged to eat pork and drink

67. Reinert ("Muslim Presence", p. 127) suggests that despite "it is unclear from the account of al-Muqaddasī whether such Muslim prisoners were coopted into the imperial workshops, but this seems to be plausible". The suggestion of employment of the Arab prisoners in Byzantine governmental factrories may be supported by the fact that the Byzantines used to send their prisoners of war and convicted criminals to work in mines. On this see Vryonis, "Byzantine Mines", p. 2–3.

68. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 694–695; trans. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 366–367.

69. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 383.

70. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 365.

71. Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 130.

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wine.[72] In the reign of Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (99–101/717–719), his envoy to the Byzantine court met an Arab prisoner who was blinded for his refusal to adopt Christianity.[73]

Other pieces of evidence refer to the continuation of the Byzantine forcible baptizing policy against the Arab prisoners during the ninth and tenth centuries. One of the most famous examples, which was frequently mentioned in Arabic sources, is that of Empress Theodora who, during her negotiations with the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil for exchanging prisoners in 241/855, ordered to kill 12,000 Arab prisoners because they refused baptism.[74] Besides that this number seems to be exaggerated, one can find also some obscurity in Arabic narratives of this incident. According to al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Aṯīr, Theodora sent an ambassador to al-Mutawakkil to exchange 20,000 Muslim prisoners. The Caliph, on his side, sent his ambassador Naṣr Ibn al-Azhar to be sure of validity of this number. After Naṣr's return to Baghdad in Šaʿbān 241/ December 855, Theodora ordered to baptize all prisoners, and improve conditions of those who accept while executing those who refuse.[75] Whereas there were 12,000 executed prisoners for refusing baptism, this suggests that about 8,000 prisoners, whether forcibly or willingly, accepted being converted to Christianity. Arabic sources refer to that, in spite of the executed prisoners, the exchange took place after less than two months, in Šawwāl 241/ February 855, but the number of the prisoners who were exchanged was 785 men and 125 women.[76] Therefore, where did the rest of 20,000 prisoners go?

One can guess the fate of these prisoners in the light of Arabic narratives concerning the exchange of prisoners in Ṣafar 246/April 860. According to these narratives, Emperor Michael III, against his mother Empress Theodora, adopted a very different policy of religious tolerance towards the Arab prisoners. He refused staying of the prisoners baptized in Constantinople until they were sent to the place of exchange, then they were given freedom to choose whether Islam and return to their homeland or Christianity and living in Byzantium.[77] One can suggest that those baptized prisoners were the rest of 8,000 prisoners who had been baptized and remained in Constantinople for five years. Al-Ṭabarī states that "more than 2,000 prisoners were exchanged, many among them had converted to Christianity, but a great number of the converted prisoners remained in Constantinople".[78] This may suggest that there were thousands of converted Arab prisoners who willingly have been baptized by the order of Empress

72. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Asad al-Ġāba*, III, p. 211; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba*, IV, p. 58; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Muntaẓam*, IV, p. 320; Zayān, *al-Asrā al-muslimūn*, p. 14–15.

73. Al-Quḍāʿī, *Takmila*, p. 189.

74. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 202; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 122.

75. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 202; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 122.

76. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 203; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 122. Bar Hebraeus presents a different narrative of this incident. According to him, Empress Theodora released 8,000 prisoners and kept 12,000 in Constantinople, saying that: "These had converted to Christianity, and we cannot give them up". Shortly, she ordered to execute them because they were inclined to abandon Christianity and return to their homeland again (Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 38).

77. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 220; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 40.

78. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ*, IX, p. 220; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 40 (states that "since many Arabs had been baptized, the Byzantine Emperor ordered that they must be sent to the frontier zones, saying that "who will

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Theodora and integrated within Byzantine society to the extent that they prefered Christianity and living in Byzantium when Michael III gave them the freedom of choice.

However, in addition to the obvious contrast of Theodora and her son's attitudes, other evidences reveal that the differences of personal natures of the Byzantine Emperors might sometimes determine their religious attitudes towards the Arab prisoners. Basil I, as Simeonova points out, "was known for his cruel treatment of Muslim prisoners". According to Theophanes Continuatus, during the Cretan campaign of 252/866, he ordered that the Muslim captives must be subjected to tortures up to death, espcially those who refused baptism.[79]

Another well-known story of the Abbasid embassy to the Byzantine court in early tenth century illustrates how the personal mood of the Byzantine Emperors sometimes could dramaticaly change the Arab prisoners' conditions to the worst. According to al-Tanūḫī, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā, Vizier of the Caliph al-Muqtadir (d. 320/932), in conversation with one of his friends and counsellors, once declared his distress at Arab prisoners' conditions in Byzantium. He said that:

> "Our employee in the frontier area (*al-ṭaġr* الثغر) wrote to us that Muslim prisoners in Byzantium had been treated with kindness and flexibility untill two young Emperors ascended the throne. Then, they were unjustly treated by them, deprived of food and clothing, tortured and forced to adopt Christianity".[80]

Jenkins, in a convincing dealing with the text, suggests that the dead Emperor was Leo VI who "had been well disposed towards Saracen prisoners, and treated them almost as guests", and the other two young Emperors described in the text were Alexander, the αυτοκράτορ, and his nephew and colleague Constantine Porphyrogenitus.[81]

The rest of this story also may provide us with some other aspects of significance. The most important is that the official Arab authorities were sometimes inclined towards using their Christians subjects, and the Byzantine concern about them, to exert pressure on Byzantium to modify its treatment of the Arab prisoners. According to al-Tanūḫī, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā adopted his counsellor's suggestion that an embassy, representing the Christian Patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem, should be sent to Constantinople to remonstrate with the two Emperors, and if it could not cease the Byzantine ill-treatment of the Arab prisoners, they (the Patriarchs) and the Christian subjects in the Caliphate would pay the price of this failure. Accordingly, three envoys were sent to Byzantium as representatives of the two Patriarchs and the Abbasid Vizier, the first task of the later was to investigate the actual conditions of the Arab prisoners in their jail. His final report confirmed the Byzantine ill-treatment of them, but the significance of this story is that the Byzantine authorities' tries to improve the picture, and its denial of adopting torture and forced baptism. Al-Tanūḫī records the report of the Vizier's envoy as follows:

choose Christianity and return to our country, we accept him as a true faithful". Accordingly, two famous goldsmiths from North Africa and many others returned [to Constantinople]").

79. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 300–301.

80. Al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-muḥāḍara*, p. 30.

81. Jenkins, "Saracen Prisoners", p. 389–393, esp. 391–393.

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"The envoy reported that: after we reached Constantinople, we were prevented from a meeting with the two Emperors for many days. Then, when the Emperors ordered to call us for the meeting, their translator said: 'The Emperors inform you that what had reached the king of the Arabs is mere lying and distortion, we allow you to visit the *Dār al-Balāṭ* to see your prisoners. You will see what is contrary to what reached you, and will hear from them their gratitude to us'. When I entered *Dār al-Balāṭ*, I saw the prisoners as if they have just been moved out tombs, their faces confirm their distress and harm. But they wear new clothes. Then I realized that the Byzantines had prevented me from seeing the prisoners for days to improve their conditions and change their clothes. The prisoners said to me: 'what had reached you is true, but as soon as your coming, they modified their treatment'".[82]

While this report suggests that the prisoners of the *Dār al-Balāṭ* (the eminent prisoners) were sometimes subjected to torture and forced baptism, one can also suggest that such this official reaction of the Arab authorities might sometimes incite Byzantium to modify its ill-treatment of them.[83] As Jenkins pointed out, there is a strong connection between the Abbasid embassy of ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā and the well-known letter of Patriarch Nikolas I Mysticus, which was adressed to the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir.[84] In this letter, Nicholas rebuts the charges included in the report,[85] and confirms the great care that Arab prisoners received in Byzantium. According to his view, the Byzantine Emperors took care from the begining of the Arab prisoners as their own subjects, and provided them with means of comfortable life, so "they suffer no hardship other than being deprived of their country, families, friends and

82. Al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-Muḥāḍara*, p. 30–32.

83. Arabic and Byzantine sources indicate that these reactions sometimes seemed to be very severe on both sides. According to Arabic sources, ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz sent an angry letter to Emperor Leo III asking him the release of an Arab prisoner, who had been blinded for refusing the baptism, he said: "I swear by God, if you would not send him to me, I will send soldiers, the first of them will be at your land and the last at mine". Accordingly, Leo III had to release the prisoner. Cf. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz*, p. 175–176; al-Quḍāʿī, *Takmila*, p. 189. On the Byzantine side, Leo the Deacon records that Nicephoros Phokas dispatched messengers to the Fatimid Caliph of North Africa, al-Muʿizz li-dīn Allāh (953–975), to demand of the *Patrikios* Niketas, the commander of the Byzantine fleet who had previously been taken prisoner at the time of Byzantine defeat in Sicily 965. In the accompanying letter, Nicephoros warned him that, if he hesitated over the return of the *Patrikios* and did not immediately release him from imprisonment, he should expect a relentless war and the destruction of all his territory by ravaging Byzantine troops. Al-Muʿizz, frightened by this message, sent as a gift to the Emperor, the *Patrikios* Niketas, as well as the prisoners he had. See Leo the Deacon, *History*, p. 126–127.

84. Jenkins, "Saracen Prisoners", p. 390. Westerink has dated this letter to 922. See Nicholas I, *Letters*, p. 568. According to this letter, the Patriarch mentioned "those whom the Caliph sent from his country" and "those of his own race and faith who were sent along with them". He evidently refers to the representatives of the two Patriarchs and the Abbasid Vizier (ibid., p. 375).

85. The Patriarch wrote that: "These oral reports of your own fellow countrymen and of your present envoys might perhaps suffice to convince you of the falsehood", and "I do not wish to speak too severely of them; but they seem to have brought these charges to your ears out of enmity to the Christians, and a desire for the increase of hurtful measures against them. So then, there is no truth or substance at all in what they have said; it is entirely without foundation, and to be rejected as falsehood" (Nicholas I, *Letters*, p. 375, 379).

