

= Manuel I Komnenos =

Manuel I Komnenos ( or Comnenus ; Greek : ??????? ? ' ??????? , Manou?I I Komn?nos ; 28 November 1118 ? 24 September 1180 ) was a Byzantine Emperor of the 12th century who reigned over a crucial turning point in the history of Byzantium and the Mediterranean . His reign saw the last flowering of the Komnenian restoration , during which the Byzantine Empire had seen a resurgence of its military and economic power , and had enjoyed a cultural revival .

Eager to restore his empire to its past glories as the superpower of the Mediterranean world , Manuel pursued an energetic and ambitious foreign policy . In the process he made alliances with the Pope and the resurgent West . He invaded the Norman Kingdom of Sicily , although unsuccessfully . The passage of the potentially dangerous Second Crusade was adroitly managed through his empire . Manuel established a Byzantine protectorate over the Crusader states of Outremer . Facing Muslim advances in the Holy Land , he made common cause with the Kingdom of Jerusalem and participated in a combined invasion of Fatimid Egypt . Manuel reshaped the political maps of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean , placing the kingdoms of Hungary and Outremer under Byzantine hegemony and campaigning aggressively against his neighbours both in the west and in the east .

However , towards the end of his reign Manuel 's achievements in the east were compromised by a serious defeat at Myriokephalon , which in large part resulted from his arrogance in attacking a well @-@ defended Seljuk position . Although the Byzantines recovered and Manuel concluded an advantageous peace with Sultan Kilij Arslan II , Myriokephalon proved to be the final , unsuccessful effort by the empire to recover the interior of Anatolia from the Turks .

Called ho Megas ( ? ????? , translated as " the Great " ) by the Greeks , Manuel is known to have inspired intense loyalty in those who served him . He also appears as the hero of a history written by his secretary , John Kinnamos , in which every virtue is attributed to him . Manuel , who was influenced by his contact with western Crusaders , enjoyed the reputation of " the most blessed emperor of Constantinople " in parts of the Latin world as well . Modern historians , however , have been less enthusiastic about him . Some of them assert that the great power he wielded was not his own personal achievement , but that of the dynasty he represented ; they also argue that , since Byzantine imperial power declined catastrophically after Manuel 's death , it is only natural to look for the causes of this decline in his reign .

= = Accession to the throne = =

Manuel Komnenos was the fourth son of John II Komnenos and Piroška of Hungary , so it seemed very unlikely that he would succeed his father . His maternal grandfather was St. Ladislaus . Having distinguished himself in his father 's war against the Seljuk Turks , in 1143 Manuel was chosen as his successor by John , in preference to his elder surviving brother Isaac . After John died on 8 April 1143 , his son , Manuel , was acclaimed emperor by the armies . Yet his succession was by no means assured : At his father 's deathbed in the wilds of Cilicia far from Constantinople , he recognised that it was vital he should return to the capital as soon as possible . He still had to take care of his father 's funeral , and tradition demanded he organise the foundation of a monastery on the spot where his father died . Swiftly , he dispatched the megas domestikos John Axouch ahead of him , with orders to arrest his most dangerous potential rival , his brother Isaac , who was living in the Great Palace with instant access to the imperial treasure and regalia . Axouch arrived in the capital even before news of the emperor 's death had reached it . He quickly secured the loyalty of the city , and when Manuel entered the capital in August 1143 , he was crowned by the new Patriarch , Michael Kourkouas . A few days later , with nothing more to fear as his position as emperor was now secure , Manuel ordered the release of Isaac . Then he ordered 2 golden pieces to be given to every householder in Constantinople and 200 pounds of gold ( including 200 silver pieces annually ) to be given to the Byzantine Church .

The empire that Manuel inherited from his father had undergone great changes since its foundation by Constantine , eight centuries before . In the time of his predecessor Justinian I ( 527 ? 565 ) ,

parts of the former Western Roman Empire had been recovered including Italy , Africa and part of Spain . However , the empire had diminished greatly following this , the most obvious change had occurred in the 7th century : the soldiers of Islam had taken Egypt , Palestine and much of Syria away from the empire irrevocably . They had then swept on westwards into what in the time of Constantine had been the western provinces of the Roman Empire , in North Africa and Spain . In the centuries since , the emperors had ruled over a realm that largely consisted of Asia Minor in the east , and the Balkans in the west . In the late 11th century the Byzantine Empire entered a period of marked military and political decline , which had been arrested and largely reversed by the leadership of Manuel 's grandfather and father . Yet the empire that Manuel inherited was a polity facing formidable challenges . At the end of the 11th century , the Normans of Sicily had removed Italy from the control of the Byzantine Emperor . The Seljuk Turks had done the same with central Anatolia . And in the Levant , a new force had appeared ? the Crusader states ? who presented the Byzantine Empire with new challenges . Now , more than at any time during the preceding centuries , the task facing the emperor was daunting indeed .

= = Second Crusade and Raynald of Châtillon = =

= = = Prince of Antioch = = =

The first test of Manuel 's reign came in 1144 , when he was faced with a demand by Raymond , Prince of Antioch for the cession of Cilician territories . However , later that year the crusader County of Edessa was engulfed by the tide of a resurgent Islamic jihad under Imad ad @-@ Din Atabeg Zengi . Raymond realized that immediate help from the west was out of the question . With his eastern flank now dangerously exposed to this new threat , there seemed little option but for him to prepare for a humiliating visit to Constantinople . Swallowing his pride , he made the journey north to ask for the protection of the Emperor . After submitting to Manuel , he was promised the support that he had requested , and his allegiance to Byzantium was secured .

