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Byzantine Parades of Infamy through an Animal Lens[1]

Introduction

Animals occupied the Byzantines' world. They lived, worked, hunted, and fought alongside humans; fed them, clothed them, and kept them company. They provided the scholars among them with the material to make their manuscripts and disseminate their thoughts, but also occasionally ate those thoughts when left unattended.[2] Inevitably, animals also inhabited the Byzantines' imagination. They offered them metaphors to express the best and worst human qualities, and means to comprehend the divine, as in the case of the dove that gave its form to the Holy Spirit. Given their multifaceted contributions, animals should also occupy the mind of historians who wish to understand how economics, politics, religion, or gender operated in society.[3] The fact that they have often gone unnoticed means that their presence has all the more power to 'disrupt and challenge conventional ways of seeing historically', by decentring narratives that have aimed attention too firmly at humans.[4] In this article, I will pursue such a decentring, focusing on Byzantine humiliation parades, as described by the eleventh-century historians Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes. I will argue that the mules and donkeys who carried the disgraced offenders upon their backs are crucial for our understanding of the scene. As their own social and religious connotations interacted with the social and religious status of their riders, these equids participated in political history, transformed the meanings of the parades for contemporary readers/viewers,

and helped to define Byzantine masculinity.[5] As such, they deserve to be part of modern accounts of Byzantine life.

But animals also deserve to be studied in their own right, independently of what they can tell us about human history. This acknowledgement has led to a call in recent decades to imagine what a drastically different history might look like, one with a non-human focus.[6] Scholars subscribing to this 'animal turn' have tried to address less tractable questions regarding animals' agency and sensory experience. A central challenge to this endeavour has stemmed from animals' inability to speak and represent themselves, which has raised the question of how to avoid writing animal histories that are merely histories of human perceptions of animals.[7] To do so scholars have turned towards interdisciplinarity, non-textual sources, and historical ingenuity.[8] Animals have often emerged from these attempts as historical actors with 'the capacity to contribute to the future' and 'the ability through action, interaction or deliberate inaction to change the outcome of events'.[9] On other occasions, the emphasis has been on reconstructing the animals' sense of the world. Two notable examples are Sandra Swart's attempt at a 'horsetory', where she focuses on horses in colonial South Africa, considering their different auditory, visual, and olfactory senses to combine 'the symbolic resonance of the horse' with 'the real breathing animal', and Erica Fudge's account of the experience of a seventeenth-century cow, where she uses work from animal science, sensory studies, and early modern social history to approach animals that she describes as twice removed from our comprehension, 'because their being is animal, and it is also past'.[10] I will return to these questions towards the end of this article, where I attempt to reconstruct something of the animals' own experience of

the parade, combining what we know from the Byzantine descriptions with modern evidence from veterinary science and animal behaviour.

In what follows, I will begin with a brief introduction to the equids themselves and to the parades of humiliation, before I examine their role in those parades.

Byzantine equids

Most Constantinopolitans would have had personal experience of equids. We know from zooarchaeological evidence from the Yenikapı Project, in Istanbul, that an area covering 58,000 m^2 around the harbour of Theodosius contains some 20,881 identified animal specimens (dating from the 4th to the 15th centuries), of which 8,317 (39.8%) belong to equids: 6,816 horses, 794 donkeys, 503 mules, and another 204 equids that are particularly hard to classify.[11] Although the numbers of securely identified donkeys and mules from this site are significantly smaller than that of horses, this could be partly due to the difficulty of distinguishing the species except by size, with the larger specimens generally identified as horses, the smaller as donkeys, and mules and hinnies being squeezed in the middle.[12] Given this difficulty of identification, it is perhaps not surprising that specialized studies on mules and donkeys are also rarer. For example, although we know that 95% of the horses found at the Yenikapı site were younger than 10 years, and within this group the majority were between 7 and 10 years old (4,246), we do not have similar statistics for mules and donkeys.[13] More generally, zooarchaeological evidence from Byzantine sites is not as useful as we might hope, since most of their animal remains represent food waste. This would allow us to quite reliably assess the role of the main domestic meat providers, such as sheep, goat, cattle, and pig, but not that of

other domestic animals, including donkeys and mules, for which a meat use is rarely zooarchaeologically detectable.[14]

From textual sources, we know that mules and donkeys would have been present in Constantinople in a variety of contexts: from carrying people in the streets[15], to transferring goods from and to the marketplace[16], to working at the donkey-mills, which despite their name could also be driven by mules and horses[17], and servicing the capital's poor houses and monasteries, such as the foundation of Michael Attaleiates which is said to have had not only horses but also male and female donkeys as well as mules and hinnies.[18] All of these are often mentioned separately in monastic foundation documents, presumably because of their different values. A mule would have cost between 15 and 17 *hyperpyra*, a donkey less than 3.[19] What is more, mules cannot reproduce, so there is an extra cost associated with replacing them after their death. Given this financial contrast we would expect that most people, and certainly anyone who owned a mule or a donkey, would differentiate between the two animals in terms of the prestige that they conferred upon their rider.

More generally, it is worth remembering that although areas such as rural Cappadocia, which was famous for its equids, would surely have had a greater concentration of horses, mules, and donkeys, Constantinople's built environment still allowed space for farming, and rustic sounds and smells within the city walls.[20] A famous and amusing reminder of the shared living arrangements of the capital's animal and human inhabitants is the three-storey tenement which housed the twelfth-century scholar John Tzetzes, sandwiched between a priest's children and pigs on the top and a farmer's hay stored on the ground floor.[21]

Parades and their sources

Parades of offenders with or without animals are a well-known form of ritual humiliation for a variety of offences from adultery to military coups. Ruth Mellinkoff, in her study of the motif of riding backwards, has noted instances of such parades in literary and visual sources from the first century B.C.E. all the way to the twentieth, covering a variety of regions, including Greece, England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Persia, India, Turkey, Egypt, Mexico, and the United States. According to Mellinkoff, the ride backwards had scatological connotations by placing the victim's nose closer to the animal's rear, especially when the rider is made to hold the tail.[22] Such was the fate of the Patriarch Constantine II (r. 754-765) who, according to the chronicle of Theophanes (d. 818), suffered the plucking of his beard, hair, and eyebrows, before being seated backwards on a saddled donkey and made to hold its tail in a public parade, during which the populace cursed him and spat on him.[23] Other Byzantine examples of infamy parades have been discussed in a number of recent studies, with a focus on the human participants.[24] For one, Lynda Garland analyzed humiliation parades in the context of female experience of street life in Constantinople in the Middle Byzantine period (800-1200), noting that for imperial women they offered an entertaining public spectacle, while for ordinary women they presented an opportunity to behave violently towards the paraded victim.[25] Similarly, Dominik Heher commented on the emperor's passive participation in the ritual; the fact that he could watch but not act was interpreted as a restriction on imperial freedom.[26] Paul Magdalino also discussed such parades in his study of derision in Byzantium, with a special interest in the humiliation of Emperor Andronikos I Komnenos (r. 1183-1185), described by Niketas and Michael Choniates. Magdalino's focus remained firmly on

the tragicomic elements of these parades of infamy and the role of power in the authorization of play and mockery, but a camel and a few other animals do make a cameo appearance in his account.[27]

These studies provide us with a wealth of examples of humiliation parades, and ways of explaining their *raisons d'être* and effects on the populace, placing particular emphasis on the potential of mockery to entertain as well as to punish and discourage unwanted behaviour. This article seeks to supplement them by focusing on the animals in the parades, as described primarily by the eleventh-century historians Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes.[28] Their histories have been chosen as case studies, and will serve as a starting point to be supplemented with earlier and later material that can, by way of comparison, help clarify contemporary views on the animals in question.

Michael Attaleiates' text covers the period from 1034 to 1079 and focuses on the military and territorial losses as well as the numerous rebellions and civil wars suffered by the Byzantine empire during this period. Attaleiates was in a good position to write such a history, since he had served as a military judge under Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes (r. 1068-1071). In his own account of the contents of his history, Attaleiates adds to the 'wars and battles', also 'the appearance of animals we saw in those times'.[29] Although he is probably referring here to the elephant and giraffe that he describes later on in significant detail, this comment is telling of his interest in animals.[30]

John Skylitzes's text covers a longer period from 811 to 1057, focusing on political, military, and ecclesiastical affairs, and is a compilation of selections from older histories, sometimes copied verbatim. These were put together both skilfully and with an agenda. In his prologue, Skylitzes criticizes other historians whom he claims to have prioritized fact

over emotion.[31] This was perhaps reflected in his comparatively short accounts of the parades.

Did the animals stand out?