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relatives. For this reason they (the Emperors) have allotted them spacious apartments, the enjoyment of the clearest air, and other comforts belonging to human life". He also concluded his long defense by saying that:

> "In short, as I have remarked, Byzantine Emperors have from the first decreed that your prisoners shall be no worse off than Saracens living in their own fatherland and country, except in the single article of estrangement from their own relations. This conduct was from the first dictated by their philanthropy (φιλανθρωπία)".[86]

Above all, the Patriarch Nicholas seemed to be denying of any sort of religious pressures over the Arab prisoners, he stated: "No Saracen has been forced to renounce his religion by imperial edict or by the malice of any magnate or officer attendant on the Emperors".[87]

Jenkins has implied that this letter, in which Patriarch Nicholas openly expressed his fears and concern about the potential threatened reprisals which had already raisen against the Byzantine captives and Christian subjects of the Caliphate, might be a precautionary reaction against these fears.[88] On the other hand, Reinert suggested that: "Such fears indeed determined a policy of tolerant restraint towards incarcerated Muslims", he also added: "Patriarch Nicholas' theorizing suggests the kind of rationalization that churchmen might present to their own subjects zealous to essentialize Muslims as heretics, baffled as to why such 'heretics' were permitted freedom of religious assembly, inside the heart and soul of the Empire". Reinert, on the basis of this evidence and the forementioned narrative of Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, implied that the "Muslim prisoners were indeed protected quasi-subjects".[89] This hypothesis, which was evidently established on the presumption that there was an indisputable Byzantine religious tolerance towards Arab prisoners, is very conflicting with what Arab prisoners were subjected to in their Byzantine imprisonment few years earlier. One can suggest that the letter of Patriarch Nicholas, and what was included in it about the apparent tolerance, is still one of the few exceptional cases.[90] It was

86. Nicholas I, *Letters*, p. 377; Jenkins, "Saracen Prisoners", p. 390. See also Sulaymān, "Risāla", p. 41–60, esp. 52–58.

87. Patriarch Nicholas I also confirmed that "the oratory of your coreligionists had not been pulled down, either now or formerly; nor is there any impediment to its repair by Saracens here; on the contrary, it receives the same care as if both oratory and worshippers were under your jurisdiction". Cf. Nicholas I, *Letters*, p. 375–376.

88. Jenkins, "Saracen Prisoners", p. 390. It is clear from the letter that these reprisals had already begun. According to its preface, the Patriarch ascribed the reason of writing this letter to "an unseemly and strange report has reached me that you transported with frightful rage against your Christian subjects, for no true cause but merely upon a simple slander. Therefore, you have issued a decree that the Christian churches under your authority are to be destroyed". Nicholas also evidently expressed his concern about the conditions of the Byzantine prisoners in the Caliphate, who, according to his words, were "frequently subjected to violent deaths, deaths strange to human devising" (Nicholas I, *Letters*, p. 373, 377). However, this letter at least indicates one of the fields in which the Abbasid Caliphate could exploit its Christian subjects and Byzantine prisoners to impose upon Byzantium fulfilling its own interests.

89. Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 128–129.

90. Al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-Muḥāḍara*, p. 33, narrates two stories of such exceptional cases. The first of some Arab prisoners who had suffered severe hardships on their road to Byzantine territory, but when reached one

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written under special conditions and for some political and religious calculations. Accordingly, it may not exactly reflect the real conditions of the Arab prisoners in Byzantium at the time of Patriarch Nicholas, and if it does, it may describe particular conditions at that time.

Moreover, the letter of Patriarch Nicholas itself included some hints that are extremely falsified compared to the ideal picture which he was trying to draw. Despite his frequent protest against what he called the "distorted charges", and his vigorous insistence on the Byzantine absolute religious tolerance and well-treatment of the Arab prisoners, he also implied that the Arab prisoners sometimes were subjected to execution and torture. He stated that:

> "When we have to take the life of one of the Saracens, we execute him in a simple fashion, devoid of savagery and cruelty, by plain decapitation".[91]

and:

> "No violence has been offered to the Saracens, either by the Emperor, or by those who are honored by his conversation, acquaintance, or familiarity; though perhaps it may have been by some obscure officials, who, when the matter is sifted, will meet with the necessary correction".[92]

The Patriarch also refered to other religious pressure that was imposed upon the Arab prisoners by "some subordinates, men of no account and unkown to the Emperors".[93] Here he evidently tries to acquit the official side from any of these charges and attributs it to unknown persons. One may wonder how did these "unknown" work in the absence of the Emperors and other "well-known" officials, to when they were still unknown, and to what extent could they harm the Arab prisoners. The only fact, according to my knowledge, is that there is no evidence refering to an official, whether known or not, who was arrested or punished for his ill-treatment of Arab prisoners.

village they were well treated by a monk, who brought woollen clothes and blankets for each of them. They were informed that this special treatment is attributed to a Baghdadi businessman who arranged with the monk for benefit of Muslim prisoners who passed through his village, against an annual payment to a church in Muslim territory. The other story is about an Egyptian prisoner, called Qubāt Ibn Razīn al-Laḫmī, who stayed in a *Patrikios*'s household. He narrates his story indicating that this *Patrikios* admired his eloquence in Koran and poetry to the extent that he abandoned his usual ill-treatment of Arab prisoners, ordered his personnel to take care that the food given to them would not comprise anything prohibted by their religion. See al-Tanūḫī, *Kitāb al-Faraǧ*, p. 144–153, esp. 145–146; trans. Canard, "Les aventures d'un prisonnier arabe", p. 51–72, esp. 53–56, 61–62. See also Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 600, no. 63 (who depends on this story, in addition to the narrative of Hārūn ibn Yaḥyā and Nicholas I's Letter, to confirm what she calls "the respect of the Byzantines towards the religious habits of the Muslim captives". She also suggests that Nicholas I's Letter emphasizes the difference in the treatment of captives between the Arabs and the Byzantines. But this story, as the letter of the Patriarch, implies that this treatment was exceptional and not permanent. It refers to the harsh treatment which Arab captives suffered by the same *Patrikios* before he modified it, especially for Qubāt ibn Razīn).

91. Nicholas I, *Letters*, p. 379.

92. Ibid., p. 383.

93. Ibid., p. 381.

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Participation in Ceremonies

Now we have to turn again to the Arabic texts which reflect the Byzantine well-treatment of the Arab prisoners of war, especially those of Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, al-Muqaddasī, and Hārūn b. Yaḥyā. All of them were written during the tenth century. If they are trusted, the Byzantines pursued a sort of religious tolerance towards the Arab prisoners. According to these narratives, they neither forced them to eat pork nor subjected to torture. Nonetheless, the forementioned narrative of Ibn Ḫurdāḏbah, who died c. 300/912, reflects the very other side of the picture. According to it, Arab prisoners were subjected to torture and execution. It seems to be a possible suggestion that Ibn Ḫurdāḏbah, who was contemporary with the reigns of Basil I (867–886) and Leo VI (886–912), described the conditions of the Arab prisoners under Basil I who, as we have seen, frequently treated Arab prisoners with cruelty and harshness. Nevertheless, if Ibn Ḫurdāḏbah refers to the Byzantine treatment of Arab prisoners during the last years of the ninth century, this will entirely refute Simeonova's hypothesis that "the radical change in the treatment of Arab prisoners may have occurred under Leo VI".[94] This hypothesis is depending upon the practice of Arab prisoners's attendance at the regular Christmas Day and Easter Sunday imperial banquets, which was established under Leo VI and might have survived at least up to a certain point during his son Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus's reign. Simeonova considered this particular innovation, whatever the reason for it, as a turning point in the Byzantine treatment of Arab prisoners.[95] On the contrary of this view, Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, despite being the only Arab historian who recorded the attendance of Arab prisoners at imperial banquets at the early tenth century, records also that some of these prisoners were exposed to a kind of random fate, in which they might be executed because their destiny gave them no chance to pass through a certain gate.[96] Abū Seʿada depends on this contradiction to reject Simeonova's view point entirely.[97]

Nevertheless, Patriarch Nicholas's letter and the Arabic accounts may lead us to handle signs of partial, instead of radical, change in the Byzantine attitudes towards the Arab pris-

94. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 77.

95. Ibid., p. 76, 77–78. Simeonova also writes: "By the middle of the ninth century, the Byzantines had already begun to treat their Arab prisoners in a somewhat more humane, or at least non-homicidal, fashion". She also observed that "the *Taktika* of Leo VI and the so-called *Kletorologion* of Philotheos (I add letters of Patriarch Nicholas I), treated the Arabs with a degree of deference and respect which cannot be found in earlier Byzantine writings".

96. According to Abū Seʿada's English translation of this text, Hārūn ibn Yaḥyā says: "In the section of the city adjoining the Golden Gate there is a vaulted bridge which has been built in the middle of the market of the city. There are therein two statues, one gives a sign with its hands as if it is saying: 'bring him here', the other gives a sign with its hand as if it is saying: 'wait a little'. They are two talismans. Captives are brought and placed between these two statues, hoping for pardon. Meanwhile a messenger goes to notify the Emperor thereupon. If on the messenger's return, the captives stay (there), they are taken to prison; but if the messenger comes to them and see them being passed beyond the statues, they will be killed, and no one among them is left alive": Ibn Rustah, *al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, p. 136; Abū Seʿada ,*Byzantium and Islam*, p. 191, no. 179. Worth to be mentioned that Abū Seʿada corrected some few errors in Vasiliev's English translation of the same text. See Vasiliev, "Harun Ibn Yaḥyā", p. 149–163, esp. 161.

97. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 191.