= = = Expedition against Konya = = =

In 1146 Manuel assembled his army at the military base Lopadion and set out on a punitive expedition against Masud the Sultan of Rûm , who had been repeatedly violating the frontiers of the Empire in western Anatolia and Cilicia . There was no attempt at a systematic conquest of territory , but Manuel 's army defeated the Turks at Acroënus , before capturing and destroying the fortified town of Philomelion , removing its remaining Christian population . The Byzantine forces reached Masud 's capital , Konya , and ravaged the area around the city , but could not assault its walls . Among Manuel 's motives for mounting this razzia there included a wish to be seen in the West as actively espousing the crusading ideal ; Kinnamos also attributed to Manuel a desire to show off his martial prowess to his new bride . While on this campaign Manuel received a letter from Louis VII of France announcing his intention of leading an army to the relief of the crusader states .

= = = Arrival of the Crusaders = = =

Manuel was prevented from following up his early successes in the east , for events to the west meant that his presence was urgently required in the Balkans . In 1147 he granted a passage through his dominions to two armies of the Second Crusade under Conrad III of Germany and Louis VII of France . At this time , there were still members of the Byzantine court who remembered the passage of the First Crusade , a defining event in the collective memory of the age that had fascinated Manuel 's aunt , Anna Komnene .

Many Byzantines feared the Crusade , a view endorsed by the numerous acts of vandalism and theft practiced by the unruly armies as they marched through Byzantine territory . Byzantine troops followed the Crusaders , attempting to police their behaviour , and further troops were assembled in

Constantinople , ready to defend the capital against any acts of aggression . This cautious approach was well advised , but still the numerous incidents of covert and open hostility between the Franks and the Greeks on their line of march , for which it seems both sides were to blame , precipitated conflict between Manuel and his guests . Manuel took the precaution ? which his grandfather had not taken ? of making repairs to the city walls , and he pressed the two kings for guarantees concerning the security of his territories . Conrad 's army was the first to enter the Byzantine territory in the summer of 1147 , and it figures more prominently in the Byzantine sources , which imply that it was the more troublesome of the two . Indeed , the contemporary Byzantine historian Kinnamos describes a full @-@ scale clash between a Byzantine force and part of Conrad 's army , outside the walls of Constantinople . The Byzantines defeated the Germans and , in Byzantine eyes , this reverse caused Conrad to agree to have his army speedily ferried across to Damalis on the Asian shore of the Bosphoros .

After 1147 , however , the relations between the two leaders became friendlier . By 1148 Manuel had seen the wisdom of securing an alliance with Conrad , whose sister @-@ in @-@ law Bertha of Sulzbach he had earlier married ; he actually persuaded the German king to renew their alliance against Roger II of Sicily . Unfortunately for the Byzantine emperor , Conrad died in 1152 , and despite repeated attempts , Manuel could not reach an agreement with his successor , Frederick I Barbarossa .

= = = Cyprus invaded = = =

Manuel 's attention was again drawn to Antioch in 1156 , when Raynald of Châtillon , the new Prince of Antioch , claimed that the Byzantine emperor had reneged on his promise to pay him a sum of money and vowed to attack the Byzantine province of Cyprus . Raynald arrested the governor of the island , John Komnenos , who was a nephew of Manuel , and the general Michael Branas . The Latin historian William of Tyre deplored this act of war against fellow Christians and described the atrocities committed by Raynald 's men in considerable detail . Having ransacked the island and plundered all its wealth , Raynald 's army mutilated the survivors before forcing them to buy back their flocks at exorbitant prices with what little they had left . Thus enriched with enough booty to make Antioch wealthy for years , the invaders boarded their ships and set sail for home . Raynald also sent some of the mutilated hostages to Constantinople as a vivid demonstration of his disobedience and his contempt for the Byzantine emperor .

Manuel responded to this outrage in a characteristically energetic way . In the winter of 1158 ? 59 , he marched to Cilicia at the head of a huge army ; the speed of his advance ( Manuel had hurried on ahead of the main army with 500 cavalry ) was such that he managed to surprise the Armenian Thoros of Cilicia , who had participated in the attack on Cyprus . Thoros fled into the mountains , and Cilicia swiftly fell to Manuel .

= = = Manuel in Antioch = = =

Meanwhile , news of the advance of the Byzantine army soon reached Antioch . Realising that he had no hope of defeating Manuel , Raynald also knew that he could not expect any help from king Baldwin III of Jerusalem . Baldwin did not approve of Raynald 's attack on Cyprus , and in any case had already made an agreement with Manuel . Thus isolated and abandoned by his allies , Raynald decided that abject submission was his only hope . He appeared before the Emperor , dressed in a sack with a rope tied around his neck , and begged for forgiveness . Manuel at first ignored the prostrate Raynald , chatting with his courtiers ; William of Tyre commented that this ignominious scene continued for so long that all present were " disgusted " by it . Eventually , Manuel forgave Raynald on condition that he would become a vassal of the Empire , effectively surrendering the independence of Antioch to Byzantium .

Peace having been restored , a grand ceremonial procession was staged on 12 April 1159 for the triumphant entry of the Byzantine army into the city , with Manuel riding through the streets on horseback , while the Prince of Antioch and the King of Jerusalem followed on foot . Manuel

dispensed justice to the citizens and presided over games and tournaments for the crowd . In May , at the head of a united Christian army , he started on the road to Edessa , but he abandoned the campaign when he secured the release by Nur ad @-@ Din , the ruler of Syria , of 6 @,@ 000 Christian prisoners captured in various battles since the second Crusade . Despite the glorious end of the expedition , modern scholars argue that Manuel ultimately achieved much less than he had desired in terms of imperial restoration .

Satisfied with his efforts thus far , Manuel headed back to Constantinople . On their way back , his troops were surprised in line of march by the Turks . Despite this , they won a complete victory , routing the enemy army from the field and inflicting heavy losses . In the following year , Manuel drove the Turks out of Isauria .