The first question we need to address is whether the animals in the parades would have attracted the Byzantines' attention. Let us start with the camels whose appearance caught Magdalino's eye. Three separate references to them were made in Michael Choniates' account of Emperor Andronikos' public humiliation:

> I am certain that even the miserable patron of this whole tragedy would not have suffered what he has justly suffered, if it had been possible for the emperor to put a stop to universal vengeance. But as things stand it was far easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than to stop that man from going forth on parade with such a great "triumph" in the middle of the streets. For it was necessary for one more resentful than camels to be paraded in this mock triumph mounted on such animals, so that he would no longer swallow the camel while straining out the gnat, by the criticisms which he levelled at another for ruling beside the emperor while he secretly usurped power.[32]

All the camels we find in this passage have a biblical or patristic pedigree: the camel attempting to go through the eye of a needle is mentioned in three of the gospels (Matt. 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18:25); the proverbial vengefulness of the camel can be traced back to the Late Antique Church Fathers St Basil and St Chrysostom; while the juxtaposition of camel and gnat comes from Matthew 23:24.[33] Despite the fact that these references were based on set expressions, they are indicative of the importance that Andronikos' mount had for Michael. It was worth commenting upon and it

offered the author a key to interpret the scene. The first camel allowed Michael to show Isaac as a humane and clement ruler, who would have liked to save Andronikos the humiliation, but both the vengeance of the people and Andronikos' own vengefulness did not allow him to do so. By being paraded on the camel, Andronikos got a fitting punishment for his crime and could finally learn his lesson: it was not acceptable to be a hypocrite, to swallow the camel while straining out the gnat. This is what Andronikos had done by usurping imperial power, while criticizing others for their undue influence on imperial affairs, a reference perhaps to the propaganda that he had led against the Empress Maria while she acted as regent for her son Alexios II.[34]

We can see, then, that in this passage the camels are made to do a lot of meaningful work. They most definitely stood out, and this despite the fact that the humiliation of Andronikos, at least as described by Niketas Choniates many years later, was quite an elaborate affair, and other scenes could have easily monopolized attention.[35] One might imagine that it was only the camel's exotic nature that made Michael notice. With the following examples, I will argue that more commonly encountered animals, such as donkeys and mules, could also stand out and alter the connotations of the offender's punishment.

Donkeys and Mules

An example of a humiliation parade which was said to have involved a donkey comes from descriptions of the triumph organized after the defeat and death of Georgios Maniakes, a prominent general who conquered eastern Sicily from the Arabs (1038), but subsequently revolted against emperor Constantine IX (1043). The event is recounted by both Skylitzes'

Synopsis and another eleventh-century historical account, Michael Psellos' *Chronographia*.[36] We will start here with Psellos, by way of comparison, as he provides us with the more elaborate of the two accounts:

> The light-armed part of the infantry was commanded to advance in arms, mixed together in no particular order, carrying shields, bows, and javelins. Behind them were to come the picked knights, encased in armour, men who inspired fear, both because of their equipment (σχήματος) and because of their martial formation (τάξεως). Next came the rebel army, not in proper equipment (σχήματι) or in formation (τάξει), but seated on donkeys, facing the tail, their heads shaven, and their necks draped with plenty of refuse as a sign of shame. Next the pretender's head was borne in triumph, and after it another part of his rebel force. Next came some men with swords and with staffs, and those whose axes sway from their right shoulders - a considerable multitude preceding the army commander. In the rear of them all was the man himself, conspicuous by his horse and his uniform, and after him the whole of the imperial guard.[37]

The way this triumph was organized was not accidental, but had symbolic meaning. Indeed, immediately before the above-mentioned passage, Psellos emphasized Constantine IX's talent for organizing shows on the grand scale, inviting the reader to pay particular attention to his description. The two armies were clearly contrasted, with the same two Greek words, σχῆμα ('equipment') and τάξις ('formation'), repeated in consecutive sentences. The imperial army was meant to inspire fear, the rebels ridicule. In this description, being paraded on a donkey was a small part of a grander ritual of humiliation, but its importance was amplified by the contrast between the donkeys and the general's horse, as well as the rebels' backward-facing position, a symbol of the reversal of their fate and their lack of control.

Madrid Skylitzes, Folio 224v, showing the humiliation parade of Maniakes' accomplices. Copyright Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

The same scene is depicted in Skylitzes' *Synopsis of Histories*. But here much less information is given:

> [The general] processed in triumph down the main artery, the head going first on top of a lance, then the rebels mounted on donkeys while he followed after, riding a white horse.[38]

The only detail of the rebels' punishment that survives in Skylitzes' account involves the donkeys, which are again directly contrasted with the general's horse. We do not even hear whether the rebels were riding facing backward or forward; the emphasis is placed firmly on the animal itself. There are, indeed, three more references to parades on donkeys in Skylitzes, all of which are sparing in their details of the rest of the ritual.[39] For Skylitzes donkeys did stand out. Surviving the cull, they appear here as a literary shorthand that expresses the rider's loss of authority and marginalization from power.

Could the same be said about mules? Skylitzes includes a humiliation parade on a mule, in the context of the punishment of Leo Phokas the Elder (919), a man who had plotted to seize the throne from Emperor Constantine VII (r. 913-959), but was outmanoeuvred by Romanos Lakapenos. After the latter had become Constantine's guardian and father-in-law, Leo revolted unsuccessfully, was captured and blinded. His parading on a mule was a secondary punishment that took place some time later as the result of a different uprising, in which Leo was not said to have been personally involved:

> There was another conspiracy against Romanos, this one led by a certain Constantine Ktematinos, David Koumoulianos and Michael, kourator of the Mangana. They armed some young men and instructed them to lay murderous hands on Romanos when he went out hunting. But when word of this leaked out, the instigators of the plot were arrested, deprived of their eyes and paraded through the city centre. Leo Phokas also participated in this disgraceful procession, mounted on a mule.[40]

Leo's initial punishment, the blinding, had been a private one. It had been carried out while he was under the charge of his captors and was being brought back to the capital. Clearly, it had not been enough, as Leo had to be punished for a second time, with the later conspirators. As in the case of Maniakes' accomplices, the public humiliation would have acted as a deterrent, ensuring that others would be less willing to follow Leo's example. The text does not expand on the description of the parade. Skylitzes simply mentions that Leo was mounted on a mule and notes his disgrace. Earlier descriptions of this event had similarly mentioned the mule without feeling the need to make the symbolism explicit.[41] It seems

that mules, just like donkeys, could act as signs of disgrace, and as such were worth pointing out.

To fully appreciate this common symbolism in the context of the parades, we should consider the animals' individual connotations within a wider artistic and literary context.

Equine connotations

Donkeys and mules featured in Byzantine art, but as yet there has been no consolidated study of their representations. We see them, for example, in Byzantine mosaics, such as those of the Great Palace in Constantinople, where one donkey loaded with wood kicks a man, and another, perhaps more well-disposed, is being presented with food.[42] We also find them in illuminated manuscripts. The image included in this article comes from the Madrid Skylitzes, a twelfth-century copy of Skylitzes' history produced in Sicily, which is particularly rich in equids, but remains understudied.[43] In this miniature, the visual difference between horses and donkeys becomes clear thanks to the longer ears of the latter, as well as their different manes and tails. Their riders too are differentiated through the lack of stirrups and reins: the rebels have nothing to hold on to and place their hands on their hips or on the back of the donkey; unlike the men on the horses who are in control, they are being carried along against their will. The difference between donkeys and mules, however, is less clear. Both equids seem to feature in the Christian motifs of the Nativity scene, the journey to Bethlehem, and the flight to and return from Egypt. Examples include the eleventh-century mosaic at the Hosios Loukas monastery in Greece, where an equid with rather short ears is looking closely at the infant Jesus; a fourteenth-century mosaic at the Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, in

Istanbul, where a longer-eared but quite elegant-looking equid carries the Virgin Mary to Bethlehem; and two eleventh-century representations of the flight to and return from Egypt, where equids with a rather more humble posture have longer (Vatican Lectionary Cod. Gr. 1156) or shorter (Paris, Cod. gr. 74) ears.[44] All these examples taken together suggest both an interest in the animals in their natural environment, and a strong association with humility and sanctity in more religious contexts. In the latter case, a clear iconographic difference between donkeys and mules does not seem to have been maintained.