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oners during this period. Except the years of Emperor Alexander's regency (912–920), the reigns of Leo VI and his son Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (912–959) seemed to witness a considerable change in the treatment of Arab prisoners. Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, who was one of these prisoners in the reign of Leo VI, refers to Arab prisoners' attendance at the imperial banquets during the celebrations of Chrismas Day c. 900, he states that:

> "During the feast, the Emperor comes from the church to that assembly, and takes a seat in front of the golden table. It is the Chrismas Day. He orders that prisoners should be present and sitting around these tables, … on which amazing amount of the hot and cold food was served. Then the imperial herald said: I swear by the head of the Emperor that in these meals there is no pork at all. Then the food is carried to them in gold and silver plates. … This continues for twelve days, and when the last of these days comes, each prisoner was given two *dīnār*-s and three dirhems".[98]

Hārūn b. Yaḥyā neither mentioned why Arab prisoners were invited to these banquets nor identified their class. The *Kletorologion* of Philotheos, which was compiled in 899 and dedicated to Leo VI, records that the Arab prisoners were invited twice to the imperial banquets, especially during the celeberations of Chrismas Day and Easter Sunday. Simeonova had discussed this text in details ten years ago,[99] but I would like to indicate the exciting similarities between the two texts. Each of them mentions the celebration of twelve days and refers to the attendance of churchmen and entry of prisoners to the palace church. But the *Kletorologion* adds new information that were not included in Hārūn b. Yaḥyā's narration, it identifies the attendants by the eminent prisoners of the *Praetorium*, indicating their high position at the banquets, and refering to other baptized *Agarenoi* who seemed to be employed at the imperial guard, the *hetaireia*.

Reinert has inclined to think that, at the ideological level, the presence of Arab prisoners at these banquets "obviously was intended to emphasize imperial victory over the Saracens".[100] On the other hand, Simeonova has suggested two other possible interpretations to explain the reason of this invitation, these are to give the Byzantines leverage in any expected peace negotiations and prisoners-exchanges with the Arabs, and to demonstrate the universal nature of their religion.[101] Nevertheless, Simeonova has found these two suggestions as not sufficient, so she has gone further to recommend another interesting interpretation, I think it is worth to be completely quoted as follow:

> "Unlike the ordinary Muslims whom the Byzantines encouraged to accept baptism in return for a comfortable settlement in the Empire, the people kept in the *Praetorium* may have been unwilling to apostatize. And if these were aristocrats who could later be ransomed for a lot of money, it

98. Ibn Rustah, *al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, p. 132–133. Cf. El Cheikh-Saliba, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, p. 176.
99. Simeonova suggests that the *Kletorologion* was compiled in September 899. There are several editions of this text: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 702–798; Migne, PG 112 cols. 1291–1434; Bury, *Administrative System*, p. 131–179; Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, p. 81–235. Cf. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 78, no. 8.
100. Reinert, "Muslim Presence", p. 129–130.
101. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 89–91.

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> is highly unlikely that the imperial government would have gone as far as to have them forcibly converted to Christianity. At the same time, Byzantines believed that it was their Emperor's task to guarantee everybody's salvation through the worldwide spread of Orthodoxy. In order to fulfil this task without openly challenging the Arab prisoners' beliefs, the Byzantine authorities may have been compelled to resort to a compromise solution; they may have been trying to symbolically convert to Christianity by subjecting them to a quasi-baptismal ceremony. The Muslims would not be aware of what was going on but, all the same, the salvation of their souls would be guaranteed. And the Emperor would score points in the eyes of both his subjects and his Christian foreign guests (namely Bulgarians and Franks); he would be seen as a truly universal ruler capable of converting the whole world to Byzantine Christianity".[102]

Abū Seʿada has compeletly rejected Simeonova's hypothesis and all of its details, considering that it, according to his words,

> "lacks a solid ground to stand on, in my opinion. Yes the whole process could be of importance for the Emperor to be seen as a truly universal ruler. But to consider this to involved subjecting Muslims to a deeply coded ceremonial of conversion, of which they remained totally ignorant, seems to be an implausible theory".[103]

Abū Seʿada's argument is established on three evidences: 1) Sources reflected that Byzantines were suspicious of new Muslim converts. 2) The refusal of Emperor Michael III to accept the converted Arab prisoners, until they went to the border where prisoners of war were usually exchanged and returned willingly into Byzantine lands. 3) The symbolic conversion or quasi-baptism is utterly contradicted by another Byzantine text concerning conversion of Muslims dated around the tenth century. This is the ritual of abjuration,[104] which was imposed on the new Muslim converts to make sure of their complete conversion.[105]

Despite the seeming validity of Abū Seʿada's evidences to reject Simeonova's hypothesis, they may need to be reconsidered. The evidence of Byzantine suspicion did not nameley refer to the Arabs, but generally to the newly baptized foreigners, and it is derived from the military source the *Strategy*, which was composed by an anonymous author in the sixth century.[106] Moreover, the contemporary Byzantine sources of the ninth and tenth centuries did not refer to continuation of such a suspicious policy, there are even other evidences refer to the employment of

102. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 91.
103. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 191–192.
104. This ritual included the form of abjuration which the converted Muslims had to read before their baptism. Some scholars suggest that the original text of this ritual may go back to the late eighth century or to the first half of the ninth century. It contained 22 anathemas against all elements of Islam including the prophet Muḥammad, his god and his doctrine, as well as his family, his companions and even some Caliphs till Yazīd I (680–683). See Ebersolt "Un nouveau manuscrit", p. 231–232; Sahas, "Ritual of Conversion", p. 57–69; Vryonis, "Byzantine Attitudes toward Islam", p. 263–286, esp. 272–273; Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 192, no. 183, p. 247–249.
105. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 192.
106. See "The Anonymous Byzantine Treatise on Strategy", p. 10–135, esp. 121.

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converted Arabs in the important military positions, including the imperial guard itself, as the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos refered. On the other hand, we can not depend on the attitude of Emperor Michael III towards the Arab prisoners as a proof of a Byzantine permanent policy. I think it is still an extraordinary evidence in both Arabic and Byzantine sources. Finally, the ritual of abjuration seems to be the only evidence that may disprove a part of Simeonova's opinions, this is related to Muslims' unawareness of what are the ceremonies they are participating in, but at the same time it does not totally deny the possibility of being quasi-baptism ceremonies. However, Simeonova's hypothesis may need to be rectified, rather than being ignored totally.

No doubt, the ideological considerations, including the religious one, played a substantive role in all Byzantine ceremonies, and as Simeonova stated "the Byzantine ceremonial invariably had a religious dimension to it, which was to make everybody—Christian, pagan, and infidel alike—believe in the eternal glory and splendour of the Empire of New Rome".[107] Yet the political and diplomatic considerations were not always absent. Sometimes, if not always, the practical interests seem to be more weightier than the theoretical or symbolical rituals. When Constantine Porphyrogenitus invited the two Tarsan envoys of the Abbasid Caliph and the Amīr of Ṭarsūs to an imperial banquet in August 946, he ordered that forty prisoners from the *Praetorium* should be present at it.[108] While this embassy task was negotiating, exchanging of prisoners and peacemaking, it is difficult to suggest that Constantine Porphyrogenitus's ideological and religious considerations were more important than the political and diplomatic ones.

On the other hand, Arabic sources record that Leo VI sent two embassies to the Abbasid Caliphate for the exchange of prisoners, the first was sent in 290/902, shortly after the accession of al-Muktafī (289–296/902–908), bringing the new Caliph gifts and captives and requesting an exchange of prisoners.[109] Few years later (293–294/905–906), a pair of diplomats were sent again to the Arabs, one of them was the maternal uncle of the Emperor's son and the other was the eunuch Basil the Chamberlain (*al-ḥāǧib*), along with ten captives as a gift and the object of arranging an exchange of prisoners.[110] Also, we know from Arabic sources that there were three exchanges of prisoners that actually took place during the reign of Leo VI.[111]

107. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 75.

108. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 592.

109. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 107 (said that Leo VI sent two diplomats, one was a *faḥl*, i.e. an eminent, the other was a *ḫādim*, i.e. civil servant).

110. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ*, X, p. 135. Bar Hebraeus (*Chronographia*, p. 50) records that Basil the Chamberlain (*al-ḥāǧib*) was sent alone to al-Muktafī with four Arab captives as a gift requesting the exchange of prisoners.

111. The first exchange took place in 283/896 under the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid. According to al-Masʿūdī (*Tanbīh*, p. 322), it was the sixth major exchange between Arabs and Byzantines; 2,495 or 3,000 men and women were exchanged. According to al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 46), 2504 men, women and Youngs, were exchanged. The other two exchanges took place in 292/905 and 295/908, under the Caliph al-Muktafī. According to Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 323, the first of them was the seventh major exchange, it was called "the exchange of treachery", i.e. *fidā' al-ġadr* فداء الغدر, since, after 1,155 men and women were exchanged (al-Ṭabarī records 1,200), the Byzantines took the rest of prisoners and did not complete it. Therefore, the exchange of 295/908, the eighth major one, was "the exchange of completion", i.e. *fidā' al-tamām* فداء التمام, and 2,842 men and women were exchanged. Both of al-Ṭabarī and Bar Hebraeus record 3,000 men and women: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 120, 138; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 50.

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Therefore, Leo VI's concern for prisoners' exchange may reveal that the political and diplomatic calculations were strongly present within his mind when he invited Arab prisoners to his banquets. The *Kletorologion* itself refers to the general rules that must be taken for the reception of Muslim "friends", i.e., Arab ambassadors on a mission to Constantinople at the time of Chrismas Day's celebrations.[112] These rules indicate that the Arab ambassadors were present at the same imperial banquets, and construct they should be seated in an advanced table even before the other Christian Bulgarian and Frankish "friends".[113] Simeonova herself has to admit that the honours paid to the Muslim envoys were probably a reflection of Leo's effort to appease the Muslims as they were Byzantium's neighbours in the Middle East, as well as an implied hint to that: "Under Leo, the imperial government assigned exceptional importance to its dealings with the Arabs".[114] I think Simeonova unintentionally produces here the most possible answer for the question which she posed and tried to solve by her controversial hypothesis: "Why did the Arab prisoners have to be invited to the imperial banquets?" Most likely, the task of these Arab envoys in Constantinople was to negotiate for peacemaking and a prisoners exchanging, and the presence of Arab prisoners at the imperial banquets might be considered as a gesture of good will and the Byzantine well-treatment of Arab prisoners.