= = Italian campaign = =

= = Roger II of Sicily = = =

In 1147 Manuel was faced with war by Roger II of Sicily , whose fleet had captured the Byzantine island of Corfu and plundered Thebes and Corinth . However , despite being distracted by a Cuman attack in the Balkans , in 1148 Manuel enlisted the alliance of Conrad III of Germany , and the help of the Venetians , who quickly defeated Roger with their powerful fleet . In 1149 , Manuel recovered Corfu and prepared to take the offensive against the Normans , while Roger II sent George of Antioch with a fleet of 40 ships to pillage Constantinople 's suburbs . Manuel had already agreed with Conrad on a joint invasion and partition of southern Italy and Sicily . The renewal of the German alliance remained the principal orientation of Manuel 's foreign policy for the rest of his reign , despite the gradual divergence of interests between the two empires after Conrad 's death .

Roger died in February 1154 and was succeeded by William I , who faced widespread rebellions against his rule in Sicily and Apulia , leading to the presence of Apulian refugees at the Byzantine court . Conrad 's successor , Frederick Barbarossa , launched a campaign against the Normans , but his expedition stalled . These developments encouraged Manuel to take advantage of the multiple instabilities on the Italian peninsula . He sent Michael Palaiologos and John Doukas Kamateros , both of whom held the high imperial rank of sebastos , with Byzantine troops , ten ships , and large quantities of gold to invade Apulia in 1155 . The two generals were instructed to enlist the support of Frederick , but he declined because his demoralised army longed to get back north of the Alps as soon as possible . Nevertheless , with the help of disaffected local barons , including Count Robert of Loritello , Manuel 's expedition achieved astonishingly rapid progress as the whole of southern Italy rose up in rebellion against the Sicilian Crown and the untried William I. There followed a string of spectacular successes as numerous strongholds yielded either to force or the lure of gold .

= = = Papal @-@ Byzantine alliance = = =

The city of Bari , which had been the capital of the Byzantine Catapanate of Southern Italy for centuries before the arrival of the Normans , opened its gates to the Emperor 's army , and the overjoyed citizens tore down the Norman citadel . After the fall of Bari , the cities of Trani , Giovinazzo , Andria , Taranto , and Brindisi were also captured . William arrived with his army , including 2 @,@ 000 knights , but was heavily defeated .

Encouraged by the success , Manuel dreamed of restoration of the Roman Empire , at cost of union between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church , a prospect which would frequently be offered to the Pope during negotiations and plans for alliance . If there was ever a chance of reuniting the eastern and western churches , and coming to reconciliation with the Pope permanently , this was probably the most favourable moment . The Papacy was never on good terms with the Normans , except when under duress by the threat of direct military action . Having the " civilised " Eastern Roman Empire on its southern border was infinitely preferable to the Papacy than having to constantly deal

with the troublesome Normans of Sicily . It was in the interest of Pope Hadrian IV to reach a deal if at all possible , since doing so would greatly increase his own influence over the entire Orthodox Christian population . Manuel offered a large sum of money to the Pope for the provision of troops , with the request that the Pope grant the Byzantine emperor lordship of three maritime cities in return for assistance in expelling William from Sicily . Manuel also promised to pay 5 @, @ 000 pounds of gold to the Pope and the Curia . Negotiations were hurriedly carried out , and an alliance was formed between Manuel and Hadrian .

At this point , just as the war seemed decided in his favour , events turned against Manuel . Byzantine commander Michael Palaiologos alienated allies with his attitude , stalling the campaign as Count Robert III of Loritello refused to speak to him . Although the two were reconciled , the campaign had lost some of its momentum : Michael was soon recalled to Constantinople , and his loss was a major blow to the campaign . The turning point was the Battle for Brindisi , where the Sicilians launched a major counterattack by both land and sea . At the approach of the enemy , the mercenaries that had been hired with Manuel 's gold demanded huge increases in their pay . When this was refused , they deserted . Even the local barons started to melt away , and soon John Doukas was left hopelessly outnumbered . The arrival of Alexios Komnenos Bryennios with some ships failed to retrieve the Byzantine position . The naval battle was decided in favour of the Sicilians , while John Doukas and Alexios Bryennios ( along with four Byzantine ships ) were captured . Manuel then sent Alexios Axouch to Ancona to raise another army , but by this time William had already retaken all of the Byzantine conquests in Apulia . The defeat at Brindisi put an end to the restored Byzantine reign in Italy ; in 1158 the Byzantine army left Italy and never returned again . Both Nicetas Choniates and Kinnamos , the major Byzantine historians of this period , agree , however , that the peace terms Axouch secured from William allowed Manuel to extricate himself from the war with dignity , despite a devastating raid by a Sicilian fleet of 164 ships ( carrying 10 @, @ 000 men ) on Euboea and Almira in 1156 .

= = = Failure of the Church union = = =

During the Italian campaign , and afterwards , during the struggle of the Papal Curia with Frederick , Manuel tried to seduce the Popes with hints of a possible union between the Eastern and Western churches . Although in 1155 Pope Hadrian had expressed his eagerness to prompt the reunion of the churches , hopes for a lasting Papal @-@ Byzantine alliance came up against insuperable problems . Pope Adrian IV and his successors demanded recognition of their religious authority over all Christians everywhere and sought superiority over the Byzantine Emperor ; they were not at all willing to fall into a state of dependence from one emperor to the other . Manuel , on the other hand , wanted an official recognition of his secular authority over both East and West . Such conditions would not be accepted by either side . Even if a pro @-@ western Emperor such as Manuel agreed , the Greek citizens of the empire would have rejected outright any union of this sort , as they did almost three hundred years later when the Orthodox and Catholic churches were briefly united under the Pope . In spite of his friendliness towards the Roman Church and his cordial relations with all the Popes , Manuel was never honoured with the title of Augustus by the Popes . And although he twice sent embassies to Pope Alexander III ( in 1167 and 1169 ) offering to reunite the Greek and Latin churches , the Pope refused , under pretext of the troubles that would follow union . Ultimately , a deal proved elusive , and the two churches have remained divided .