In literary examples, the distinct characteristics of mules and donkeys are more substantially developed. These are too many to cover in detail here, but I will mention a few that can help us understand their role in the infamy parades. Most notably, donkeys were associated with meekness and humility, because of their famous biblical ancestor: the donkey which carried Jesus into Jerusalem in a triumphant yet humble way. We can find this association most prominently in biblical commentaries.[45] For example, in the eleventh century Theophylact of Ohrid described Jesus' entry in the following way:

> He sat on a donkey not for any other reason, but to fulfil the prophecy and to show us that it is necessary to be carried by humble means (εὐτελῶς). For he did not ride on horses, but on a paltry (εὐτελοῦς) little donkey.[46]

In this context, this rather negative characterization of the donkey as paltry (εὐτελής) worked in its favour, and can be found also in homilies and religious epigrams.[47] More generally, however, the same adjective could be used to describe donkeys in a denigrating way, as in a version of Aesop's fable where a farmer complained to Zeus about his imminent death 'not by

brave horses, or virtuous mules, but by the most paltry of donkeys'.[48] Other characteristics were even less flattering, such as the donkey's reputation for laziness and stupidity, the latter having become proverbial through the phrase 'ὄνος πρὸς λύραν', literally 'a donkey before a lyre', but used to refer to people who were intellectually unreceptive.[49] On the flip side, donkeys were said to have good hearing as well as a good memory.[50]

Mules had their own distinct connotations. We have already seen the Aesopic quotation describing them as virtuous (ἀγαθός). Another characteristic involved their higher economic value: they were referred to as a luxury item, and in this context they were often accompanied by horses. For example, Symeon the New Theologian states:

> For, tell me, when someone is being anxious and deliberating as though he were going to live forever, and busies himself night and day simply about things of this life, and contrives means of making profits, and erects grand houses, and amasses a multitude of horses and mules and female slaves, acquiring vessels of silver, and getting for himself expensive clothes and beds and everything else that ministers to bodily comfort and carnal pleasure, does not such a man lack knowledge of himself?[51]

Similarly, the mule appears elsewhere described as highly prized (πολύτιμος), costly (πολυτίμητος), and bearing silver trappings (ἀργυροφάλαρος), while its gluttonous and pampered lifestyle could also be emphasized in a negative way.[52] This characterization contrasted clearly with that of the paltry donkey. Points of convergence, however, could be found in the view of all three equids as animals that lacked understanding, and along with donkeys, mules and horses too could be described as witless (ἀσύνετος).[53]

In the histories under consideration, the most instructive example of equids beyond the context of parades is a mocking description of the 'skills' in which Emperor Michael II excelled, found in Skylitzes as well as in the tenth-century chronicle of Theophanes Continuatus:

> These consisted of such abilities as being able to predict which of a litter of newborn pigs would fare well and not fail to develop large bodies, which would fall prey to adversity; standing close to kicking horses; having the knack of restraining kicking donkeys from far away. He was an excellent judge of mules, able to tell which would serve best as beasts of burden, which would be serviceable mounts and not be suddenly affrighted into throwing the rider and breaking his neck. He could even tell just by looking at horses which would have speed and stamina on the road, which would serve their riders valiantly in battle.[54]

Although the purpose of this passage was not to describe the animals, but to insult Michael II, the basic functions of the different equids under discussion are of interest. Donkeys kick; mules carry loads and people, ideally in a serviceable manner; only horses serve valiantly in war.[55]

Overall, mules and donkeys could be represented in a variety of ways, both positive and negative. Their image was flexible and held at once different, and even contrasting, connotations that authors could use to manipulate the representation of any given scene.[56] What is more, although some of these connotations separated them from each other, emphasizing their distinctness, others brought them together, highlighting their commonality, either as a group of three or in smaller binaries, placing for example mules with horses in opposition to the paltry donkey or with donkeys in opposition to the noble horse, as in the case of the parades.

Back to the Parades

Another example of a humiliation parade where mules could blend into donkeys involves the deposition of emperor Michael V (r. 1041-1042), the adoptive son of empress Zoe. Michael was deposed by the people of Constantinople for having removed Zoe from the palace. In order to avoid the protesters, he sought refuge in the sanctuary at the monastery of Stoudios, but this did not stop his pursuers, who dragged him out by force. As Attaleiates tells us:

> They loaded him as an object of ridicule onto a mule of a rather paltry (εὐτελεστέρων) and humble (ταπεινῶν) kind. When he reached the Sigma, an order arrived from the Augusta that he be blinded immediately, along with his father's brother, the *nobellisimos* [...] So they were pulled down from their mules in a disgraceful way, and with everyone looking on, the pupils of their eyes were punctured with needles. In this way they lost their sight along with their imperial power, and were delivered over to become monks.[57]

This passage emphasizes the aspect of the animal that devalues its rider: it is εὐτελής ('paltry') and ταπεινός ('humble'), qualities that we would normally associate with a donkey, but are here applied to a mule. Clearly these qualifiers were meant as an insult, as we are told that the image inspired ridicule rather than pity. We are not meant to think of Jesus and his humility in choosing a paltry donkey for his mount. Indeed, this is a secular rather than a religious context and the riders had no choice in the matter.

But how are we to understand this interchangeability of mule and donkey, especially given the mule's higher social status among equids? It may help to juxtapose this scene with the one that immediately precedes it: there Attaleiates tells us how the people secured the support of Zoe's sister,

Theodora, for Michael's deposition. Theodora had been living in a monastery for years, but this did not stop her from lending support to the people. We are told that:

> Theodora mounted a horse and was surrounded by a splendid and heavily armed escort of formidable guards; securing the roads in advance, she proceeded directly through the City, acclaimed by the entire population and encouraged not to abandon the struggle and to topple the usurper.[58]

Theodora's parade on the horse was used to bring her back from the fringes into the centre of power, while Michael's parade on a mule was a clear symbol of his marginalization. The reader is invited to directly contrast the two animals. A second-rate mule, just like a donkey, is a lesser mount. Despite their bigger size and monetary value, under the right circumstances mules as well as donkeys could act as foils to horses. Here the circumstances are provided by three factors, which I will go on to investigate in more detail: social rank, gender, and religious status.

Social Rank

Michael had been at the time of his parade an emperor, and emperors were closely associated with horses. The importance of riding on horseback during imperial processions can be glimpsed from the pains that emperors are said to have taken to do so on occasions when they were physically incapacitated. One such example comes from Psellos' *Chronographia*, which describes Constantine IX towards the end of his reign, ailing and being conveyed on a litter when in the palace, but settled on a horse and propped up on either side during his imperial processions.[59] Being on horseback on such occasions was essential to an emperor's self-

presentation as an effective and powerful ruler. In the histories under consideration, the humiliation parades are used specifically to punish offences associated with imperial power: usurpations in Skylitzes and depositions in Attaleiates. As emperors were expected to ride a horse, a more noble steed, it was only fitting that their unsuccessful alter egos would be associated with lesser equines. Despite the mule's higher status, in this context, it could be as paltry as a donkey, and as such could add to an offender's disgrace.

Similar expectations applied to generals, and one who unsuccessfully tried to usurp imperial power would be doubly offended by a ride on a mule or donkey. We encounter such an example in Skylitzes' description of the punishment of Thomas the Slav, a ninth-century military commander who revolted against Emperor Michael II (821-823):[60]

> First performing a deed which was customary for the emperors of old time but which is no longer in use, Michael placed his foot on the apostate's neck as he lay sprawled on the ground. Then he cut off his hands and feet, set him on a donkey and made a spectacle of him around the camp - him crying out nothing other but: 'Be merciful to me, you who are truly the emperor!'[61]

The double amputation physically incapacitated the vanquished rebel, while the ritual trampling denoted his utter submission to the rightful power. The parade on the donkey was an extra touch that instilled fear in the army before whom this whole scene was taking place, by reminding them that they could lose not only their life but also their honour.[62] Thomas' accomplices received a lighter punishment:

> The emperor returned from the Thracian cities swathed in triumph and chose to take no further action against those who had risen with

> Thomas, now his prisoners of war, than to parade them mounted on donkeys when the Hippodrome was full and to send them into exile.[63]

This story can also be found in earlier chronicles, but it is in Skylitzes that the donkeys play the most prominent role. Theophanes Continuatus as well as the tenth-century history of Genesios make no mention of them in the punishment of Thomas or his accomplices. Instead Thomas finds himself on a pole (ἐπὶ κοντοῦ) rather than a donkey (ἐπὶ ὄνου) and the rebels are said to have *walked* through the hippodrome.[64] In Skylitzes' version, the fact that both leader and followers had been paraded on donkeys would have acted as a reminder of the stakes involved: rebellion was a dangerous affair with serious consequences. Skylitzes uses again the donkey as a shorthand for disgrace, this time in particular for fighting men.

