

= Michael Dokeianos =

Michael Dokeianos (Greek : ?????? ?????????) , erroneously called Doukeianos by some modern writers , was a Byzantine nobleman and military leader , who married into the Komnenos family . He was active in Sicily under George Maniakes before going to Southern Italy as Catepan of Italy in 1040 ? 41 . He was recalled after being twice defeated in battle during the Lombard @-@ Norman revolt of 1041 , a decisive moment in the eventual Norman conquest of southern Italy . He is next recorded in 1050 , fighting against a Pecheneg raid in Thrace . He was captured during battle but managed to maim the Pecheneg leader , after which he was put to death and mutilated .

= = Biography = =

The family name of Dokeianos is considered to derive from Dok [e] ia in the Armeniac Theme . The family only came into prominence in the mid @-@ 11th century , with Michael one of the first to be mentioned . He is generally considered as the Dokeianos who married an unnamed daughter of Manuel Erotikos Komnenos and sister of the future emperor Isaac I Komnenos (reigned 1057 ? 59) , probably ca . 1030 . Together , they had a son , Theodore Dokeianos . According to John Skylitzes , Michael Dokeianos was a simple man and not suited for command , and according to Konstantinos Varzos he owed his rise to high office to his family ties with the Komnenoi . It is known that he was wealthy , and possessed estates in Paphlagonia , possibly adjacent or part of the Komnenos family estates in the same region .

= = = In Italy = = =

Michael Dokeianos is first mentioned in 1040 , as protospatharios and doux , when he was sent to southern Italy to assume command of the local Byzantine province as Catepan of Italy . Prior to that , he was apparently a member of George Maniakes ' expeditionary force sent to conquer Sicily in 1038 . Dokeianos arrived in the mainland in November 1040 , and the situation he found was critical : his predecessor Nikephoros Dokeianos , probably a relative , had been killed in January at Ascoli in a mutiny of his troops , which was followed by a revolt in Taranto and the capture of the capital , Bari , by Argyrus , son of the Lombard leader Melus . Dokeianos hanged or blinded the ringleaders of the various revolts , but he failed to address the underlying cause , the widespread resentment at the oppressive taxation imposed by the Empire as part of the preparations for the Sicilian expedition under Maniakes . Dokeianos also offered the rule of strategic fortress of Melfi to the Milanese mercenary Arduin , with the title of topoteretes . Arduin had served under previous Byzantine commanders as part of a Norman contingent , but had been flogged in a dispute about the distribution of booty taken from the Muslims in Sicily (William of Apulia claims this was done by Dokeianos , but it is possible that it was done by one of his predecessors , perhaps George Maniakes) . Arduin 's grudge against the Byzantines now bore fruit . He sought the aid of the Normans who had been established at nearby Aversa since 1030 , and received a contingent of 300 men , upon a promise to share his gains equally with them . Thus in March 1041 he and his men seized Melfi . The inhabitants initially opposed him , but eventually were won over by Arduin .

The rebels quickly extended their control over the neighbouring towns of Venosa , Ascoli , and Lavello . Dokeianos , who had just reimposed order in Bari and the surrounding region , marched to meet them with a hastily assembled and incomplete force : most of the imperial army was still in Sicily , so that Skylitzes writes that Dokeianos only took the Opsician and part of the Thracesian contingents with him , while other sources also add that his army comprised elements of the Varangian Guard . The two armies met at the Olivento river , where Dokeianos was defeated in a battle fought on 17 March . The rebels then moved south towards the coast , and on 4 May defeated another Byzantine force under Dokeianos in another battle near Cannae , a field that had served as the site for the famous battle of 216 BC and the first Norman engagement in southern Italy in 1018 . The Annales Barenses claims , with obvious exaggeration , that 2 @,@ 000 Normans defeated 18 @,@ 000 Byzantines , but whatever the true numbers it does appear that the Byzantines

considerably outnumbered the rebel forces . Dokeianos himself fell from his horse during the battle and was almost captured , until rescued by a squire . In the aftermath of the battle , both sides remained quiescent . The Lombards and Normans were probably exhausted and may have suffered heavy casualties , while the Byzantines regrouped : Dokeianos was recalled and replaced by Exaugustus Boioannes , while the garrisons in Sicily were withdrawn to the Italian mainland to face the rebel threat .

The withdrawal of the imperial forces from Sicily resulted in the rapid collapse of the imperial position there . Under Maniakes , the Byzantines had conquered the eastern portion of the island , but by 1042 , only Messina remained in Byzantine hands . On the mainland , Boioannes did not fare better than his predecessor , as he was defeated and taken prisoner at the Battle of Montepeloso in September . This succession of defeats signalled the beginning of the end for Byzantine rule in southern Italy , a process which was completed three decades later with the fall of Bari to the Normans under Robert Guiscard .

= = = In Thrace = = =

Dokeianos re @-@ appears in 1050 , when he held the titles of patrikios and vestarches , as part of an imperial expedition against the Pechenegs who raided Thrace . The imperial commander @-@ in @-@ chief , the eunuch praipositos Constantine , a militarily inexperienced court favourite of Emperor Constantine IX (r . 1042 ? 55) , listened to his advice on fortifying the army 's encampment , but when the Pechenegs appeared before Adrianople , he refused to heed the opinion of the magistros Constantine Arianites to wait and attack the Pechenegs on their return journey , and instead marched to meet them in the open field of Basilike Libas , resulting in a devastating defeat : Arianites fell , while Dokeianos was taken prisoner . As he was brought before the Pecheneg leader , however , Dokeianos seized a sword from one of his guards and slashed at the leader , cutting off one of his arms , whereupon the enraged Pechenegs killed him and , according to Michael Attaleiates , opened his belly , cut off his arms and legs and placed them in it .