The final results of the Italian campaign were limited in terms of the advantages gained by the Empire . The city of Ancona became a Byzantine base in Italy , accepting the Emperor as sovereign . The Normans of Sicily had been damaged and now came to terms with the Empire , ensuring peace for the rest of Manuel 's reign . The Empire 's ability to get involved in Italian affairs had been demonstrated . However , given the enormous quantities of gold which had been lavished on the project , it also demonstrated the limits of what money and diplomacy alone could achieve . The expense of Manuel 's involvement in Italy must have cost the treasury a great deal ( probably more than 2 @, @ 160 @, @ 000 hyperpyra or 30 @, @ 000 pounds of gold ) , and yet it produced only limited solid gains .

= = Byzantine policy in Italy after 1158 = =

After 1158 , under the new conditions , the aims of the Byzantine policy changed . Manuel now decided to oppose the objective of the Hohenstaufen dynasty to directly annex Italy , which Frederick believed should acknowledge his power . When the war between Frederick I Barbarossa and the northern Italian communes started , Manuel actively supported the Lombard League with money subsidies , agents , and , occasionally , troops . The walls of Milan , demolished by the Germans , were restored with the aid of the Byzantine Emperor . Frederick 's defeat at the Battle of Legnano , on 29 May 1176 , seemed rather to improve Manuel 's position in Italy . According to Kinnamos , Cremona , Pavia , and a number of other " Ligurian " cities went over to Manuel ; his relations were also particularly favourable in regard to Genoa and Pisa , but not to Venice . In March 1171 Manuel had suddenly broken with Venice , ordering all 20 000 Venetians on imperial territory to be arrested and their property confiscated . Venice , incensed , sent a fleet of 120 ships against Byzantium . Due to an epidemic , and pursued by 150 Byzantine ships , the fleet was forced to return without great success . In all probability , friendly relations between Byzantium and Venice were not restored in Manuel 's lifetime .

= = Balkan frontier = =

On his northern frontier Manuel expended considerable effort to preserve the conquests made by Basil II over one hundred years earlier and maintained , sometimes tenuously , ever since . Due to distraction from his neighbours on the Balkan frontier , Manuel was kept from his main objective , the subjugation of the Normans of Sicily . Relations had been good with the Serbs and Hungarians since 1129 , so the Serb rebellion came as a shock . The Serbs of Rascia , being so induced by Roger II of Sicily , invaded Byzantine territory in 1149 .

Manuel forced the rebellious Serbs , and their leader , Uroš II , to vassalage ( 1150 ? 1152 ) . He then made repeated attacks upon the Hungarians with a view to annexing their territory along the Sava . In the wars of 1151 ? 1153 and 1163 ? 1168 Manuel led his troops into Hungary and a spectacular raid deep into enemy territory yielded substantial war booty . In 1167 , Manuel sent 15 000 men under the command of Andronikos Kontostephanos against the Hungarians , scoring a decisive victory at the Battle of Sirmium and enabling the Empire to conclude a very advantageous peace with the Hungarian Kingdom by which Syrmia , Bosnia , and Dalmatia were ceded . By 1168 nearly the whole of the eastern Adriatic coast lay in Manuel 's hands .

Efforts were also made towards a diplomatic annexation of Hungary . The Hungarian heir Béla , younger brother of the Hungarian king Stephen III , was sent to Constantinople to be educated in the emperor 's court . Manuel intended the youth to marry his daughter , Maria , and to make him his heir , thus securing the union of Hungary with the Empire . At court Béla assumed the name Alexius and received the title of Despot , which had previously been applied only to the Emperor himself . However , two unforeseen dynastic events drastically altered the situation . In 1169 , Manuel 's young wife gave birth to a son , thus depriving Béla of his status as heir of the Byzantine throne ( although Manuel would not renounce the Croatian lands he had taken from Hungary ) . Then , in 1172 , Stephen died childless , and Béla went home to take his throne . Before leaving Constantinople , he swore a solemn oath to Manuel that he would always " keep in mind the interests of the emperor and of the Romans " . Béla III kept his word : as long as Manuel lived , he made no attempt to retrieve his Croatian inheritance , which he only afterwards reincorporated into Hungary .

= = Relations with Russia = =

Manuel Komnenos attempted to draw the Russian principalities into his net of diplomacy directed against Hungary , and to a lesser extent Norman Sicily . This polarised the Russian princes into pro- and anti -Byzantine camps . In the late 1140s three princes were competing for primacy in

Russia : prince Iziaslav II of Kiev was related to Géza II of Hungary and was hostile to Byzantium ; Prince Yuri Dolgoruki of Suzdal was Manuel 's ally ( symmachos ) , and Vladimirko of Galicia is described as Manuel 's vassal ( hypospondos ) . Galicia was situated on the northern and northeastern borders of Hungary and , therefore , was of great strategic importance in the Byzantine @-@ Hungarian conflicts . Following the deaths of both Iziaslav and Vladimirko , the situation became reversed ; when Yuri of Suzdal , Manuel 's ally , took over Kiev and Yaroslav , the new ruler of Galicia , adopted a pro @-@ Hungarian stance .