Gender

Going back to Theodora's ride on a horse from the monastery to the palace, we can argue that Attaleiates further emphasized the change in the power dynamic between her and Michael V by presenting the deposed emperor as an ineffective man and, as a result, an ineffective ruler. Horses, especially within histories, were primarily associated with warfare and hunting, and as such were rarely mounts for women. This was, then, an exceptional scene that would have surprised the reader, even more so through the juxtaposition: a woman on a horse only a few paragraphs away from a man on a mule. As if the image was not striking enough, just as Theodora mounts the horse, Attaleiates tells us explicitly that she was persuaded 'to set aside her feminine modesty and weakness'.[65] Is the implication that if

Theodora on her horse was abandoning her femininity, Michael V on his mule was also surrendering his masculinity?

That humiliation parades were meant to emasculate offenders can be seen from cases in which they are made to wear women's clothing. There is such an example in Skylitzes' account, following directly from the humiliation of Maniakes' accomplices, which we have already discussed. Another rebel, Theophilos Erotikos, strategos of Cyprus, was dressed in women's clothing, paraded in the hippodrome on a race day, deprived of his goods, and released.[66] We are not told whether Theophilos was paraded on an animal or on foot. Instead, the focus of this punishment was on the general's feminization through cross-dressing. Although forcing an enemy to wear women's clothes might seem like a more obvious way of emasculating him, the accounts of Maniakes' accomplices and Theophilos would have had similar effects for Byzantine readers, and the cumulative effect of reading them one after another would have been even greater. These rebels, deprived of the trappings of their masculinity, their clothing and their horses, were lesser men and did not deserve to be in power.[67]

What is more, in this case the fact that the mount was a mule, rather than a donkey, might have had an importance beyond their common opposition to the horse. As we have seen, mules could be associated with luxury and a pampered lifestyle, which in turn could be associated with effeminacy. An example where loss of masculinity was associated both with riding a mule and with wearing inappropriate clothing comes from the twelfth-century histories of Niketas Choniates and Eustathios of Thessalonike. Here, the ride on a mule is not described as a forced parade, but as a voluntary activity that was nonetheless thought to clash with the status of the rider, David Komnenos, who was the local governor of

Thessalonike at the time of the Norman invasion (1185). More specifically, Choniates tells us:

> No one saw him dressed in his suit of armor; rather, he shunned helmet, coat of mail, greaves, and shield like those tenderly reared ladies who know nothing outside their shaded women's apartments, and he made the rounds of the city mounted upon a mule with his mantle gathered and fastened from behind, wearing elegant gold-embroidered buskins reaching to the ankles.[68]

Similarly, Eustathios commented:

> In the days - and there were many of them - before the battle began in earnest, and even when it was at its height, no one saw him wearing the dreadful trappings of war or riding on a noble horse, but a mule bore him, and he wore breeches and sandals of the latest fashion.[69]

Eustathios goes on to describe David's hat and to conclude that the luxurious way in which it warded off the sunshine was nothing less than a renunciation of his military capacity.[70] The problem with the mule, the hat, and the clothing was that they did not match what should have been David's military role; this literary image symbolized and anticipated his failure to protect the city in the face of the Norman attack. Emperors and military men were expected to ride around on horses. Their ability to ride was a manifestation of their potential for violence and a demonstration of their mastery over the people and the natural world.[71] For such men, riding on a mule could be seen as emasculating, even when it was done voluntarily.

This is not to say, however, that mules were always associated with a loss of masculinity. Social and religious status had a role to play. I will explore the latter in my final section.[72]

Religious Status

Michael, in the quotation that served as our starting point, was an emperor who after his disgraceful parade on the mule was given over to become a monk. Things would have been different if he had been a monk in the first place. The last two examples of equine rides that I will focus on involve religious figures. The first comes from the reign of Isaac Komnenos (r. 1057-1059) and the cleric in question is the Patriarch Michael Keroularios, who is famous for his imperial aspirations. Keroularios was involved in the popular and military revolution that had placed Isaac on the throne and in return he had won certain advantages for the Church and for himself. As a result, however, he was said by Attaleiates to have become 'puffed up' and to have begun 'to think that he held greater authority over all things than was appropriate to his actual rank'.[73] He was further said to have criticized the emperor and even to have given him orders. So Isaac decided to depose him, and here is the description of the first step, his exile:

> [The emperor] dispatched ahead one of his own men who was a priest to engage with the archpriest in discussion over some supposedly confidential matters, but in reality to block any opportunity that he may have had to consider the plot against him, and any rumors. While they were thus conversing, a large number of heavily armed soldiers arrived and surrounded him on all sides, whereupon they lifted him from his throne and carried him off in a humiliating way, sitting him upon a mule and escorting him to the Blachernai shore. There, upon the swift arrival of an imperial decree, he was hurriedly placed in a boat.[74]

In a recent article, Krallis claimed that Attaleiates presented Keroularios' arrest 'quite dispassionately, almost like a simple police affair'.[75] Given what has already been discussed here, we can argue that rather than being dispassionate, the scene seems emasculating. Although this was not a formally organized humiliation parade, it was certainly reminiscent of one. Being carried off on a mule is explicitly said to be humiliating; Keroularios is 'lifted up' and seated down; he is manhandled by the 'heavily armed soldiers'; and moved from a throne to a mule. This was a clear assault on his authority. If this scene took place as it is described by Attaleiates, the ride on the mule could have been a statement about Keroularios' secular aspirations. According to at least some of his contemporaries, he lusted after imperial power and involved himself heavily in political conflicts. Psellos even accused him of 'making the sign of the cross with his hand, while his mouth issued imperial commands'.[76]

However, Attaleiates quickly switches from the secular to the religious. Keroularios is a cleric; what for secular men is humiliating, for him can be turned into a sign of humility. Clerics, unlike military men and emperors, had a wider variety of mounts that they could honourably ride, mules and donkeys included.[77] This difference was not lost on Attaleiates, who described the outcome of this attempt at humiliation as follows:

> He bore it in an exceedingly good spirit and nobly, and was roundly praised for surpassing Job by a wide margin in enduring this suffering. [...] He did not call his misfortune a misfortune but rather a necessary cauterization, a punishing lesson that brought him closer to perfection, and a way to access a higher virtue. He embraced his humiliation, becoming his own accuser, and claimed that he deserved all that he had suffered.[78]

If this was an attempt to marginalize Keroularios from power, as it was more clearly in the case of the other rebels, in Attaleiates' narrative it was not a successful one. Keroularios could capitalize on his religious role in a way that was not possible for secular men. For him this experience was far from emasculating. It was an opportunity to show his asceticism, patience, and self-restraint. Like another Job, he could take this trial manfully, and increase rather than lose his religious authority.

A similar scene can be found later on in Attaleiates' history, in his description of emperor Romanos IV Diogenes' fall from power (1072).[79] Romanos too is placed on a beast of burden on two separate occasions, once after his defeat and assumption of the monastic habit and again after his blinding and a few days before his death. We read:

> Diogenes was also taken along on a paltry beast of burden (εὐτελεῖ τῷ ὑποζυγίῳ) and dressed in monkish garb; he was conveyed through those villages and regions where formerly he had passed with his imperial retinue and been acclaimed as equal to a god.[80] [...]
>
> He was led on a paltry beast of burden (ἐν εὐτελεῖ τῷ ὑποζυγίῳ) as far as the Propontis, dragged along like a rotting corpse with his eyes gouged out, his head and face all swollen up and maggots were visibly dropping off.[81]

Romanos' fall has much in common with Keroularios'. He too was carried away against his will by soldiers and placed on a beast of burden, but dealt with his situation with patience and self-restraint; he too was compared to Job. Both men had a religious status at the time of their tribulations; a fact that Attaleiates was keen to emphasize in Romanos' case, whom he describes as an 'angelic figure' of 'monastic status'. This is a deliberate framing, as Romanos' conversion was forced and Attaleiates would have

known full well that that such conversions were not always honest or meant to last. Depicting the former emperor with an emphasis on his new religious status allowed Attaleiates to turn his humiliation into humility. His 'paltry beast of burden' might not be explicitly specified, but both the adjective εὐτελής and the word ὑποζύγιον hint towards a donkey and, in particular, towards Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, as ὑποζύγιον figures in Matthew 21:5 as a synonym for ὄνος.[82] This way, Romanos' masculinity was safeguarded both through his former glories as an emperor and general and through his later humiliation and fall by which he could show his new-found asceticism. In this representational shift a paltry beast of burden could take the reader a long way.