Nevertheless, whatever the considerations of any Byzantine ceremony that Arab prisoners participated in, the Byzantines seemed to evaluate its psychological effect on these prisoners. We must not forget that the attendants of these banquets were recently driven out of the prison for passing occasions and would return again to it. During this short period, they must see another dazzling and flashy world that very different from the walls of their confinement. The Byzantines might think that this psychological effect could occur when the prisoners compare harshness of their captivity to what they were supposed to get through watching, or partaking of, ceremonies that represented a magnificent blend of acclamations, music, light, colours and ample decoration. Of course, the effect of these ceremonies was not expected to have influence only on the prisoners who were involved in it, but also over the others who were still confined in the *Praetorium*.

Efficiency of this psychological factor could be seen in the famous example of Samonas's father, who was dispatched from Ṭarsūs in an official mission to Constantinople in the reign of Leo VI, his task was to arrange an exchange of prisoners. If we trust the Byzantine sources, he was a very important person in his own right and was received by the Emperor at the Magnaura Palace, and was even allowed to see the sacred church vessels at Hagia Sophia. Kathryn Ringrose finds this as "a remarkable concession to a visitor who probably was not even a Christian".[115] I think it was perhaps a deliberate concession to rise something inside the visitor, at least to amaze him by Hagia Sophia's treasures, but what happened later exceeded all expectations. Samonas'

112. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, p. 163. The *Kletorologion* describes the Arab ambassadors as "Agarene friends", whose rank equals that of the *patrikoi* and *strategoi*. Cf. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 81.
113. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, p. 163–165; Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 81.
114. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 80, 81–82.
115. Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*, p. 188.

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father was so impressed with Constantinople that he expressed his desire to his son to become a Christian and settle there.[116] This outcome may explain why the Byzantines only invited Arab prisoners to banquets that connected to celebrations of downright religious feasts.

Moreover, The *Kletorologion* refers to attendance of churchmen at these banquets, to Arab prisoners' entrance to the church, and to the psalms and hymns which were chanted most of the time.[117] According to Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, on the twelfth day of the feasting, the Arab prisoners were tipped two *dīnār*-s and three *dirham*-s each. They also took part in the Emperor's procession to Hagia Sophia. Hārūn also adds that:

> "They were conducted into the church. When they saw its magnificence and glory, cried three times wishing the Emperor many years, and were then given robes of honour by the Emperor's command".[118]

Also, when forty Arab prisoners were invited again to Constantine Porphyrogenitus's banquets in sunday 9 August 946, the day after the feast of the Transfiguration, the Emperor tipped them 1,000 miliaresia, and sent a lump sum to the prisoners who were still confined in the *Praetorium*.[119] According to Theophanes Continuatus, the Arab prisoners, both males and females, were tipped three nomismata each on Good Friday by Romanos Lekapenos.[120] Accordingly, one can understand the meaning of Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn's account that the Byzantines "are charitable to the Muslim prisoners, provide them with rations".[121]

Therefore, it can be suggested that the invitation of Arab prisoners to be present and tipped in the celebrations of religious feasts seems to be not only for ideological or political considerations, but also for a Byzantine desire to press on morales of Arab prisoners. The Byzantines seemed to believe that when prisoners watch glory and prosperity of Byzantium, and above all, when they were present inside the church, participating in religious rituals, hearing chants, and seeing churchmen, they would be impressed by this spiritual context, and then might be attracted to Christianity. Moreover, the presence of the newly converted Arabs, who were employed in the imperial guard, the *hetaireia*, at the same celebrations might be deliberately arranged to corroborate with the moral and psychological effect. One can imagine the effect of seeing these converts' freedom or their neat and bright appearance over prisoners spending most of their times confined behind the prison's walls.

This interpretation can be extended to another ceremony in which Byzantines seemed to employ the same psychological factor, it is the humiliation of Arab prisoners, in particular the

116. Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, p. 277–279, 282; Zonaras, *Epitomae Historiarum*, III, p. 453; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 189; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 160.
117. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance*, p. 174–177, 185–187. Those included the Patriarch, the Metropolitans, deacons, the abbots of the twelve most influential monastries, 260 monks, and certain numbers of priests, deacons, subdeacons and readers. Cf. Simeonova, "Arab Prisoners", p. 84, 85, 91.
118. Ibn Rustah, *al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, p. 125.
119. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 592.
120. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 430.
121. Ishāq b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ākām*, p. 36.

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eminent, in public parades which usually took place in the streets of Constantinople from the Golden Gate to the Chalkē of the palace.[122] At the ideological level, these parades were evidently designed to declare military victory over the *Sarakēnoi*, but their rituals seemed to bear witness to such factor. In 344/955–956, Constantine Porphyrogenitus's general Leo Phokas captured the Hamdanid Amīr Abū al-ʿAšāʾir, who was carried to Constantinople and was humiliated in a triumphal parade. The Emperor put his foot on the royal prisoner's neck, while the rest of prisoners were ordered to lie on the ground. After the celebration, the Emperor made much of him; he loaded him with honours and gifts.[123] After the Byzantine reconquest of Crete in 350/961, its captured Amīr ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz[124] and his family were paraded in the triumphal procession of the victorious General Nicephoros Phokas, after that "the Amīr received lavish gifts in gold and silver from the Emperor, and was given an estate in the country as a residence for himself and his children. He was not promoted to senatorial rank because the family refused baptism".[125] Toynbee comments on these two parades, considering what happened with Amīr Abū al-ʿAšāʾir "was the worst that the distinguished prisoner had to suffer", and that of Amīr of Crete "still more remarkable instance of Byzantine generosity to a captured Muslim prince".[126]

However, I am still inclined to think that the Byzantine humiliation, or generosity with the Arab prisoners, particularly the eminent ones, was not aimless procedure. Constantine Porphyrogenitus's reference, to the Patriarch and clergy's participation in these parades, and to special religious hymns, sermons and psalms that were chanted during them,[127] leads us once again to the psychological interpretation. Also, Pseudo-Symeon's narrative, in which the Amīr of Crete was not promoted to senatorial rank because of refusing baptism, implied that baptism was the ultimate purpose of the parade and Byzantine generosity with him. As we will see later, his son Anemas's career in the imperial service indicates to what extent the Byzantine policy of "stick and carrot" الترهيب والترغيب seemed to be effective in some cases.[128]

122. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises*, p. 143, 149.

123. Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, II, p. 330–331; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 610; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 241; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 203–204.

124. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn Šuʿab al-Qurṭūbī, known in the Byzantine Sources as Kouroupas. See: Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia*, p. 759; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 250; trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 210 and no. 6.

125. Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia*, p. 760. Cf. Leo the Deacon, *The History*, p. 79, 81 (says that after Nicephoros Phokas took Chandax, the central city of Crete, by force in March 961, he "placed in bondage the pick of the prisoners, and set them aside, saving them especially for the triumph he was going to lead").

126. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 383–384.

127. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 610–612. Abū Seʿada thinks these religious features reveal that: "there is an anti-Islamic current of feeling which gives explicit impression of the victory of Christianity over its enemies being celebrated" (*Byzantium and Islam*, p. 201). While Simeonova suggests that the whole ceremonial "was supposed to reflect the Emperor's own ideas of chastity, piety, power and glory" ("Arab Prisoners", p. 103).

128. Perhaps there is a somewhat validity if resorting to the psychological factor to partially interpret some of the apparent contradictions of sources, and of Byzantine treatment of Arab prisoners. According to it, we may can also understanding why the eminent Arab prisoners had begun their imprisonment in the harsh, depressing and dark prison of the *Nūmera*, and then were moved to the comfortable prison of the *Dār*

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Integration Within Society

Away from the ideological meanings of ceremonies or theoretical context of tolerance and humanity's conceptions, the Byzantines seemed to have pragmatic considerations that essentially formed their attitudes towards Arab prisoners. Although the majority of these prisoners were expected to be inslaved in the governmental and aristocratic properties, Byzantines evidently tried to employ some of them in the imperial service, mainly as spies,[129] guards, officials, and mercenary fighters.[130] Leo VI, who appeared tolerant and generous with them, could not hide his concern for using some of them as allies and friends against the enemies.[131] Certainly, Byzantines perceived that they would be more serviceable if they become real quasi-subjects and are integrated within society. Lopez has suggested that the foreigner, whatever his origin, can become a real Byzantine citizen if he have his home within the Empire, intermarry with citizens, and accept the Byzantine way of life.[132] Also, Nicol has discussed the precise dynamics of the general Byzantine policy to achieve a complete integration of the foreigners in its soil, concluding that it could be only achieved through three terms: conversion to Orthodoxy, adoption the Greek language, and intermarriage with Byzantine families.[133]

al-Balāṭ. And why Byzantines resorted to means of both cruelty and generosity, or of scaring and attracting, in their treatment with Arab prisoners, which could be pursued by one Emperor, as is obvious in the very two conflicting accounts of Hārūn ibn Yaḥyā concerning Leo VI's treatment of them.

