

= Alexios Philanthropenos =

Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos (Greek : ??????? ?????? ?????????????) was a Byzantine nobleman and notable general . A relative of the ruling Palaiologos dynasty , he was appointed commander @-@ in @-@ chief in Asia Minor in 1293 and for a time re @-@ established the Byzantine position there , scoring some of the last Byzantine successes against the Turkish emirates . In 1295 he rose up in revolt against Andronikos II Palaiologos , but was betrayed and blinded . Nothing is known of him until 1323 , when he was pardoned by Andronikos II and sent again against the Turks , relieving a siege of Philadelphia , allegedly by his mere appearance . He was then named briefly governor of Lesbos in 1328 , and again in 1336 , when he recovered the island 's capital from Latin occupation . He ruled the island thereafter , probably until his death in the 1340s .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life and family = = =

Alexios was born circa 1270 as the second son of pr?tovestiarios and megas domestikos Michael Tarchaneiotes . His mother , Maria , belonged to the noble family of the Philanthropenoi , which rose to prominence in the latter half of the 13th century . She was the daughter of pr?tostrat?r and megas doux Alexios Doukas Philanthropenos , after whom Alexios was named . On his father 's side , Alexios was also closely related to the imperial family of the Palaiologoi , through his grandmother , Martha Palaiologina , a sister of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (r . 1259 ? 1261) . Alexios married Theodora Akropolitissa , daughter of Constantine Akropolites and granddaughter of the historian George Akropolites . They had one child , Michael Philanthropenos , who also became a general .

= = = First command in Asia and uprising = = =

Alexios 's uncle , Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (r . 1282 ? 1328) , took an active interest in the defence of the Anatolian possessions of the Byzantine Empire against the encroaching Turkic emirates in the early 1290s : hoping to re @-@ establish the akritai , he settled refugees from Venetian @-@ held Crete in military colonies along the border and appointed Alexios as doux of the Thracesian theme , awarding him the high court title of pinkern?s .

Alexios commanded all of the Byzantine possessions in Asia , except for the Ionian coast , but his main area of responsibility was the interior of the old Thracesian Theme , which comprised the southeastern parts of Byzantine Anatolia . A certain Libadarios deputized for him in the northern provinces (Neokastra) . During the next two years , Alexios achieved several victories : he defeated the Turks of Mysia at Achyraous and forced them to recognize Byzantine rule , and then moved south . Based at Nymphaion , he scoured the valley of the Maeander river , managing to stop the Turkish raids and advance into the Emirate of Monteshe , recapturing the fortress of Melanoudion , the town of Hieron , and rid Miletus of the payment of tribute to the Turks . Many Turks , fleeing from Mongol pressure , joined his army , and so many prisoners were made during his campaigns , that the monk and scholar Maximus Planudes , a friend of Alexios , wrote that " a sheep was more expensive to buy than a Muslim prisoner " . His successes made him popular with the locals , who reportedly began suggesting that he should make himself emperor . Philanthropenos at first refused to heed them and even asked Andronikos to transfer him away from Anatolia , but in vain . In mid @-@ 1294 , Philanthropenos was ordered by the emperor to transfer the region of Lydia to Libadarios 's control . In summer 1295 , while Philanthropenos was at Tralleis , a Turkish general named Karman used the opportunity to launch an attack on Priene , but was beaten back with heavy losses , and Philanthropenos 's troops recovered Hieron .

At this point , in the autumn of 1295 , Alexios rose up against Andronikos . The exact circumstances

and reasons for this move remain obscure , but the revolt was fuelled by the discontent of the Asian provinces over high taxation and what many perceived as the neglect of the defence of Asia by the Palaiologoi . His rebellion certainly had the support of the people : as George Pachymeres recounts , " in the monasteries [..] , the name of the Emperor was no longer commemorated , but only that of Philanthropenos . " At Ephesus Alexios seized Theodore Palaiologos , the Emperor 's brother , but failed to gain the support of all provincial governors ; Libadarios , most notably , who was also Theodore 's father @-@ in @-@ law , remained loyal to Andronikos . Negotiations began , with Andronikos offering Alexios the title of Caesar to lull him into a false sense of security , while he prepared to get rid of him . Around Christmas , Libadarios persuaded some Cretan soldiers to seize Alexios and had him blinded , the punishment usually meted out to rebels .

= = = Rehabilitation and rescue of Philadelphia = = =

Alexios was replaced as commander by John Tarchaneiotes , first cousin of Andronikos II , and disappeared from the scene for 30 years . His successors proved greatly inferior , and by 1323 , Byzantine possessions in Asia had been greatly reduced . At that point , Patriarch Jesaias urged Andronikos to recall the aged general . A desperate Andronikos agreed and pardoned Alexios in 1324 . Alexios was tasked with relieving the isolated exclave of Philadelphia , which had been long under siege and was ready to fall . He was given no army , but , according to the Byzantine chroniclers , the mere news of Alexios 's approach , and the respect in which the Turks held him , was enough for the siege to be lifted . Alexios was appointed governor of the city , a position he retained until 1327 .

= = = Governor of Lesbos = = =

Philanthropenos remained at Philadelphia until 1326 , possibly also 1327 , but it appears that he was then appointed as governor of the strategically important Byzantine island of Lesbos , since he was dismissed from the same post in 1328 by Andronikos III Palaiologos .

In 1335 , Lesbos was seized by a Latin army under the Genoese Lord of Phocaea , Domenico Cattaneo , and Andronikos III raised a fleet of 83 ships to recover the island , which arrived in June 1336 . The fleet disembarked an army , led by Alexios Philanthropenos , which swiftly secured the entire island except for the capital , Mytilene . Philanthropenos countered the strong garrison of 500 Latin mercenaries by inducing them , group by group , to come over to him . The siege lasted until November , when Domenico capitulated , returning Lesbos and Phocaea to the Empire . In the next year , Philanthropenos was able to thwart a Turkish attack on the island by bribing the Turks . Exuberantly praised by contemporaries like Nikephoros Gregoras as the " Belisarius of the Palaiologan era " , Alexios Philanthropenos was left by Andronikos III as governor of the island , where he lived until his death , which occurred probably in the 1340s .