The Animal's Parade

So far I have focused on what the animals can tell us about their human riders. But is there something we can say about the animals themselves and their experience of these parades? The Byzantine authors did not pause long enough from their human considerations to give us a glimpse of the equids' reactions. But perhaps something can be retrieved based on what we know about animal behaviour and the animals' sensory experience of the world today.

Thinking back to the parades, we have seen mules and donkeys surrounded by army men and/or other animals, being ridden by unwilling riders who faced forwards or backwards, and who could be riding without reins. These riders could even be missing limbs and oozing blood, having the smell of 'a rotting corpse', or if they were physically intact, they could still be 'draped with refuse'. To these olfactory and visual stimuli, we can add the noises of the populace who might spit and curse in the animal's direction.[83] What impact could all this have on the animals involved? An

important caveat, when attempting to answer this question, is that our knowledge of equids is heavily horse-centric.[84] Most studies I will refer to have focused on horses, and their results can only be indicative in the case of donkeys and mules.

The first effect to consider involves the rider's posture and control of the animal. It has been found that exposure to novel objects and challenging situations is perceived as less stressful to horses when there is harmonious communication with their rider. By contrast, mismatches of equid and rider, such as we would expect in the context of a humiliation parade, increase the horse's heart rate and lead to agitated behaviour.[85] A second aspect to comment on involves the sensory experience of the animals. Horses have been found to have an increased heart rate when confronted with new visual and auditory stimuli. The latter had the additional effect of making the horse back away from the test stimulus. Although olfactory stimuli do not elicit the same response, unknown smells are still thought to increase anxiety in horses, as shown by a more vigilant attitude towards their surroundings and more disrupted feeding.[86] Another study has shown that the combination of different aversive sensory experiences can lead to hypersensitization. In an experiment that focused on how horses react to the odour of predators, it was found that the combination of a sudden noise and exposure to wolf odour caused a significantly increased heart rate and a tendency to be slower to resume feeding, when compared to control horses which were exposed to the sudden sound without the wolf odour.[87]

How much do these results apply to donkeys and mules? Would they have been in distress in the same way as a horse? One of the problems with answering these questions is that mules and donkeys lack obvious pain expressions. While the instinctive response of horses to aversive stimuli is

flight, donkeys exhibit a more "stoic" and sedate nature, even when experiencing pain. For example, the deep groaning that a horse can emit as a result of visceral pain is not reported in the donkey. This is the case with a series of indicators that are useful in the case of horses.[88] This lack of response is believed to result from our current inability to interpret the subtle behavioural changes being presented, rather than being a sign of a higher level of tolerance. Indeed, there seems to be no evidence that the donkey has a different pain tolerance from other equines. According to recent research, donkeys demonstrated a similar or greater cerebral cortical response to a noxious stimulus as measured by an electroencephalogram during castration than that of ponies who underwent the same procedure.[89] The fact that donkeys can experience pain just as much as horses and mules, but have subtler ways of showing it, could have a great impact on their experience of humiliation parades, as their stoic approach to the populace's reactions would have done nothing to stop the situation from escalating. Perhaps we could tentatively come back here to the question of agency. Can a horse, and even perhaps a mule, experience greater agency in this situation, being able to make more clearly felt their anger or pain?

These modern studies suggest that the experience of the parade would have been an unpleasant one for the equids involved, even if that was not immediately obvious to a bystander. However, making such a statement also assumes that Byzantine and modern equids would have had the same responses. Even if these studies had focused on donkeys or mules, could we assume that their findings would apply over a period of some 900 years? The *Geoponika*, a collection of excerpts on agriculture dedicated to Emperor Constantine VII (compiled around 944–959), contains a section on equids attributed to the fourth-century veterinary writer Apsyrtos, which suggests that, prior to training, horses were expected to react nervously to

both visual and auditory stimuli. More specifically, readers are told that a *good* colt is not frightened by things that appear unexpectedly, and are further advised to hang a bridle at the manger, as part of the taming process, to help their horse become accustomed to the noise of the bits.[90] This is further corroborated by a rare description by a tenth-century cleric of the reaction of his nephew's mule to a sudden attack: 'the mule, having been allotted a nervous nature and seeing monsters even in shadows, was terrified at the unaccustomed uproar'.[91] In these examples the Byzantines too singled out unusual visual and auditory stimuli as potentially upsetting for equids.

Conclusions

Nowadays one could go one's whole life without making the acquaintance of a horse, a donkey, or a mule. Our ideas about these equids are shaped by their media representations, perhaps in the form of Joey the War Horse or Donkey from Shrek. By contrast, Byzantium was full of animals, and equids would have preoccupied the Byzantines both through their physical presence and through their literary exempla. As a result, when these animals show up in Byzantine sources they invite us to pay attention. A ride on a mule or a donkey could have implications for the rider's social status, religious authority, and gender. Were they a peasant or an emperor? A soldier or a scholar? A layman or a cleric? A man or a woman? Depending on the answer, the ride could be considered unsuitable, an assault on one's authority or a way of bolstering it.

In the examples under discussion, it was often imperial power that was at stake. Emperors, and rebels who wished to become emperors, had to perform a certain type of masculinity that was incompatible with a humiliating ride on a paltry beast of burden. Being placed on the wrong

kind of animal signalled to their contemporaries their loss of honour and control. All this, however, could turn on its head, when it came to religious figures. For men of the cloth humiliation could be presented as humility through an emphasis on their patience and asceticism. Ultimately, as this article has shown, equids could be a powerful resource in the hands of the Byzantines, who put them to work not only in the fields and roads of Byzantium, but also in the discursive corridors of power and politics.

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[1] I would like to thank the Leverhulme Trust for generously funding my research, as well as Prof. Anthony Kaldellis and the late Dr Ruth Macrides for their comments on previous versions of this article.

[2] For example the eleventh-century Byzantine poet Christophoros Mitylenaios foresaw in one of his poems that mice would devour his books, and indeed they have gnawed at the manuscript in which his poetic collection survives, leaving us with important lacunae. See Floris Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry, 1025-1081* (Oxford, 2014), p. 20.

[3] For an excellent starting point for animals in Byzantium, see Ilias Anagnostakis, Taxiarchis G. Kolias, and Eftychia Papadopoulou (eds.), *Ζώα και περιβάλλον στο Βυζάντιο (7ος-12ος αι.)* (Athens, 2011). For a survey of the work on animals in the medieval West, see Anna L. Taylor, 'Where are the wild things? Animals in western medieval European History', *History Compass*, 16:3 (2018), pp. 1-12.

[4] Hilda Kean, *The Great Cat and Dog Massacre: The Real Story of World War Two's Unknown Tragedy* (London, 2017), p. 13.

[5] Another example of the political importance of animals involves their role as diplomatic gifts. See Nancy P. Ševčenko, 'Wild Animals in the Byzantine Park', in *Byzantine Garden Culture*, ed. A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington D.C., 2002), pp. 69-86.

[6] For a recent survey of the field, see J. Specht, 'Animal history after its triumph: Unexpected animals, evolutionary approaches, and the animal lens', *History Compass*, 14 (2016), pp. 326–336.

[7] See, for example, Erica Fudge, 'A left-handed blow: writing the history of animals', in Nigel Rothfels ed. *Representing Animals* (Bloomington, 2003), pp. 3-18; Susan J. Pearson and Mary Weismantel, 'Does "the Animal" Exist? Toward a Theory of Social Life with Animals', in *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History*, ed. Dorothee Brantz (Charlottesville, 2010), pp. 17–37; Etienne Benson, 'Animal Writes: Historiography, Disciplinarity, and the Animal Trace', in *Making Animal Meaning*, ed. Linda Kalof and Georgina M. Montgomery (East Lansing, 2011), pp. 3-16; Hilda Kean,

'Challenges for Historians Writing Animal Human History: What Is Really Enough?', *Anthrozoös*, 25:1 (2012), pp. 57-72.

[8] See for example Chapter 6 in Susan Nance, *Entertaining Elephants: Animal Agency and the Business of the American Circus* (Baltimore, 2013) where she combines historical sources with ethological and animal welfare science to understand how circus captivity shaped elephant behaviour.

[9] Animal agency was the topic of a recent issue of *BJHS Themes.* For the introduction to this volume, see A. Rees, 'Animal agents? Historiography, theory and the history of science in the Anthropocene', *BJHS Themes*, 2 (2017), pp. 1-10.