In 1164 @-@ 65 Manuel 's cousin Andronikos , the future emperor , escaped from captivity in Byzantium and fled to the court of Yaroslav in Galicia . This situation , holding out the alarming prospect of Andronikos making a bid for Manuel 's throne sponsored by both Galicia and Hungary , spurred the Byzantines into an unprecedented flurry of diplomacy . Manuel pardoned Andronikos and persuaded him to return to Constantinople in 1165 . A mission to Kiev , then ruled by Prince Rostislav , resulted in a favourable treaty and a pledge to supply the Empire with auxiliary troops ; Yaroslav of Galicia was also persuaded to renounce his Hungarian connections and return fully into the imperial fold . As late as 1200 the princes of Galicia were providing invaluable services against the enemies of the Empire , at that time the Cumans .

The restoration of relations with Galicia had an immediate benefit for Manuel when , in 1166 , he dispatched two armies to attack the eastern provinces of Hungary in a vast pincer movement . One army crossed the Walachian Plain and entered Hungary through the Transylvanian Alps ( Southern Carpathians ) , while the other army made a wide circuit to Galicia and , with Galician aid , crossed the Carpathian Mountains . Since the Hungarians had most of their forces concentrated on the Sirmium and Belgrade frontier , they were caught off guard by the Byzantine invasion ; this resulted in the Hungarian province of Transylvania being thoroughly ravaged by the Byzantine armies .

= = Invasion of Egypt = =

= = = Alliance with the Kingdom of Jerusalem = = =

Control of Egypt was a decades @-@ old dream of the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem , and king Amalric I of Jerusalem needed all the military and financial support he could get for his policy of military intervention in Egypt . Amalric also realised that if he were to pursue his ambitions in Egypt , he might have to leave Antioch to the hegemony of Manuel who had paid 100 @,@ 000 dinars for the release of Bohemond III . In 1165 , he sent envoys to the Byzantine court to negotiate a marriage alliance ( Manuel had already married Amalric 's cousin Maria of Antioch in 1161 ) . After a long interval of two years , Amalric married Manuel 's grandniece Maria Komnene in 1167 , and " swore all that his brother Baldwin had sworn before . " A formal alliance was negotiated in 1168 , whereby the two rulers arranged for a conquest and partition of Egypt , with Manuel taking the coastal area , and Amalric the interior . In the autumn of 1169 Manuel sent a joint expedition with Amalric to Egypt : a Byzantine army and a naval force of 20 large warships , 150 galleys , and 60 transports , under the command of the megas doux Andronikos Kontostephanos , joined forces with Amalric at Ascalon . William of Tyre , who negotiated the alliance , was impressed in particular by the large transport ships that were used to transport the cavalry forces of the army .

Although such a long @-@ range attack on a state far from the centre of the Empire may seem extraordinary ( the last time the Empire had attempted anything on this scale was the failed invasion of Sicily over one hundred and twenty years earlier ) , it can be explained in terms of Manuel 's foreign policy , which was to use the Latins to ensure the survival of the Empire . This focus on the bigger picture of the eastern Mediterranean and even further afield thus led Manuel to intervene in Egypt : it was believed that in the context of the wider struggle between the crusader states and the Islamic powers of the east , control of Egypt would be the deciding factor . It had become clear that the ailing Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt held the key to the fate of the crusader states . If Egypt came out of its isolation and joined forces with the Muslims under Nur ad @-@ Din , the crusader cause was in trouble .

A successful invasion of Egypt would have several further advantages for the Byzantine Empire . Egypt was a rich province , and in the days of the Roman Empire it had supplied much of the grain for Constantinople before it was lost to the Arabs in the 7th century . The revenues that the Empire could have expected to gain from the conquest of Egypt would have been considerable , even if these would have to be shared with the Crusaders . Furthermore , Manuel may have wanted to encourage Amalric 's plans , not only to deflect the ambitions of the Latins away from Antioch , but also to create new opportunities for joint military ventures that would keep the King of Jerusalem in his debt , and would also allow the Empire to share in territorial gains .

= = = Failure of the expedition = = =

The joined forces of Manuel and Amalric laid siege to Damietta on 27 October 1169 , but the siege was unsuccessful due to the failure of the Crusaders and the Byzantines to co -@ operate fully . According to Byzantine forces , Amalric , not wanting to share the profits of victory , dragged out the operation until the emperor 's men ran short of provisions and were particularly affected by famine ; Amalric then launched an assault , which he promptly aborted by negotiating a truce with the defenders . On the other hand , William of Tyre remarked that the Greeks were not entirely blameless . Whatever the truth of the allegations of both sides , when the rains came , both the Latin army and the Byzantine fleet returned home , although half of the Byzantine fleet was lost in a sudden storm .

Despite the bad feelings generated at Damietta , Amalric still refused to abandon his dream of conquering Egypt , and he continued to seek good relations with the Byzantines in the hopes of another joined attack , which never took place . In 1171 Amalric came to Constantinople in person , after Egypt had fallen to Saladin . Manuel was thus able to organise a grand ceremonial reception which both honoured Amalric and underlined his dependence : for the rest of Amalric 's reign , Jerusalem was a Byzantine satellite , and Manuel was able to act as a protector of the Holy Places , exerting a growing influence in the Kingdom of Jerusalem . In 1177 , a fleet of 150 ships was sent by Manuel I to invade Egypt , but returned home after appearing off Acre due to the refusal of Count Philip of Flanders and many important nobles of the Kingdom of Jerusalem to help .