129. Byzantine military manuals of the tenth century, which mainly deal with wars against the Arabs, frequently refered to the importance of depending on both prisoners and deserters as a source of informations and news of the enemy. The *Taktika* of Nicephoros Ouranos in tenth century advised that, at the beginning of war, the commander of the army must first make investigations through spies, prisoners, and deserters and find out the situation of each enemy area, of their villages and fortresses, as well as the size and nature of their cavalry forces. On the battlefield, recently captured prisoners were more important than the others, the same *Taktika* interprets the necessity of taking prisoners with that "for it often happens that one or two days before the raid is launched, a body of reinforcements from somewhere else comes to the enemy, while the spies, deserters from the enemy, and captured prisoners coming from the place a week or three to four days previously are unware of what has happened there one or two days before. Hence the necessity of taking prisoners for interrogation and through them learning of developments in the enemy region". See the *Praecepta Militaria* of the Emperor Nicephoros II Phokas, p. 25; *The* Taktika *of Nicephoros Ouranos*, p. 99, 101, 133, 143, 145. Practically, Byzantine historical sources reveal the important role of Arab prisoners in intellegence's affairs, Leo the Deacon said that during the capture of Crete in 961, the Emperor Nicephoros Phocas learned from some Arab prisoners that "a barbarian army, numbring about forty thousand, was assembled on a hill, in order to attack the Byzantines unexpectedly in force, drive them from the island": Leo the Deacon, *The History*, p. 66.

130. Byzantines seemed to consider Arab prisoners very valuable as fighters. According to Arabic sources, when a large army of the Bulgarian Khan Symeon attacked Constantinople in 283/896, Emperor Leo VI entirely relied on them to protect the city. See: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 45; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 385; Bar Hebreaus, *Chronographia*, p. 47 (Bar Hebreaus also narrates a similar story, attributing it to the Emperor Michael III, who allegedly used Arab prisoners against an offensive of the Byzantine rebel Thomas on Constantinople); ibid., p. 24–25. There is no mention of such narratives in the Byzantine sources: Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, p. 385.

131. Leo VI, *Taktika*, col. 909.

132. Lopez, "Foreigners in Byzantium", p. 341–352, esp. 342–343.

133. Nicol, "Symbiosis and Integration", p. 113–135, esp. p. 118–119.

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As we saw, conversion to Christianity seemed to be one of the central components that formed the Byzantines' attitude towards their Arab prisoners. Of course, "scaring" was not always an effective mean to realize this goal. The nature of needs which the Byzantines hoped to fulfil through the baptized Arab prisoners sometimes obliged them to abandon the means of religious pressure. They must be aware that such means can achieve an immediate success, but on the long run may also pose a danger of elements who were forced to baptism and entering to imperial service, especially to the military administration. I think this consideration might incite Micheal III to abandon his mother's policy of forced baptism against Arab prisoners, and might clarify why Byzantines were sometimes inclined to adopt the psychological factor of "attracting الترغيب" in their treatment of them.

Unfortunately, evidences do not openly refer to the fixed numbers of prisoners who preferred adopting Christianity and staying in Byzantium. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār seemed to be entirely exaggerating in evaluating the number of those prisoners, at the second half of tenth century, by two millions, ascribing their conversion to the Byzantine policy of "stick and carrot".[134] Nevertheless, if we try to examine the recorded numbers of Arab prisoners who were captured during wars combined with those who were released in the frequent exchanges, we may get some interesting relative information. As we saw the comparison of prisoners' numbers who were forced to baptism by Empress Theodora in 241/855 with those who were exchanged in the same year and in 246/860 by her son Michael III, may imply that about five thousands of Arab prisoners willingly accepted baptism.

Kolia-Dermitzaki has elaborately compared numbers of Arab prisoners during Theophilos's expeditions against Cilicia in 216/831, and against Sozopetra and Arsamosata in 222/837, which might reach more than 35,000, with about 4,500 of those who were exchanged in 231/845,[135] and has estimated that the rest of non-exchanged prisoners must have been either sent to the local markets of Kappadocia or sold immediately in the villages, and only a part of the total number of prisoners were transported to Constantinople.[136] Even if we accept this estimation, one can also add that many of these transported prisoners might have been converted and integrated during a long

134. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār, *Taṯbīt*, I, p. 182–183.

135. According to Theophanes Continuatus there were about 25,000 prisoners from Emperor Theophilos' expedition of 831 against the Arabs: Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 114. Kolia-Dermitzaki suggests that if we add to this the number of captives that were captured in the expedition of 837, we must reach a much higher number, at least 35,000. See her elaborate analysis in: "Some Remarks", p. 587–590, esp. 590, n. 24. Arabic sources record that the Byzantines executed and captured all populations of Sozoppetra. Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīḫ*, II, p. 581; al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 55; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VI, p. 39; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūǧ al-Ḏahab*, III, p. 141. Also, al-Ṭabarī records that more than 1,000 women were captured from Melitene during the same expeditions: al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 55. Al-Masʿūdī records 4,047 or 4,362 exchanged prisoners, al-Ṭabarī refers to 3,500. Al-Masʿūdī also reported that there had been no such exchange since 816.

136. Kolia-Dermitzaki suggests that this part consists of the eminent, the soldiers, those guaranteeing a ransoming, and due to their social and economic status, or to their ability to survive the hardships of the long march: Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 589.

AnIsl 43 (2009), p. 155-194 ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz M. A. Ramaḍān
The Treatment of Arab Prisonersof War in Byzantium, 9th- 10th centuries.
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period of twelve years.[137] Moreover, the long periods which separated between some exchanges, which sometimes, as Kolia-Dermitzaki points out, extended to thirty years, may be very adequate to incite many Arab prisoners to be baptized and integrated within the Byzantine society.[138]

Also, Arabic sources recorded tens thousands of Arab captives who were moved to Byzantine territories during Nicephoros Phokas's reconquest of Northern Syria in the second half of the tenth century. In 351/962, he captured 10,000 young men and women from Aleppo.[139] In 354/965, he captured 200,000 captives from Maṣṣīṣa's populations.[140] The total number of captures during his expeditions of 358/969 was 100,000 young men and women from many cities of northern Syria.[141] In the later year, he captured more than 20,000 young men and women from Antioch.[142] According to these numbers, one can suggest that the number given by al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār, despite being exaggerated, is still clearly indicative of the large numbers of Arab prisoners taken at this period.[143] On the other hand, if we compare these numbers with few thousands of Arab prisoners who were released in the only major exchange that took place at this period, in 355/966,[144] we can guess that one of the essential considerations which incited Nicephoros Phokas to transfer Arab captives to Byzantium, is his desire to integrate them within it.

The previous estimation may be confirmed by Arabic sources' reference to the mass conversion which occured at this time in some northern Syrian cities. According to Arabic sources, when

137. This interpretation can be extended to other cases. For example, In in 288/901, the Byzantines launched a naval attack on Kīsūm and took with them more than 15,000 men, women and youths. In 916 they captured 50,000 from Ṭarsūs and Marʿaš. Bar Hebreaus, *Chronographia*, p. 49; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 85. Nevertheless, the total numbers of Arab prisoners who were exchanged in 292/905, 295/908, and 300/912were about 8,000. Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 323; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 120, 295.

138. Kolia-Dermitzaki, "Some Remarks", p. 600. See also the well done table of Arab-Byzantine exchanges of prisoners: p. 614–620.

139. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 274; Ibn Miskawayh, *Taǧārib al-Umam*, p. 193; Bar Hebreaus, *Chronographia*, p. 62; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 134.

140. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 287; Ibn Miskawayh, *Taǧārib al-Umam*, p. 211; Bar Hebreaus, *Chronographia*, p. 64; Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, *Annales*, p. 123. Ibn al-Aṯīr and Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī record that Nicephoros Phokas moved all the populations of Maṣṣīṣa to Byzantium.

141. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 313–314; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 149; Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāyā*, XI, p. 268–269. Ibn Kaṯīr states that great numbers of them converted to Christianity. Ibn Ḥawqal records that Byzantines captured 35,000 men, women and young from Maʿarrat al-Nuʿmān alone. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, p. 164. Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī records that 1200 from Maʿarrat Maṣrīn were moved to Byzantium: *Annales*, p. 131.

142. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 318; Bar Hebreaus, *Chronographia*, p. 66.

143. On these numbers and their effects on the demography of Northern Syria, see: Dagron, "Minorités ethniques et religieuses", p. 177–216, esp. 179–186.

144. Arabic sources did not record the precise number of the exchanged prisoners, but refered to a surplus of Arab prisoners' numbers. Ibn al-ʿAdīm mentions that Sayf al-Dawla, after exchanging all Byzantine prisoners that he had for his relatives and the eminent Arab prisoners, had to pay 72 *dīnār*-s to release each of the rest. Yaḥyā of Antioch records that 3,000 Muslims were ransomed against 240,000 Greek *dīnār*-s (80 *dīnār*-s for each prisoner). Al-Ḏahabī (*Ta'rīḫ al-Islām*, XXVI, p. 22) records 3,270 prisoners against 300,000 *dīnār*-s (91,7 *dīnār*-s for each prisoner). Al-Tanūḫī states that Sayf al-Dawla redeemed each prisoner against 83 *dīnār*-s and three Byzantine women, and the total amount he had to pay was 500,000 *dīnār*-s. This means that he ransomed more than 13,000 prisoners and had to release more than 39,000 Byzantine women. Cf. Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 139; Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, *Annales*, p. 126; al-Tanūḫī, *Nišwār al-Muḥāḍara*, p. 136.

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Nicephoros Phokas peacefully captured Ṭarsūs in 345/956, he concluded an agreement with its population, he gave them the free choice whether to leave the city with their properties, stay but pay the tribute, i.e., *al-ǧizya*, or convert to Christianity and "having favor, honor and enjoyed his boon". He raised two banners, one for those who would desire baptizm and moving to Byzantium, the other for those who would decide going away.[145] According to Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, "great numbers of Muslims turned to the Byzantines' banner and converted to Christianity".[146] Also, Ibn Kaṯīr recorded that during Nicephoros's expeditions on Northern Syria, he "captured countless number of Muslims, all or most of them converted to Christianity".[147]

However, one must return again to the factor of "attracting", which seems to be approved by Byzantines as an effective tool to embrace Arab prisoners. I think this factor may help us to understand, at least in part, the motives which attracted many of these prisoners toward Byzantium and Christianity. Arabic sources usually present money, power[148] and the Byzantine women's beauty and attraction, i.e. *fitna*,[149] as essential motives for Arabs' apostasy. Also, they

145. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-Buldān*, IV, p. 28–29; Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 287; Ibn Miskawayh, *Taǧārib al-Umam*, p. 210–213; Ibn al-ʿAdīm, *Zubda*, I, p. 137 (states that Nicephoros raised two javelins, putting the cross on one, the Koran on the other). Another similar event, when the General John Courcouas peacefully captured Melitene in 324/935, he pitched two tents and put the cross on one of them, giving its population the freedom of choice whether leaving the city or converting to Christianity and keeping their properties, according to Ibn al-Aṯīr, "most of them turned to the tent of the cross for keeping their properties" (*Kāmil*, VII, p. 106).

146. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-Buldān*, IV, p. 29. Also, Ibn al-Aṯīr records that part of Ṭarsūs' population converted to Christianity. Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 287. Bar Hebreaus states that "Many of its Arab population returned, and some of them converted and were baptized, but all of Ṭarsan's sons were converted to Christianity". Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 64. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, loc. cit., records that during the fall of Ṭarsūs, some of the Byzantine women, who had been married to Muslim Arabs, took their children to Byzantium and baptized them. On the other side, Ibn al-ʿAdīm records that 100,000 of the Ṭarsans choosed Islam and going to Antioch: *Zubda*, I, p. 137.

147. Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāyā*, XI, p. 269.

148. Sometimes, Arabic Sources are entirely exaggerated in describing Byzantine means of attracting, they refer to generous imperial offers of marrying Emperors' daughters and sharing their thrones. As in the case of a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, called ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Ḥuḏāfa al-Sahmī. But at least this exaggeration may reflect the Arabs' view of to what extent Byzantines wished to attract and baptize some of them, also reflect their conception of what the Arab apostates can achieve in Byzantium. Moreover, I think it was an advanced excuse to interpret the motives which incited many Arabs toward Byzantium and Christianity. See: Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Asad al-Ġāba*, III, p. 211; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Iṣāba*, IV, p. 58; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Muntaẓam*, IV, 320; Zayān, *Al-Asrā al-Muslimūn*, p. 14–15.

149. Arabic sources present many stories of male Arab lovers who easily abandoned all thing to win their girls. Usually conversion to Christianity and going to live in Byzantium were terms of their girls to accept marrying them. Epic of Princess Ḏāt al-Himma concentrates on the Byzantine girls' beauty as a reason incited many Arabs to apostatize: *Sīrat al-Amīra Ḏāt al-Himma*, I, p. 640, 898; II, p. 278, 344–348; III, p. 232–234, 383–391; IV, p. 282–283. Epic of Digenis Akrites also presents love as the only motive which incited one of its heroes, *amīr* Mousour, to apostasy: *Digenes Akrites*, trans. Mavrogordato, p. 20–23; *Digenis Akritis. The Grettaferrata and Escorial Versions*, ed. & trans. Jeffreys, p. 37–39, 251–252. Despite that emotional relations as a motive to defection appeared as an epical treatment, we can frequently find it in the Arabic historical sources, which relate a story of a very pious and faithful man, keeping the Koran in his mind, but when he was fighting in the Byzantine lands, he saw a beautiful girl and fall in love with her, then converted

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illustrate a sumptuous life of the Arab apostates in Byzantium. The Muslim geographer of the tenth century, Ibn Ḥawqal, recorded a story of mass defection of the Arab tribe Banū Ḥabīb, stating that 10,000 men with their wives and slaves emigrated to Byzantium and converted to Christianity. The sumptuous life they found was a motive incited them to write to others encouraging them to emigrate to Byzantium.[150] Epic of princess Ḏāt al-Himma presents an interesting character of an Arab captive called Abū l-Hazāhiz. Despite being firstly described as "the most strong and brave among the Arabs in war and fighting", but later he became very weak and could not resist the much exaggerated Byzantine offers of attracting. Also, he was presented as a greedy man, his real religion is his personal interest. The epic's comparison between hardship of his earlier life and the welfare of his new one may reflect how the Arabs imagined the Byzantine comfortable life. The most remarkable side in Abū l-Hazāhiz's story is that the epic firstly described him as "an ignorant and nomadic man" in manners and behaviours, but after he was baptized and stayed in Byzantium, he became more civilized.[151] We can find the same picture in the epic's story of the Arab fugitive Ẓālim, husband of Ḏāt al-Himma, who emigrated with his son and all members of his tribe to Byzantium. When the Emperor ordered him to stay in a palace, Ẓālim refused saying that they used to live in "deserts and tents".[152] This comparison reminds us with the similar one of the Byzantine epic Deginis Akrites. Its author often compares the noble and relaxed life of the Byzantine *Oikos* with the harsh life of the Arab *Tenda*. In his narrative about the apparent speedy and easy defection of the Amīr Mousour and his kin, he illustrates the Arabs as people use to live in transit, but only when they convert to Christianity and move to live in Byzantium, they became more

to Chrisianity to marry her. After many years, some of Muslims, who were in a task of captives' exchange, met him at Constantinople and asked about what did he still remember from Koran. He replied that he was forgotten all of it except the God's saying: "Who disbelieved may wish if they were Muslims". They offered exchange him and return to the Muslim lands but he refused. This story was frequently repeated in the Arabic sources in different details and for several persons, but they had the following common divisors: 1) All of their heroes before defection were pious and faithful, memorizer of the Koran, and fighters *muǧāhidūn* against Byzantium for a long time. 2) They easily abandoned Islam and homeland to win their lovers. 3) They refused an offer to exchange them and retun to their homeland. 4) All of them were forgotten the Koran except the same God's saying. See: Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Muntaẓam*, V, p. 120; Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāyā*, XI, p. 64; al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aġānī*, V, p. 126–127. On the Arabs' view of Byzantine women's beauty and *fitna*, see: El Cheikh-Saliba, "Describing the Other", p. 239–250, esp. 239–240.

150. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, p. 140–141.

151. *Ḏāt al-Himma*, I, p. 897–898. According to the author of the epic, after Byzantines captured Abū l-Hazāhiz, they drove him to the Emperor who ordered to bring for him the deluxe clothes and gifts. They also brought the money out big boxes and shed it over him up to it reached his thorax, put one of imperial chests between his hands, and presented ten pretty maidens to him. Then the Emperor said to him: "Wish any of Byzantine provinces, but firstly you must adopt our religion and say our word". When Abū l-Hazāhiz asked about this word, the Emperor said: "Abjure Islam and accept the baptism". Then Abū l-Hazāhiz converted to Christianity saying to himself: "There is no problem to be a Christian at the day and a Muslim at the night, when the Day of Resurrection will come I shall adopt what will be the real religion".

152. *Ḏāt al-Himma*, I, p. 640.

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"civilized" for then they left the harsh life of tents and became settled in houses.[153] I think it is very logic that Byzantines had a belief in the superiority of Christian over non-Christian, or/and of the Byzantine over the nomadic Arab, but, on the other hand, it is difficult to explain a similar view in an Arabic epic.

Such Arab view about apostates' brilliant future and comfortable life in Byzantium seemed to be well exploited by the Byzantines, who obviously welcomed and encouraged the Arabs, in particular refugees, fugitives, rebels and prisoners, to be quasi-subjects of Byzantium. Although they sometimes presented very lavish privileges to the eminent Arabs, as clear in the case of Khurramite rebel Naṣr/Theophobus,[154] their facilities and concessions to integrate the common ones seemed to be more realistic than the exaggerated offers which Arab sources reflect. For those, getting married to Byzantine families was the second step, after baptism, to realize their entire integration within society. After 14,000 Khurramites soldiers of Naṣr were baptized, Emperor Theophilos enrolled them as Byzantine soldiers in special companies under their own officers and dispersed them among the different *themata* of both Asia and Europe, where by imperial edict he required widowed or unmarried Byzantine women to marry them.[155] Treadgold suggests that "since the women who were required to marry them appear to have been from military families, they would have gained shares of military land through their wives. In return, the women's families seem to have received generous compensation, because they positively encouraged such marriages".[156] I think these procedures seem to be adopted by the Byzantines as tools of a general policy to integrate Arabs, including prisoners of war, within their society. A short text in the *De Ceremoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, entitled "concerning Saracen captives baptized in a theme", openly refering to continuation of such policy at the early tenth century, records that:

153. Galatariotou, "Structural Oppositions", p. 29–68, esp. 37–38. On the Byzantine view of the *Oikos*'s life, see: Magdalino, "Byzantine Aristocratic Oikos", p. 92–111.

154. Naṣr, after the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim's army dealt him a crushing defeat in December 834, fled to Byzantium with 14,000 soldiers, without most of their wives and children. All of them converted to Christianity, and when Naṣr came to Constantinople for his baptism, he took the name of Theophobus "God-fearing", on the pattern of Theophilos "God-loving". The Emperor Theophilos gladly gave him the rank of *Patrikios* and made him his brother-in-law by marrying him to one of the Empress Theodora's sisters. Also, Theophobus was given residence at Constantinople in a palace by the Golden Horn. Genesios, *On the Reigns*, p. 52; Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 110–112; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 56; Bar Hebreaus, *Chronographia*, p. 31, 33–34; Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, p. 282; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, p. 140–141.

155. Genesios, *On the Reigns*, p. 52; Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 110–112; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, IX, p. 56 (states that the Khurramite soldiers "fled to mountains and embraced to Byzantines. The Byzantine Emperor gave them generously, marrying them to Byzantine women and enrolled them as Byzantine soldiers"). The life of Sta Athanasia of Aegina, lived in the first half of ninth century, refers to "an imperial edict was issued that unmarried women and widows should be given in marriage to foreign men". Some scholars suggest there is a clear connection between this edict and the imperial desire to encourage the assimilation of the Khurramite soldiers: *Life of Sta Athanasia of Aegina*, p. 137–158, esp. 139, 143 and no. 22; Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, p. 283.

156. Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, p. 282–283.

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"Take note that they must each one of them recieve three *nomismata* from the *protonotarios* of the theme, six *nomismata* for their yoke of oxen, and fifty—four *modioi* of grain for their seed and provisions. Note that concerning captives given as son-in-law to households, whether the household which the Saracen son-in-law enters is military or civil, it is extempted for three years from the land tax and the hearth tax. After three years this household is obliged once more to pay the land tax and the hearth tax. Note that when the captives or others are given land for settlement, they remain free from all service to the fisc for three years, and they pay neither the hearth tax nor the land tax. After the completion of the three years, they pay both the land tax and the hearth tax".[157]

Also, there are some Arabic narratives confirming the Byzantines' adoption of such means to integrate Arab prisoners within their society. According to al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār, many of the Arab soldiers, after staying in Constantinople for several years in captivity or for other reasons without a hope to be exchanged, "pretended to convert to Christianity, lived with the Byzantines and mixed with them". One of these converts narrates how the Emperor gave him generously and ordered his officials to find some rich women to marry the new converts in order to improve their conditions.[158] Epic of Ḏāt al-Himma also records that the Byzantine Emperors used to raise some of the converted Arab prisoners to the patrician degree, encouraged the Byzantine *Patrikoi* to give their daughters as wives to them.[159]

However, integration and assimilation of the Arab prisoners seem to be one of the essential and ultimate goals which formed the limits of Byzantines' treatment of them, even when they determine to sell and enslave them. The decree of Emperor John Tezimiskes on the sale of prisoners of war posed taxes on the soldiers who sell them in markets and villages, and extempted whether those who send them as a gift to persons living in Constantinople or residing outside, or those who send them to their households and properties or even to relatives.[160] This may imply that the Byzantine government, beside its concern to collect its portion from the sale of prisoners, sometimes inclined to promote prisoners' integration in its soldiers and citizens' households, whether in the capital or in the other cities. Evidences confirm that Arab prisoners were found and integrated within the societies of the great Byzantine cities. The Hagiographer of Sta Theodora of Thessalonike (812–892) narrates a story of a man called Elias who lived in Myriophytos, one of the villages subjected to Thessalonike, and "who was of Arab extraction". Many priests and laymen of the village tried to compel him to anathematize the iconoclast heresy, but he replied them that if he does then he "will anathematize the religion handed down to him by his ancestors".[161] This story may reveal that Elias was a member of an Arab family which had been converted to Christianity and integrated in a Byzantine village at

157. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Ceremoniis*, I, p. 694–695; trans. McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 366–367.
158. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār, *Taṯbīt*, I, p. 171.
159. *Ḏāt al-Himma*, IV, p. 282–283.
160. Trans. in McGeer, *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth*, p. 367.
161. *Life of Sta Theodora of Thessalonike*, p. 212–213.

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least during the ninth century. Certainly, Thessalonike, the second important city after the capital, assimilated considerable numbers of Arab prisoners. One can imagine why the Arabs found 4,000 Arab prisoners in it during their attack against it in 291/904.[162]

Also, as Setton suggests, "maybe the little colony of Arabs in Athens were captives rather than conquerors. Some of them were converted to Christianity, and even entered the service of the Byzantine state. Such was apparently the case of one Chase".[163] Constantine Porphyrogenitus's reference to Chase as "the slave of the *Patrikios* Damian" suggests that he was captured and enslaved in this Byzantine aristocratic houshold. His later career in the imperial service was an exceptional one. Although he "remained a true *Sarakēnos* in thought and manners and religion", he was raised to be a Byzantine *Protospatharios* and had "great freedom of intercourse with the Emperor Alexander (912–913)". His brother the *Protospatharios* Niketas, whose Byzantine name implies his conversion to Christianity, was appointed the military governer of the *thema* of Kibyrrhaiotai. Constantine Porphyrogenitus indicates his strong influence on the Emperor Alexander who accepted his request to make his son, the *Spatharocandidate* Abercius, a captain-general of the Mardaïtes of Attalia.[164] One can suggest that these two brothers, Chase and Niketas, at least were descendants of an Arab prisoner, or were captured, most likely during their childhood, and moved to Byzantium. The most important side of their story is that they seemed to be integrated within the Byzantine society, achieved a great success in the military administration, and attained, with their offspring, the posts of leadership in it.

Other examples of Arab prisoners' integration and success are these of the eunuch Samonas, the *Patrikios, Prôtospatharios* and *Parakoimômenos* of Emperor Leo VI's court, and Anemas, son of the Amīr of Crete who was captured in 350/961. Samonas began his splendid career at Constantinople as a servant in the house of Stylianos Zaoutzes, this implies that he was captured and castrated during his childhood, then was enslaved in the aristocratic *oikos* of Stylianos Zaoutzes.[165] The story of Samonas may also explain in part why the Byzantines were largely concerned with capturing Arab children during their wars, particularly in the

162. Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḫ al-Rusul*, X, p. 17.

163. Setton, "Raids of the Moslems in the Aegean", p. 311–319, esp. 319.

164. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando*, p. 243.

165. *Vita Euthymii*, p. 55. Samonas's splendid career at the Byzantine court incited Rydén to conclude his study on Samonas by saying: "The Arabs were regarded as enemies, and their religion was hateful to the Byzantines. But if an Arab became Christian and served the Christian Empire loyally, there was no end to his possibilities. In theory, he could even become Emperor". In this conclusion, Rydén depends on two tenth century apocalyptic texts which made an Arab the last Roman Emperor: Rydén, "Portrait of Samonas", p. 101, 107–108. The most interesting, Arabic sources openly present a similar view, they refer to Emperor Nicephoros I as the grandson of Ǧabla ibn al-Aiham. See Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, V, p. 333; al-Masʿudī, *Tanbīh*, p. 285; Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāyā*, X, p. 194. Also, Arabic sources state about Emperor Nicephoros II Phokas that: "He was one of the Muslims' sons, his father was one of the best Muslims at Ṭarsūs called Ibn al-Faqās, but he converted to Christianity" (Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VII, p. 320; and Ibn Kaṯīr, *Bidāyā*, XI, p. 268; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Muntaẓam*, IV, p. 56. It is difficult to guess the truth of these narratives, but at least they reflect the Arabs' imagination of the unlimited power and wealth which the Arab converts or their offspring could acquire in the Byzantine lands.

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second half of the tenth century.[166] Surely, children would be more desirable in the markets of slaves, but they also seemed to be more susceptible to the integration within the Byzantine Society. As for Anemas, his story may indicate a career of an Arab family that extended to many generations. Despit his father's refusal of baptism, and that Byzantine sources did not openly refer to his conversion, it seemed to be occured. According to these sources, Anemas became a loyal Byzantine subject, was appointed an imperial bodyguard and army commander, and subsequently appeared in the narratives fighting prominently against the Rūs.[167] Leo the Deacon described his heroic death on the battlefield, praised him as "a man surpassed by no one his age in brave feats in battle".[168] Most likely, the career of Anemas in the Byzantine service suggests that he was baptized and integrated within society.[169] His offspring appeared in the Byzantine texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. According to Anna Komnena, his grandson Michael Anemas and his brothers played an important role in military and political events of the reign of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118).[170] The most striking is that Anemas career in the imperial service might incite the Byzantines to perpetuate his memory by using his name to designate a Constantinoplitan tower.[171]

Arabic sources rarely refer to the fate of baptized Arab prisoners in their new lands. I think this may be caused by their writers' lack of close contact with the stage of events, and because they received information from the envoys who visited Constantinople or from the released captives. Nevertheless, the very few narratives which are concerned with the fate of these prisoners imply that many of them really adopted Christianity and the Byzantine way of life to the extent that they refused return again to Islam and their former homeland, i.e. *Dār al-Islām*. According to al-Iṣfahānī, when the envoy of the Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to the Byzantine court met a converted captive called al-Wābisī, the later refused an offer to release him and return to the Muslim lands, saying that: "I can not return to Islam because I have a wife and two sons, and if we return the Muslims will mock at us and will call me O Christian".[172] Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī narrates a similar story of another converted captive who was recaptured

166. On the Byzantine concern with capturing children, see Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 211–212. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār accused the Byzantines of being ruthless in capturing Muslim children, and castrating them in large numbers. Cf. his, *Taṯbīt*, I, p. 168; trans. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 212.

167. Leo the Deacon, *The History*, p. 192; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 304–305, 308; Fren. trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 254–255, 257.

168. Leo the Deacon, *The History*, p. 196.

169. Jean-Claude Cheynet writes, without refering to his sources, that: "Cet Anémas passa au service de Byzance et donna naissance à une lignée qui fournit de nombreux généraux jusqu'au XII^e siècle": Skylitzes's Fren. trans. *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 210, no. 7.

170. Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 299, 382ff. Michael Anemas was also the chief conspirator in a plot to assassinate Alexios I Komeneos. Anna Komnena also mentions a certain Byzantine general, called Tactikius who was "a valiant fighter, a man who kept his head under combat conditions, but his family was not free-born. His father was in fact a Saracen who fell into the hands of my paternal grandfather John Komnenos when he captured him on a marauding raid": Ibid., p. 141.

171. Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad*, p. 386, 388. Niketas Choniates also refers to the prison of Anemas, in which the Emperor Andronikos I was confined: trans. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium*, p. 192.

172. Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aġanī*, V, p. 126.