[10] Sandra Swart, 'The world the horses made: a South African case study of writing animals into social history', *International Review of Social History*, 55:2 (2010), pp. 241-6; Erica Fudge, 'Milking other men's beasts', *History and Theory*, 52:4 (2013), pp. 13-28. See also Clifford Sanders and Arnold Arluke, 'If lions could speak: investigating the animal-human relationship and the perspectives of non-human others', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34 (1993), pp. 377-390; Erica Fudge, 'What Was It Like to Be a Cow?: History and Animal Studies', in *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Studies*, ed. Linda Kalof (Oxford, 2017), pp. 267-8.

[11] Compare this to 4,209 (20.1%) animal specimens belonging to cattle and 246 (1.1%) to camels. V. Onar, H. Alpak, G. Pazvant, A. Armutak, N. Gezer İnce, and Z.S. Kızıltan, 'Animal skeletal remains of the Theodosius Harbor: General overview', *Turkish Journal of Veterinary and Animal Sciences*, 37 (2013), pp. 81-85, at p. 83.

[12] H. Kroll, 'Animals in the Byzantine Empire: An overview of the Archaeozoological Evidence', *Archeologia Medievale*, XXXIX (2012), pp. 93-121, at p. 99; Peter Mitchell, *The Donkey in Human History: An Archaeological Perspective* (Oxford, 2018), p. 28. Kroll gives 111.3cm as the average withers height of donkeys identified in archaeological reports on early- to middle-Byzantine sites. See H. Kroll, 'Groß und Stark? Zur Widerristhöhe und Statur byzantinischer Arbeitstiere', in *Hinter den Mauern und auf dem offenen Land: Leben im Byzantinischen Reich*, ed. F. Daim and J. Drauschke (Mainz, 2016), pp. 141-158, at pp. 150-151, 155. The evidence for horses from Yenikapı indicates the presence of 38.72% of specimens which are medium-sized, with withers height between 136 and 144 cm, and 36.31% of specimens which are large-medium, with withers height between 144 and 152 cm. See V. Onar, G. Pazvant, E. Pasicka, A. Armutak, H. Alpak, 'Byzantine Horse Skeletons of Theodosius Harbour: 2. Withers height estimation', *Revue de Médecine Vétérinaire*, 166 (2015), pp. 30-42. We would expect mules to be somewhere in between horses and donkeys, with the whole spectrum from the highest to the lowest sizes being represented.

[13] V. Onar, H. Alpak, G. Pazvant, A. Armutak, A. Chrószcz, 'Byzantine horse skeletons of Theodosius Harbour: 1. Paleopathology', *Revue de Médecine Vétérinaire,* 163 (2012), pp. 139-146, at p. 140. These animals were of quite a young age given that nowadays horses can be considered old when they approach 20 years of age. See Tom Gore, Paula Gore, James M. Giffin, *Horse Owner's Veterinary Handbook* (New Jersey, 3rd edn., 2008), p. 575. By contrast, donkeys are said to live longer than horses, often beyond 45 years. See Suzanne L. Burnham, 'Anatomical Differences of the Donkey and Mule', *AAEP Proceedings*, 48 (2002), pp. 102-9, at p. 104.

[14] Professor Onar has confirmed in an email exchange that he has found some traces of butchery on some equid bones in the Yenikapı excavation. But more generally, equids are thought to have been eaten only in extreme cases of crisis, such as famines. See Kroll, 'Animals in the Byzantine Empire', pp. 94, 98.

[15] Klaus Belke, 'Communications: Roads and bridges', in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John F. Haldon, Robin Cormack (Oxford, 2008), pp. 295-308, at p. 301.
[16] Taxiarchis Kolias, 'Die Versorgung des byzantinischen Marktes mit Tieren und Tierprodukten', in *Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege. Aspekte der Warenversorgung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. bis 15. Jahrhundert)*, ed. E. Kislinger, J. Koder, A. Külzer (Vienna, 2010), pp. 175-184.
[17] Dionysios Stathakopoulos, 'Between the field and the plate: how agricultural products were processed into food', in *Eat, Drink, and Be Merry, Luke 12:19: Food and Wine in Byzantium: Papers of the 37th Annual Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, in Honour of Professor A.A.M. Bryer*, ed. Leslie Brubaker and Kallirroe Linardou (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 27-38, at pp. 34-5.
[18] '... ἀγορᾶς μουλαρίων, μεσομουλαρίων, βορδωνίων, μεσοβορδωνίων, ἵππων, παριππίων, ὀνοκηλωνίων, ὀνοθηλειῶν, φορβάδων ...', 'de l'achat de mulets, de demi-mulets, de bardots ou de demi-bardots, de chevaux, de chevaux de renfort, d'ânes, d'ânesses, de juments'. See P. Gautier, 'La Diataxis de Michel Attaliate', *Revue des études byzantines*, 39 (1981), pp. 118-119, for an edition of the *Diataxis* with a French translation.
[19] Indicative prices for different animals: 10th century, mule**,** 15 nomismata, based on *De ceremoniis*; early 12th century, mule, 17 hyperpyra, based on the Iviron *Acta*; early 12th century, donkey, 2 1⁄6 hyperpyra, based on Chomatianos. See C. Morrisson and J.-C. Cheynet, 'Prices and Wages in the Byzantine World', in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A. E. Laiou, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 2002), pp. 815–78, at p. 840.
[20] According to an estimate for tenth-century Cappadocia, there were at least 100,000 horses, and the same number of donkeys and mules. See J. Eric Cooper and Michael J. Decker, *Life and Society in Byzantine Cappadocia* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 78; Paul Magdalino, 'Medieval Constantinople: Built Environment and Urban Development', in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A.E. Laiou (Washington, D.C., 2002), pp. 529-537, at p. 534.
[21] I. Gregoriades, *Ιωάννης Τζέτζης, ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΑΙ: Εισαγωγή-Μετάφραση-Σχόλια* (Athens, 2001), pp. 76-81.
[22] Ruth Mellinkoff, 'Riding Backwards: Theme of Humiliation and Symbol of Evil', *Viator*, 4 (1973), pp. 153-86.
[23] Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997), p. 581.
[24] McCormick discussed humiliation parades as part of imperial triumphs, but only in passing. See Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 49-51, 144-46, 179-88. For three much earlier studies in Greek, see F. Koukoules, 'Από την μεσαιωνικήν διαπόμπευσιν', *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, 4 (1928), pp. 62-66; F. Kouloules, *Βυζαντινών βίος και πολιτισμός*, III (Athens, 1949), pp. 184-208; N. G. Politis, 'Υβριστικά σχήματα (σφάκελο, μούτζα, πούλος, σαμάρκο)', *Λαογραφία*, 4 (1912-13), pp. 601-669.
[25] Lynda Garland, 'Street-life in Constantinople: Women and the Carnivalesque', in her *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800-1200* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 169-171.

[26] Dominik Heher, 'Heads on Stakes and Rebels on Donkeys. The Use of Public Parades for the Punishment of Usurpers in Byzantium (c. 900-1200)', *Πορφύρα*, 23:2 (2015), pp. 12-20.
[27] Paul Magdalino, 'Tourner en dérision à Byzance', *La dérision au Moyen Âge: De la pratique sociale au rituel politique*, ed. E. Crouzet-Pavan and J. Verger (Paris, 2007), pp. 55-72, at p. 69.
[28] D. R. Reinsch, *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia* (Berlin, 2014); Anthony Kaldellis and Dimitris Krallis (trans.), *The History: Michael Attaleiates* (Cambridge, MA, 2012); John Wortley (trans.), *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057: Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 2012); J. Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum* (Berlin, 1973). For an example of oxen used in an infamy parade, see A. Kambylis and D.R. Reinsch, *Annae Comnenae Alexias* (Berlin, 2001), pp. 374-5. For a possible parade on a pig, see Gregoriades, *Ιωάννης Τζέτζης*, pp. 48-49.
[29] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, p. 7.
[30] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 87-
[31] For an introduction to these histories and historical writing in Byzantium more generally, see Leonora Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge, 2018), pp. 150-61.
[32] S. Lampros (ed.), *Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1879), p. 239.
[33] S. Giet, *Basile de Césarée. Homélies sur l'hexaéméron*, 2nd edn. (Paris, 1968), pp. 434-435; PG 62, col. 483.
[34] For the background to this, see for example the chapter on Maria of Antioch in Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527-1204* (London, 1999), pp. 199-209.
[35] For Niketas Choniates' description, see H.J. Magoulias (trans.), *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984), pp. 192-3.
[36] Attaleiates states only the following: 'The general in charge of the war, the sebastophoros Stephanos, celebrated a triumph along the public thoroughfares, and was illustriously elevated to the highest position beside the emperor.' See Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 32-33.
[37] Reinsch, *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvi.
[38] Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, p. 449; Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae*, p. 428.
[39] To give an idea of the brevity of the descriptions of the parade of infamy and as such the centrality of the donkey in Skylitzes, here are the relevant passages: 'set him on a donkey and made a spectacle of him around the camp'; 'to parade them mounted on donkeys when the Hippodrome was full'; 'paraded them in triumph through the forum, mounted on donkeys'. See Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, pp. 43, 44, 320.
[40] Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, p. 204; Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae*, p. 211.
[41] See for example the chronicles of George the Monk and Symeon Logothetes in I. Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Bonn, 1838), p. 889; S. Wahlgren, *Symeonis magistri et logothetae chronicon* (Berlin, 2006), p. 313.
[42] It is interesting to note that both of these animals have also been alternatively identified as mules. See Rowena Loverance, 'Exhibiting Byzantium: Edinburgh 1958 and London 2008', in *Wonderful Things: Byzantium through its Art: Papers from the Forty-Second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, London, 20-22 March 2009*, ed. Antony Eastmond and Liz James (Aldershot, 2013), pp. 49-70, at p. 56 and n. 34.