= = Kilij Arslan II and the Seljuk Turks = =

Between 1158 ? 1162 , a series of Byzantine campaigns against the Seljuk Turks of the Sultanate of Rûm resulted in a treaty favourable to the Empire . According to the agreement , certain frontier regions , including the city of Sivas , should be handed over to Manuel in return for some quantity of cash , while it also obliged the Seljuk Sultan Kilij Arslan II to recognize his overlordship . When it became clear to the Byzantines that the Seljuks had no intention of honouring their side of the bargain , as Kilij Arslan II had used the entente over time to enlarge his authority over the Danishmends , Manuel decided that it was time to deal with the Turks once and for all . Therefore , he assembled the full imperial army and marched against the Seljuk capital , Iconium ( Konya ) . Manuel 's strategy was to prepare the advanced bases of Dorylaeum and Sublaeum , and then to use them to strike as quickly as possible at Iconium .

Yet Manuel 's army of 35 @, @ 000 men was large and unwieldy ? according to a letter that Manuel sent to King Henry II of England , the advancing column was ten miles ( 16 km ) long . Manuel marched against Iconium via Laodicea , Chonae , Lampe , Celaenae , Choma , and Antioch . Just outside the entrance to the pass at Myriokephalon , Manuel was met by Turkish ambassadors , who offered peace on generous terms . Most of Manuel 's generals and experienced courtiers urged him to accept the offer . The younger and more aggressive members of the court urged Manuel to attack , however , and he took their advice and continued his advance .

Manuel made serious tactical errors , such as failing to properly scout out the route ahead . These failings caused him to lead his forces straight into a classic ambush . On 17 September 1176 Manuel was decisively defeated by Seljuk Sultan Kilij Arslan II at the Battle of Myriokephalon ( in highlands near the Tzibritze pass ) , in which his army was ambushed while marching through the



narrow mountain pass . The Byzantines were too dispersed , and were surrounded . The army 's siege equipment was quickly destroyed , and Manuel was forced to withdraw ? without siege engines , the conquest of Iconium was impossible . According to Byzantine sources , Manuel lost his nerve both during and after the battle , fluctuating between extremes of self @-@ delusion and self @-@ abasement ; according to William of Tyre , he was never the same again .

The terms by which Kilij Arslan II allowed Manuel and his army to leave were that he should remove his forts and armies on the frontier at Dorylaeum and Sublaeum . Since the Sultan had already failed to keep his side of the earlier treaty of 1162 , however , Manuel only ordered the fortifications of Sublaeum to be dismantled , but not the fortifications of Dorylaeum . Nevertheless , defeat at Myriokephalon was an embarrassment for both Manuel personally and also for his empire . The Komnenian emperors had worked hard since the Battle of Manzikert , 105 years earlier , to restore the reputation of the empire . Yet because of his over @-@ confidence , Manuel had demonstrated to the whole world that Byzantium still could not defeat the Seljuks , despite the advances made during the past century . In western opinion , Myriokephalon cut Manuel down to a humbler size : not that of Emperor of the Romans but that of King of the Greeks .

The defeat at Myriokephalon has often been depicted as a catastrophe in which the entire Byzantine army was destroyed . Manuel himself compared the defeat to Manzikert ; it seemed to him that the Byzantine defeat at Myriokephalon complemented the destruction at Manzikert . In reality , although a defeat , it was not too costly and did not significantly diminish the Byzantine army . Most of the casualties were borne by the right wing , largely composed of allied troops commanded by Baldwin of Antioch , and also by the baggage train , which was the main target of the Turkish ambush . The limited losses inflicted on native Byzantine troops were quickly recovered , and in the following year Manuel 's forces defeated a force of " picked Turks " . John Komnenos Vatatzes , who was sent by the Emperor to repel the Turkish invasion , not only brought troops from the capital but also was able to gather an army along the way , allowing him to score a victory over the Turks at the Battle of Hyelion and Leimocheir , a sign that the Byzantine army remained strong and that the defensive program of western Asia Minor was still successful . After the victory on the Meander , Manuel himself advanced with a small army to drive the Turks from Panasium , south of Cotyaeum . In 1178 , however , a Byzantine army retreated after encountering a Turkish force at Charax , allowing the Turks to capture many livestock . The city of Claudiopolis in Bithynia was besieged by the Turks in 1179 , forcing Manuel to lead a small cavalry force to save the city , and then , even as late as 1180 , the Byzantines succeeded in scoring a victory over the Turks .

The continuous warfare had a serious effect upon Manuel 's vitality ; he declined in health and in 1180 succumbed to a slow fever . Furthermore , like Manzikert , the balance between the two powers began to gradually shift ? Manuel never again attacked the Turks , and after his death they began to move further west , deeper into Byzantine territory .

= = Doctrinal controversies ( 1156 ? 1180 ) = =

Three major theological controversies occurred during Manuel 's reign . In 1156 ? 1157 the question was raised whether Christ had offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world to the Father and to the Holy Spirit only , or also to the Logos ( i.e. , to himself ) . In the end a synod held at Constantinople in 1157 adopted a compromise formula , that the Word made flesh offered a double sacrifice to the Holy Trinity , despite the dissidence of Patriarch of Antioch @-@ elect Soterichus Panteugenus .

Ten years later , a controversy arose as to whether the saying of Christ , " My Father is greater than I " , referred to his divine nature , to his human nature , or to the union of the two . Demetrius of Lampe , a Byzantine diplomat recently returned from the West , ridiculed the way the verse was interpreted there , that Christ was inferior to his father in his humanity but equal in his divinity . Manuel , on the other hand , perhaps with an eye on the project for Church union , found that the formula made sense , and prevailed over a majority in a synod convened on 2 March 1166 to decide the issue , where he had the support of the patriarch Luke Chrysoberges and later Patriarch Michael III . Those who refused to submit to the synod 's decisions had their property confiscated or were

exiled . The political dimensions of this controversy are apparent from the fact that a leading dissenter from the Emperor 's doctrine was his nephew Alexios Kontostephanos .