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by the Muslims during Maslama b. ʿAbd al-Malik's offensive against Constantinople in 717, he also refused their offer of return because he have a family and sons in Byzantium.[173] In a peerless text, al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār relates a story of converted Arab captives who were recruited for the Byzantine army, and married Byzantine women. One of them had to change his manners and accepted that his Byzantine wife made a sexual intercourse with her male friends. He concluded his own story by saying that: "Whoever enters the Rūm lands, will not mind if his wife has friends; he will lose his former nature; give up jealousy, his heart and will lose the enthusiasm which he had when he was a Muslim".[174] Despite ʿAbd al-Ǧabār here seemed intent to show the miserable fate of Arab apostates in Byzantium, considering the loss of their zeal as a divine punishment for their apostasy, but at least he also implies that they were completely integrated within society to the extent that they gave up their former way of life and became Byzantines in thoughts and traditions.[175]

However, although the previous evidences may suggest that many Arabs could achieve an ideal integration within the Byzantine society, this does not mean that they did not confront obstacles, the most noticeable of them is the reactions of this society itself. The Byzantine society seemed accept and welcome Arab apostates, and raised some of them to the highest position of Sainthood.[176] But when these men could accomplish a significant success in the court and imperial service, the attitudes become very different. Constantine Porphyrogenitus describes the members of Chasi's family as "malicious and foolish men", and criticizes his uncle Emperor Alexander for being

173. Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿǧam al-Buldān*, II, p. 44.

174. Al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār, *Taṯbīt*, I, p. 171–172; trans. Abū Seʿada, *Byzantium and Islam*, p. 362–364. Cf. El Cheikh-Saliba, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, p. 75–76.

175. In my study on the Byzantine women, I point out that despite al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Ǧabār's story seems inconsistent with the nature of the Byzantine patriarchal society, and exaggerated in describing the sexual freedom of the Byzantine women, other Byzantine evidences indicate that many married women involved in such sexual relations outside their households. Emperor Leo VI, in one of his homilies, reveals that these relations may sometimes occured in the holy places. Patriarch Nicholas I states that many married men, indeed dislike their own wives, while burning with passion for those of others. So, many wives had to run away from their own husbands and to live with their lovers. Cf. Antonopoulou, *The Homilies of the Emperor Leo VI*, p. 239–240; Westerink, *Nikolas I Patriarch of Constantinople*, p. 52. For many other texts and the whole discussion, see: Ramaḍān, *al-Marʾa wa l-Muǧtamaʿ*, p. 174–182. On the Arabs' view of morality and behavior of Byzantine women, see: El Cheikh-Saliba, "Describing the Other", p. 241–242.

176. The writer of the Life of St Barbaros praises him and related his story since he was an Arab Muslim until becoming a Christian martyr. Gregory Dekapolites, mentions a similar story about a Muslim Amīr who converted to Christianity and became a martyr. The life of St Christopher described him as a Muslim General who abjured "the false faith of the Persians, and became monk in the monastery of Mar Saba which was subjected to the King of the Saracens". The Life of St Antony Ruwah states that he was an official in the court of the Caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd, but was executed after his conversion to Christianity. The life of St Theodore of Edessa related a story of Mavia, the King of Baghdad, who abjured Islam and was re-named John after his baptism, but he became a martyr by the hands of some angry Muslims. Sahas, "Hagiological Texts as Historical Sources", p. 50–59; Id., "Gregory Dekapolites (d. 842) and Islam", p. 47–67, esp. 50–62; Dick, "La Passion de St Antoine Ruwah", p. 109–113; Vasiliev, "Life of Theodore of Edessa", p. 207ff.; Kazhdan, "Greek Barlaam and Ioasaph", p. 1187–1209; Tolan, *Saracens*, p. 55–56.

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subjected to their influence.[177] Arethas, in his work *Epitaphos*, writes that Emperor Alexander handed over the imperial affairs to the *Barbaroi*. Karlin-Hayter suggests that this criticism was a defensive mechanism from the aristocratic families against Alexander's policy intending to appoint Slavs and Arabs to important posts.[178] The last interpretation seems plausible, since the sources of the same period do not have any love for Samonas, who was described as "a Satan in disguise", "Leo's evil genius", the "treacherous", the "dirty", the "impure", and the "evil".[179]

One can add that this negative picture might be also partially drawn by the Byzantine society's *xenophobia* and conception of highness over the other ethnic groups. These factors usually were combined and incited angry reactions when the Byzantines saw the others attained high positions. According to Byzantine sources, the Athenians hated Chase to the extent that they rose up against him in anger, and pursued him even into the Parthenon, the Church of the Virgin Atheniotissa, where they stoned him to death.[180] In the light of these factors, we can also explain the reason which incited Samonas to plan his failing attempt of flight.[181] The Byzantine *xenophobia* expressed itself in 1044. According to Ibn al-Aṯīr and Bar Hebraeus, the extremely increased influence of the foreigners, Muslims and Christians, incited the angry population of Constantinople to revolt before the imperial palace. The Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–1055) had to order that the foreigner, who had remained in the capital for 30 years, must go away during three days or will be blinded. So, about 100,000 persons had to depart, but no more than 12,000 persons were allowed to remain because the Byzantines trusted them.[182]

177. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando*, p. 243.

178. Karlin-Hayter, "Emperor Alexander Bad Name", p. 585–596, esp. 591.

179. Rydén, "Portrait of Samonas", p. 103.

180. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 388; Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, p. 293–294; Pseudo-Symeon, *Chronographia*, p. 723.

181. Samonas tried to flee to Syria before 906, but the General Constantine Ducas arrested him near Halys River. Cf. Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, p. 277–279; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, p. 184 and trans. Flusin, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, p. 155; Zonaras, *Epitomae Historiarum*, p. 488. According to Jenkins' suggestion it was not a flight at all but a mission in disguise to obtain intelligence of Arab military plans, and "there is no suggestion of motive to induce the *cubicularius* to desert". Rydén approves this suggestion considering it as "ingenious theory". On the other hand, Tougher recommends that "Samonas simply wanted to return to his own people". And "There seems to be no reason to doubt that this was the real motive". Also, he suggests that the flight probably occurred in the same year of the Arab advance on Constantinople and the sack of Thessalonike in 904, and Samonas might fear the anti-Arab sentiment within Byzantium: Jenkins, "Flight of Samonas", p. 217–235, esp. 218; Rydén, "Portrait of Samonas", p. 103; Tougher, *Reign of Leo VI*, p. 215. I think that Samonas certainly tried to flee. Since four years after his try, his father visited Constantinople in a diplomatic mission, and when he expressed his desire to convert to Christianity and settle at Constantinople, Samonas refused and advised him that: "Keep your faith, it is better that I come to you, if possible". Leo Grammaticus, *Chronographia*, p. 283–284.

182. According to Ibn al-Aṯīr, these foreigners were from "Muslims, Christians, and others". Bar Hebraeus records they were "Armenians, Arabs, and Jews": Ibn al-Aṯīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, p. 262; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronographia*, p. 94.

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However, the Arab presence in Byzantium did not cease. According to Cedrenus, Emperor Constantine IX himself recruited many Arabs, enlisted them in particular *tagmata* under the command of Generals of their own race, and dispatched them to guard the oriental *themata*.[183] Moreover, the case of Michael Anemas and his brothers may prove that the Arab offspring extended for many generations, at least to the late eleventh century.

I think that the appearance of the Seljuks on the stage of events which transformed the Byzantine-Muslim conflict, and the crusades of twelfth century which created a buffer states between the Byzantines and the Arabs, may have make it hard to observe new Arab prisoners of war in Byzantium. Also, The Byzantine sources of the twelfth century, which generally refer to many integrated Muslim persons without any ethnic distinction, pose another difficulty to identify whether they were Turks or the offspring of the Arab prisoners of war.[184]

Conclusion

Byzantine policy towards the Arab prisoners of war was not random or aimless one. Byzantines seemed to be well-aware of why and when they must resort to whether mercy or cruelty in their treatment with them. Although execution of the Arab prisoners seemed an usual punitive practice, whether determined by the severe nature or the strategic necessity of the battlefields, the Byzantines did not tend to adopt this choice when these prisoners proved to be profitable.

No doubt, two of the most important considerations, which formed the Byzantine treatment of the Arab prisoners, were: 1) using them in order to redeem the Byzantine prisoners in the Arabs' hands, 2) enslaving and exploiting them as an incentive and reward for the soldiery, slaves in the Byzantine Aristocratic households, and above all as a source of revenue to the Empire.

Nevertheless, the Byzantines seemed to have other various pragmatic needs that Arab prisoners were expected to fulfil. They evidently tried to exploit some of them in the imperial service, mainly as spies, guards, officials, and mercenary fighters. This consideration may essentially form the Byzantine attitudes towards the Arab prisoners and may interpret many of sources' contradictions concerning these attitudes.

To achieve this goal, the Byzantines seemed appreciating the efficiency of the psychological factor's effect on the Arab prisoners. This factor may interpret: why the Arab prisoners had to suffer in a harsh prison before being moved to a more comfortable one; why some of them were invited to be present at the imperial banquets and were moved again to their imprisonment; why they were humiliated in public parades before given honours and gifts.

183. Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, II, p. 602.

184. Although Kazhdan and Epstein suggest that Turks and Arabs were represented in the ranks of the Byzantine nobility during the twelfth century, they faced a similar difficulty to identify the origin of some Muslim families, whether Arab or Turkish, such as the noble family of the Tatikoi which founded by a servant of Alexios I, and the family of Chalouphes. See Kazhdan & Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture*, p. 180. On the Turkish presence and integration within Byzantium at this period, see Brand, "Turkish Element in Byzantium", p. 1–25.

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The Byzantine policy of "stick and carrot" seemed to be effective in many cases. As the Arabic and Byzantine sources reflect, many of these prisoners were integrated within the Byzantine Society, adopted Christianity and the Byzantine way of life, to the extent that they refused return again to Islam and their former homeland when this chance was available for them. Some of them achieved a splendid career in the imperial service, had a personal relationship with the Emperors, and their names were frequently mentioned in the Byzantine sources up to twelfth century. Thus the prediction of the Patriarch Euthymios, which was included in his letter to Leo VI, was verified: "No doubt you will be furnishing the *Sarakēnoi* held in the *praetorium* with presents..., you will reward them with brilliant positions and conspicuous advancement".[185]

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