[43] The Madrid Skylitzes is the Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Matrinensis Graecus Vitr. 26-2. On this manuscript, see Elena Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge, 2015); Vasiliki Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes* (Leiden, 2002).
[44] Nano Chatzidakis, *Hosios Loukas: Byzantine Art in Greece* (Athens, 1997), pp. 13, 19-20. See also Cecily Hennessy, 'Representations and Roles of Adolescence with a Focus on Apocryphal Imagery', in *Coming of Age in Byzantium*, ed. Despoina Ariantzi (Berlin, 2018), pp. 175-202, at pp. 190-3.
[45] Chrysostom's Homily on Matthew: '*Ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεταί σοι πρᾶος, καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὑποζύγιον καὶ πῶλον νέον·* οὐχὶ ἅρματα ἐλαύνων, ὡς οἱ λοιποὶ βασιλεῖς· οὐ φόρους ἀπαιτῶν, οὐ σοβῶν καὶ δορυφόρους περιάγων· ἀλλὰ πολλὴν τὴν ἐπιείκειαν κἀντεῦθεν ἐπιδεικνύμενος.' See PG 58, col. 628. For Euthymios Zigabenos, see '*Ἔρχεται* δὲ πρὸς αὐτὴν πραῦς, μήτε δορυφόρους ἔχων, μήτε ξιφηφόρους, μήτε ῥαβδούχους, ἀλλὰ πολλὴν τὴν ἡμερότητα καὶ ἐπιείκειαν ἐνδεικνύμενος' in PG 129, coll. 548-9.
[46] PG 123, coll. 368-370.
[47] Homily 2 of Emperor Leo VI: 'Εὐλογημένος εἶ ὁ ἄνω μὲν θεοπρεπῶς χερουβικῷ ἅρματι ἐποχούμενος, κάτω δ' ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ πώλου ὄνου ἐν εὐτελεῖ καθήμενος σχήματι.' See Th. Antonopoulou, *Leonis VI Sapientis Imperatoris Byzantini Homiliae* (Turnhout, 2008); Epigram 6 of John Mauropous: '*Ἄνοιγε* τὰς σάς, ὦ θεοῦ πόλις, πύλας· | ἃς ἠγάπησε κύριος παντοκράτωρ· | ἰδοὺ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἔρχεταί σοι δεσπότης, | πρᾷος, δίκαιος, μέτριος, ταπεινόφρων, | ἔχων ὄχημα πῶλον εὐτελοῦς ὄνου, | καὶ τοὺς μαθητὰς ἐκ ποδῶν ὁδοιπόρους'.
[48] From Aesop's life by Maximos Planoudes (c.1260–c.1305) based on fable 303: 'ὦ Ζεῦ' εἶπε, 'τί ποτέ σε ἠδίκησα, ὅτι οὕτω παρὰ λόγον ἀπόλλυμαι, καὶ ταῦτα οὔθ' ὑφ' ἵππων γενναίων οὔθ' ἡμιόνων ἀγαθῶν, ἀλλ' ὀναρίων εὐτελεστάτων;' See A. Eberhard, *Fabulae romanenses Graece conscriptae,* vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1872), p. 304. Other versions of the fable contain the comparison of horses, mules, and donkeys, but use different adjectives; for example for the donkeys the word ἐλαχίστων (most insignificant) instead of εὐτελεστάτων.
[49] Chrysostom's Homily on Matthew: 'Εἰ γὰρ τοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον χρεμετίζοντας οὐκ ἀφίησιν ὁ προφήτης ἀνθρώπους νομίζεσθαι, τίς ἡμῖν ἐγκαλέσει τούτους τράγους καὶ χοίρους καὶ ὄνων ἀνοητοτέρους εἶναι νομίζουσιν, οἳ τὰ τῶν ὁρωμένων φανερώτερα ταῦτα ἄδηλα εἶναι νομίζουσιν·' in PG 57, col. 214. Note also Michael Choniates' pun between 'ἀπ' ὄνου πεσόντας' and 'ἀπὸ νοῦ πεσόντας' in Epistle 110: 'Ἀλλ' οὐ χρὴ παρὰ τοῦτο ὥσπερ ἀπ' ὄνου πεσόντας μόνον θρηνεῖν καὶ τοῦ λόγου καταμελεῖν παρασυμβαλλομένους τοῖς κτήνεσι, μήτε μὴν σοφίας ἐπιλαθέσθαι, κἂν οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν ἡμῶν οὕτως αἰσθάνωνται λόγων ἁρμονίας ὥσπερ καὶ λύρας ὄνοι, τὸ παροιμιαζόμενον·' See S. P. Lampros, *Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου τοῦ χωνιάτου τὰ σωζόμενα*, vol. 2 (Athens, 1880), p. 208. For the donkey's slothful nature, see n. 50.
[50] Commentary on the Hexameron of Pseudo-Eustathios: 'Νωθὸς ὁ ὄνος, καὶ ὀξυήκοος, καὶ μνήμων.' PG 18, col. 744; John Tzetzes' Chilias 1: '*Ὧτα* δὲ τοῦτον λέγουσιν ἔχειν, ὡς εἶπον, ὄνου, τῷ εἶναι ὀξυήκοον εἴτε μὴν καὶ μακρώτην, ἢ τῷ πολλοὺς ὠτακουστὰς ἔχειν τε καὶ πευθῆνας' in P.L.M. Leone, *Ioannis Tzetzae historiae* (Naples, 1968), p. 6.
[51] H.J.M. Turner, *The Epistles of Symeon the New Theologian* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 110-1. For another example from the same epistle putting horses and mules together, see p. 135.

[52] Oration 18 line 82: 'Ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἐποχούμενος ἔσται ἐκεῖνος ἐν ἡμιόνοις πολυτίμοις, σὺ δὲ πεζοπορῶν ἔσῃ καὶ κοπιῶν·'; Oration 18 line 482: 'Μὴ διὰ δόξαν ἀνθρωπίνην πράξῃς ἢ λέξῃς τι τῶν μὴ ἀνηκόντων τῇ μονῇ σου πραγμάτων, μὴ συνεχεῖς ἀγαπήσῃς τὰς προόδους ποιεῖσθαι ἐν ἡμιόνοις πολυτιμήτοις καὶ τοῖς ἑπομένοις ὁμοῦ καὶ προάγουσιν.' See B. Krivochéine and J. Paramelle, *Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, Catéchèses* (Paris, 1964), pp. 273, 303; Michael Choniates' Oration 1: 'Ἴδοις οὖν αὐτοὺς ὡς μὲν λιπαροὺς τὴν κόμην καὶ γεγανωμένους τὰ πρόσωπα, ὡς δὲ στιλπνοὺς τὰς ἐσθῆτας καὶ ἀτεχνῶς ἁβροχίτωνας, ἐφ' ἡμιόνων ὀχουμένους ἀργυροφαλάρων οὕτως εὐτραφῶν καὶ τὰς γαστέρας ἐξωγκωμένων τῇ πολυσαρκίᾳ [...]' in Lampros, *Μιχαὴλ Ἀκομινάτου*, vol. 1, p. 9. The association of mules with luxury goes back to Chrysostom: 'Ὅταν γὰρ λακτίζῃς μὲν ὥσπερ ὄνος, σκιρτᾷς δὲ ὥσπερ ταῦρος, χρεμετίζῃς δὲ ἐπὶ γυναιξὶν ὥσπερ ἵππος· καὶ γαστριμαργῇς μὲν ὥσπερ ἄρκτος, πιαίνῃς δὲ τὴν σάρκα ὥσπερ ἡμίονος· μνησικακῇς δὲ ὥσπερ κάμηλος· [...]' in PG 57, col. 48.