A third controversy sprung up in 1180 , when Manuel objected to the formula of solemn abjuration , which was exacted from Muslim converts . One of the more striking anathemas of this abjuration was that directed against the deity worshipped by Muhammad and his followers :

And before all , I anathematize the God of Muhammad about whom he [ Muhammad ] says , " He is God alone , God made of solid , hammer @-@ beaten metal ; He begets not and is not begotten , nor is there like unto Him any one . "

The emperor ordered the deletion of this anathema from the Church 's catechetical texts , a measure that provoked vehement opposition from both the Patriarch and bishops .

= = Chivalric narrations = =

Manuel is representative of a new kind of Byzantine ruler who was influenced by his contact with western Crusaders . He arranged jousting matches , even participating in them , an unusual and discomforting sight for the Byzantines . Endowed with a fine physique , Manuel has been the subject of exaggeration in the Byzantine sources of his era , where he is presented as a man of great personal courage . According to the story of his exploits , which appear as a model or a copy of the romances of chivalry , such was his strength and exercise in arms that Raymond of Antioch was incapable of wielding his lance and buckler . In a famous tournament , he is said to have entered the lists on a fiery courser , and to have overturned two of the stoutest Italian knights . In one day , he is said to have slain forty Turks with his own hand , and in a battle against the Hungarians he allegedly snatched a banner , and was the first , almost alone , who passed a bridge that separated his army from the enemy . On another occasion , he is said to have cut his way through a squadron of five hundred Turks , without receiving a wound ; he had previously posted an ambush in a wood and was accompanied only by his brother and Axouch .

= = Family = =

Manuel had two wives . His first marriage , in 1146 , was to Bertha of Sulzbach , a sister @-@ in @-@ law of Conrad III of Germany . She died in 1159 . Children :

Maria Komnene ( 1152 ? 1182 ) , wife of Renier of Montferrat .

Anna Komnene ( 1154 ? 1158 ) .

Manuel 's second marriage was to Maria of Antioch ( nicknamed Xene ) , a daughter of Raymond and Constance of Antioch , in 1161 . By this marriage , Manuel had one son :

Alexios II Komnenos , who succeeded as emperor in 1180 .

Manuel had several illegitimate children :

By Theodora Vatatzina :

Alexios Komnenos ( born in the early 1160s ) , who was recognised as the emperor 's son , and indeed received a title ( sebastokrator ) . He was briefly married to Eirene Komnene , illegitimate daughter of Andronikos I Komnenos , in 1183 ? 1184 , and was then blinded by his father @-@ in @-@ law . He lived until at least 1191 and was known personally to Choniates .

By Maria Taronitissa , the wife of protovestiarios John Komnenos , whose legitimate children included Maria Komnene , Queen consort of Jerusalem :

Alexios Komnenos , a pinkernes ( " cupbearer " ) , who fled Constantinople in 1184 and was a figurehead of the Norman invasion and the siege of Thessalonica in 1185 .

By other lovers :

A daughter whose name is unknown . She was born around 1150 and married Theodore Maurozomes before 1170 . Her son was Manuel Maurozomes , and some of her descendants ruled the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm .

A daughter whose name is unknown , born around 1155 . She was the maternal grandmother of the author Demetrios Tornikes .

= = Assessments = =

= = = Foreign and military affairs = = =

As a young man , Manuel had been determined to restore by force of arms the predominance of the Byzantine Empire in the Mediterranean countries . By the time he died in 1180 , 37 years had passed since that momentous day in 1143 when , amid the wilds of Cilicia , his father had proclaimed him emperor . These years had seen Manuel involved in conflict with his neighbours on all sides . Manuel 's father and grandfather before him had worked patiently to undo the damage done by the battle of Manzikert and its aftermath . Thanks to their efforts , the empire Manuel inherited was stronger and better organised than at any time for a century . While it is clear that Manuel used these assets to the full , it is not so clear how much he added to them , and there is room for doubt as to whether he used them to best effect .

Manuel had proven himself to be an energetic emperor who saw possibilities everywhere , and whose optimistic outlook had shaped his approach to foreign policy . However , in spite of his military prowess Manuel achieved but a slight degree of his object of restoring the Byzantine Empire . Retrospectively , some commentators have criticised some of Manuel 's aims as unrealistic , in particular citing the expeditions he sent to Egypt as proof of dreams of grandeur on an unattainable scale . His greatest military campaign , his grand expedition against the Turkish Sultanate of Iconium , ended in humiliating defeat , and his greatest diplomatic effort apparently collapsed , when Pope Alexander III became reconciled to the German emperor Frederick Barbarossa at the Peace of Venice . Historian Mark C. Bartusis argues that Manuel ( and his father as well ) tried to rebuild a national army , but his reforms were adequate for neither his ambitions nor his needs ; the defeat at Myriokephalon underscored the fundamental weakness of his policies . According to Edward Gibbon , Manuel 's victories were not productive of any permanent or useful conquest .

His advisors on western church affairs included the Pisan scholar Hugh Eteriano .

= = = Internal affairs = = =

Choniates criticised Manuel for raising taxes and pointed to Manuel 's reign as a period of excession ; according to Choniates , the money thus raised was spent lavishly at the cost of his citizens . Whether one reads the Greek encomiastic sources , or the Latin and oriental sources , the impression is consistent with Choniates ' picture of an emperor who spent lavishly in all available ways , rarely economising in one sector in order to develop another . Manuel spared no expense on the army , the navy , diplomacy , ceremonial , palace @-@ building , the Komnenian family , and other seekers of patronage . A significant amount of this expenditure was pure financial loss to the Empire , like the subsidies poured into Italy and the crusader states , and the sums spent on the failed expeditions of 1155 ? 1156 , 1169 , and 1176 .

The problems this created were counterbalanced to some extent by his successes , particularly in the Balkans ; Manuel extended the frontiers of his Empire in the Balkan region , ensuring security for the whole of Greece and Bulgaria . Had he been more successful in all his ventures , he would have controlled not only the most productive farmland around the Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic seas , but also the entire trading facilities of the area . Even if he did not achieve his ambitious goals , his wars against Hungary brought him control of the Dalmatian coast , the rich agricultural region of Sirmium , and the Danube trade route from Hungary to the Black Sea . His Balkan expeditions are said to have taken great booty in slaves and livestock ; Kinnamos was impressed by the amount of arms taken from the Hungarian dead after the battle of 1167 . And even if Manuel 's wars against the Turks probably realised a net loss , his commanders took livestock and captives on at least two occasions .

This allowed the Western provinces to flourish in an economic revival that had begun in the time of his grandfather Alexios I and continued till the close of the century . Indeed , it has been argued that Byzantium in the 12th century was richer and more prosperous than at any time since the Persian

invasion during the reign of Herakleios , some five hundred years earlier . There is good evidence from this period of new construction and new churches , even in remote areas , strongly suggesting that wealth was widespread . Trade was also flourishing ; it has been estimated that the population of Constantinople , the biggest commercial center of the Empire , was between half a million and one million during Manuel 's reign , making it by far the largest city in Europe . A major source of Manuel 's wealth was the kommerkion , a customs duty levied at Constantinople on all imports and exports . The kommerkion was stated to have collected 20 @,@ 000 hyperpyra each day .

Furthermore , Constantinople was undergoing expansion . The cosmopolitan character of the city was being reinforced by the arrival of Italian merchants and Crusaders en route to the Holy Land . The Venetians , the Genoese , and others opened up the ports of the Aegean to commerce , shipping goods from the Crusader kingdoms of Outremer and Fatimid Egypt to the west and trading with Byzantium via Constantinople . These maritime traders stimulated demand in the towns and cities of Greece , Macedonia , and the Greek Islands , generating new sources of wealth in a predominantly agrarian economy . Thessaloniki , the second city of the Empire , hosted a famous summer fair that attracted traders from across the Balkans and even further afield to its bustling market stalls . In Corinth , silk production fuelled a thriving economy . All this is a testament to the success of the Komnenian Emperors in securing a Pax Byzantina in these heartland territories .

= = = Legacy = = =

To the rhetors of his court , Manuel was the " divine emperor " . A generation after his death , Choniates referred to him as " the most blessed among emperors " , and a century later John Stavrakios described him as " great in fine deeds " . John Phokas , a soldier who fought in Manuel 's army , characterised him some years later as the " world saving " and glorious emperor . Manuel would be remembered in France , Italy , and the Crusader states as the most powerful sovereign in the world . A Genoese analyst noted that with the passing of " Lord Manuel of divine memory , the most blessed emperor of Constantinople ... all Christendom incurred great ruin and detriment . " William of Tyre called Manuel " a wise and discreet prince of great magnificence , worthy of praise in every respect " , " a great @-@ souled man of incomparable energy " , whose " memory will ever be held in benediction . " Manuel was further extolled by Robert of Clari as " a right worthy man , [ ... ] and richest of all the Christians who ever were , and the most bountiful . "

A telling reminder of the influence that Manuel held in the Crusader states in particular can still be seen in the church of the Holy Nativity in Bethlehem . In the 1160s the nave was redecorated with mosaics showing the councils of the church . Manuel was one of the patrons of the work . On the south wall , an inscription in Greek reads : " the present work was finished by Ephraim the monk , painter and mosaicist , in the reign of the great emperor Manuel Porphyrogennetos Komnenos and in the time of the great king of Jerusalem , Amalric . " That Manuel 's name was placed first was a symbolic , public recognition of Manuel 's overlordship as leader of the Christian world . Manuel 's role as protector of the Orthodox Christians and Christian holy places in general is also evident in his successful attempts to secure rights over the Holy Land . Manuel participated in the building and decorating of many of the basilicas and Greek monasteries in the Holy Land , including the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem , where thanks to his efforts the Byzantine clergy were allowed to perform the Greek liturgy each day . All this reinforced his position as overlord of the Crusader states , with his hegemony over Antioch and Jerusalem secured by agreement with Raynald , Prince of Antioch , and Amalric , King of Jerusalem respectively . Manuel was also the last Byzantine emperor who , thanks to his military and diplomatic success in the Balkans , could call himself " ruler of Dalmatia , Bosnia , Croatia , Serbia , Bulgaria and Hungary " .

Byzantium looked impressive when Manuel died in 1180 , having just celebrated the betrothal of his son Alexios II to the daughter of the king of France . Thanks to the diplomacy and campaigning of Alexios , John , and Manuel , the empire was a great power , economically prosperous , and secure on its frontiers ; but there were serious problems as well . Internally , the Byzantine court required a strong leader to hold it together , and after Manuel 's death stability was seriously endangered from within . Some of the foreign enemies of the Empire were lurking on the flanks , waiting for a chance

to attack , in particular the Turks in Anatolia , whom Manuel had ultimately failed to defeat , and the Normans in Sicily , who had already tried but failed to invade the Empire on several occasions . Even the Venetians , the single most important western ally of Byzantium , were on bad terms with the empire at Manuel 's death in 1180 . Given this situation , it would have taken a strong Emperor to secure the Empire against the foreign threats it now faced , and to rebuild the depleted Imperial Treasury . But Manuel 's son was a minor , and his unpopular regency government was overthrown in a violent coup d 'état . This troubled succession weakened the dynastic continuity and solidarity on which the strength of the Byzantine state had come to rely .

= = Ancestors = =