[53] Psalm 32: 'Do not be like the horse and the mule, senseless creatures which will not come near you unless their spirit is tamed by bit and bridle.' See also Chapter 72 of Michael Glykas: 'ποτὲ δὲ «μὴ γίνεσθε ὡς ἵππος καὶ ἡμίονος οἷς οὐκ ἔστι σύνεσις». Ἀσύνετα δὲ καὶ ἀνόητα τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα ὁ προφητικὸς ἐκάλεσε λόγος, ἅτε δὴ καλοῦ καὶ χείρονος μὴ κεκτημένα διάκρισιν' in S. Eustratiades, *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Γλυκᾶ. Εἰς τὰς ἀπορίας τῆς Θείας Γραφῆς* (Alexandria, 1912), p. 244.

[54] Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, p. 29; Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae*, p. 25. For Theophanes' text, see J.M. Featherstone, J. Signes-Codoñer (eds.), *Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nomine Fertur Libri I–IV* (Berlin, 2015), pp. 68-9.

[55] For horses and donkeys having a reputation for kicking, see also Chrysostom's Homily on Matthew: 'Οὕτω πάντες λακτίζουσι, καθάπερ ἵπποι καὶ ὄνοι τινὲς ἄγριοι, καὶ κόπρου πολλῆς τὰ ἐνταῦθα πληροῦσι·' in PG 58, col. 780.

[56] It was not uncommon for the same animal to have both positive and negative connotations, and such reversals applied even to the biblical figures of the sheep and the wolf. See N. Koutrakou, '"Animal Farm" in Byzantium? The Terminology of Animal Imagery in Middle Byzantine Politics and the Eight "Deadly Sins", in *Ζώα και περιβάλλον στο Βυζάντιο*, ed. I. Anagnostakis, G.T. Kolias, E. Papadopoulou (Athens, 2011), pp. 319-377.

[57] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 26-27.

[58] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 25-27.

[59] Psellos, Book 6, ch. 129. Similarly, see the final triumph of Michael IV, during which Psellos says that he himself witnessed the emperor swaying on his horse, in Book 4, chapter 50.

[60] See also McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, pp. 144-6.

[61] Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, p. 43; Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae*, p. 40.

[62] It has been argued that the choice of location, an army camp rather than Constantinople, was characteristic of the nature of the revolt: Thomas had been popular with the soldiers and as such needed to be humiliated in front of them. This made using a donkey as a mount all the more appropriate as it would have seemed incongruous against the background of the army's cavalry. See McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, p. 146.

[63] Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, p. 44; Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae*, p. 41. The importance of the hippodrome as a place where Byzantine humiliation parades took place has already been noted by Magdalino, in Magdalino, 'Tourner en dérision', p. 70.

[64] A. Kaldellis (trans.), *Genesios On the Reigns of the Emperors* (Canberra, 1998), pp. 38-9; Featherstone and Signes-Codoñer (eds.), *Chronographiae Quae Theophanis Continuati Nomine Fertur Libri I– IV*, pp. 102-103.
[65] 'Πείθουσι γὰρ αὐτὴν γυναικείας αἰδοῦς καὶ ἀσθενείας ἐπιλαθέσθαι' in Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 24-25.
[66] Wortley, *John Skylitzes: A Synopsis*, p. 404.
[67] Indeed, when talking about the father of Michael V, Psellos puts both horses and clothing in the same category (Book 4, ch. 27): 'His horse, his clothes, everything else that alters one's appearance -- all were out of place.' See Reinsch, *Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, p. viii.
[68] Magoulias, *Annals of Niketas Choniates*, p. 165; J. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae historia, pars prior* (Berlin, 1975), p. 298.
[69] J.R. Melville Jones, *Eustathios of Thessaloniki: The Capture of Thessaloniki: A Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Canberra, 1988), pp. 82-3.
[70] Melville Jones, *The Capture of Thessaloniki*, p. 82.
[71] This does not mean that they would not be criticised if they rode their horse too ostentatiously, veering again towards luxury rather than military discipline. See, for example, the eleventh-century poem by Christopher of Mytilene on the eparch John of Amoudas. See M. De Groote, *Christophori Mitylenaii versuum variorum collectio cryptensis* (Turnhout, 2012), no. 30 lines 12–26.
[72] Another context where mules appear to add to a man's prestige, rather than damaging his masculine identity, can be found in the letters of scholars, such as Michael Psellos and Ioannes Tzetzes, who talked about them as sought-after items. For Tzetzes, see Letter 29 in Gregoriades, *Ιωάννης Τζέτζης*, pp. 96-7. For Psellos, see Sathas 171 To Iasites in K. Sathas, *Μεσαιωνικὴ βιβλιοθήκη*, V (Paris / Venice, 1876), pp. 434-438.
[73] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, p. 113.
[74] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 114-115.
[75] D. Krallis, 'Sacred Emperor, Holy Patriarch: A New Reading of the Clash between Emperor Isaakios I Komnenos and Patriarch Michael Keroularios in Attaleiates' History', *Byzantinoslavica*, (2009), p. 186.
[76] See 'Accusation of the Archpriest Before the Synod' in G.T. Dennis, *Michael Psellos, Orationes forenses et acta* (Stuttgart, 1994), vol. I, pp. 2420-2422.
[77] Certain typika expected monks to go on foot, or if need be on a donkey, forbidding both horses and mules. But the prohibition was not universal. For example, the Testament of Theodore the Studite for the Monastery of St. John Stoudios in Constantinople (826) states: 'You shall not ride on horses or mules when not necessary; rather you shall travel by foot in imitation of Christ. If it should be necessary, however, let your beast of burden be a colt.' See Thomas and Constantinides Hero (eds.), *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, vol. 1, pp. 77-8. By contrast, the twelfth-century canonist and titular Patriarch of Antioch, Theodore Balsamon, thought that it would be a slander towards God if bishops went on foot, and he expected a certain level of ostentation. 'Πολλῷ πλέον οὐκ ἔσται πρὸς τιμὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸ πεζῇ βαδίζειν ἀρχιερέα διὰ πενίαν καὶ στερεῖσθαι τῶν ἀναγκαίων.' in G.A. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, vol. 3 (Athens, 1853), p. 223.
[78] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 114-7.
[79] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 305-325.
[80] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 318-319.
[81] Kaldellis and Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, pp. 324-325.

[82] Matthew 21:5: 'Εἴπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών, Ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεταί σοι, πραὺς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὄνον, καὶ ἐπὶ πῶλον υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου.' See also D. Instone-Brewer, 'The two asses of Zechariah 9:9 in Matthew 21', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 54:1 (2003), pp. 87-97.
[83] For a rather extreme example, see Niketas Choniates' description of the humiliation of Emperor Andronikos, in Magoulias, *Annals of Niketas Choniates*, pp. 192-3.
[84] For a brief description of the donkey's biology and its differences from the horse, see Mitchell, *The Donkey in Human History*, pp. 22-26.
[85] Carolien C.B.M. Munsters, Kathalijne E.K. Visser, Jan van den Broek, Marianne M. Sloet van Oldruitenborgh-Oosterbaan, 'The influence of challenging objects and horse-rider matching on heart rate, heart rate variability and behavioural score in riding horses', *The Veterinary Journal*, 192 (2012), 75-80, at p. 79.
[86] Janne Winther Christensen, Linda Jane Keeling, Birte Lindstrøm Nielsen, 'Responses of horses to novel visual, olfactory and auditory stimuli', *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 93 (2005), 53-65.
[87] Janne Winther Christensen, Margareta Rundgren, 'Predator odour per se does not frighten domestic horses', *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 112 (2008) 136–145.
[88] F. H. Ashley, A. E. Waterman-Pearson and H. R. Whay, 'Behavioural assessment of pain in horses and donkeys: application to clinical practice and future studies', *Equine Veterinary Journal*, 37:6 (2005), pp. 565-575.
[89] Faith Burden, Alex Thiemann, 'Donkeys Are Different', *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science*, 35 (2015), pp. 376–382, at p. 379; N.J. Grint, C.B. Johnson, R.E. Clutton, H.R. Whay, J.C. Murrell, 'Spontaneous electroencephalographic changes in a castration model as an indicator of nociception: a comparison between donkeys and ponies', *Equine Veterinary Journal*, 47 (2015), pp. 36-42.
[90] Andrew Dalby, *Geoponika: Farm Work* (Devon, 2011), pp. 308-9.
[91] J. Darrouzès, *Épistoliers byzantins du Xe siècle* (Paris, 1960), pp. 269-271.