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The cultural dynamics of the term *Hellanodikes* in Palaiologan Byzantium

Abstract: In ancient Greek literature, *Hellanodikai* (Ἑλλανοδίκαι) were figures of public authority and high esteem, renowned for their fair judgment, overseeing control, and morally transparent life. The characteristics we gather regarding their public role come from a number of historical and other sources, such as Cassius Dio, Lucian, and Pausanias. In the Byzantine era, the term was revived either as a historical gloss contextualizing the position of *Hellanodikes* (Ἑλλανοδίκης) in ancient times or as a lexical and grammatical entry. As a contrast to the conventional treatments of this term, Palaiologan scholars proceeded to its unique redeployment. In this article, I argue that *Hellanodikes* became an epithet of social and cultural significance in Palaiologan Byzantium, a notion embedded within the intellectual peculiarities of this age, especially in contexts of imperial patronage and scholarly apprenticeship.

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An overview of *Hellanodikes* in Greek literature before the 13th century

The organizers and judges of the Olympic games, widely known as *Hellanodikai*, were highly respectable figures in Greek society, exemplars of correct judgment and impartiality.¹ The oldest surviving literary source testifying to their role is

The English translations and transliterations of Byzantine proper names and places follow the conventions of the *ODB*. Dates are also taken from there.

1 S. HORNBLOWER / A. SPAWFORTH / E. EIDINOW, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition. Oxford 2012, s. v.; H. CANKIĆ / H. SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Brill's New Pauly*, ed. by Brill Online, 2013: <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/Hellanodikes-e506750> (last accessed 3 June 2014). More on *Hellanodikai* in their athletic context in H. BENGSTON, *Die olympischen Spiele in der Antike*. Zurich 1971, and especially D.G. ROMANO, *Judges and judging at the ancient Olympic Games*, in: *Onward to the Olympics: historical perspectives on the*

Pindar's *Olympian Ode* (3.9–18), which pays emphasis on the crowning of the athletes as a repayment for their bright victory. The allocation of prizes on their part is also attested by later sources, for instance Aelianus (*Varia Historia* 9.31), Philostratus (*Imagines* 2.6.1), and Libanius (*Orationes* 11.269). As protectors of truth and fairness, the *Hellanodikai* were expected to maintain the legacy of the games by approving the qualifications of the participants (e.g. Lucian, *Pro imaginibus* 11, Pausanias, *Graecae descriptio* 6.9.6, 8.40.1, Choricus, *Opera* 42.2). It was also their sacred duty to act as uncorrupted supervisors of the contesting procedures (Lucian, *Hermotimus* 40–42, Pausanias, *Graecae descriptio* 6.15.5, Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 6.10). Their public impact is manifested in their assumption of political authority in Sparta, as mentioned by Xenophon (*De republica Lacedaemoniorum* 13.11; cf. Michael Psellos, *Theologica*, Opusc. 7, 61–63).

A good number of authors from antiquity up to the Komnenian period provide us with many other details regarding the position of the *Hellanodikai* in certain historical settings (e.g. Herodotus, *Histories* 5.22, Cassius Dio, *Historiae Romanae* 63.14.1, Pausanias, *Graecae descriptio* 5.9.5–6, 6.3.7, 6.20.8). What features prominently is the reference to episodes on the prohibited entrance of women at the games (Aechines, *Epistulae* 4.5, Aelianus, *Varia Historia* 10.1, Choricus, *Opera* 7.1.11), thereafter a literary *topos* culminating in John Tzetzes' Poem 407 of his *Chiliades*.² Apart from that, *Hellanodikes* occurs frequently in grammatical treatises (Aelius Herodian, *De prosodia catholica* 3.1, p.32, Choeroboscus, *Prolegomena et scholia in Theodossi Alexandrini canones isagogicos de flexione nominum*, p.155) or as a lemma in various Byzantine lexica (e.g. Hesychius, *Lexicon* 2155, Photius, *Lexicon* 638, the *Suda* 740–741, Pseudo-Zonaras 682, *Etymologicum Magnum* 331).

Although the term *Hellanodikes* was transmitted across the ages within the context of different genres, it is clear that it was not exploited in any sophisticated or systematic ways. The only noteworthy case seems to be that of Nikephoros Basilakes. Sharing a similar passion with John Tzetzes for mining the classical past, Basilakes resorts to the term *Hellanodikes* in an oration to Alexios Aristenos. Here the author compares his addressee's rhetorical competence to that of Pericles, stressing, among other things, how Alexios in the fashion of the Athenian politician was a bearer of just discernment, a true *Hellanodikes* (*Or.*

Olympic Games. *Publications of the Canadian Institute in Greece*, 5. Waterloo, Ontario 2007, 95–113, with note 2, page 110 for further updated bibliography.

² Πῶς ἐπὶ μόνῃ τῇ Ἀριστοπατείρῃ οἱ Ἑλλανοδίκαι τὸν νόμον τῶν Ὀλυμπίων παρέβησαν καὶ τίνες οἱ Ἑλλανοδίκαι, Ioannis Tzetzae historiae, ed. P.L.M. LEONE. Naples 1968.

B1, p. 23).³ That is an isolated instance in which a Byzantine author uses the authority of the ancient term to enhance the prestige of a contemporary figure.

In the remainder of this article, I would like to demonstrate that Palaiologan scholars were particularly fond of that practice, because they advanced the metaphorical use of *Hellanodikes* within their works, and gave it a key role in the code of contemporary communication, associated as it was to notions of social and cultural status.

***Hellanodikes* in the Palaiologan period (1261–1453)**

The heightened interest of Palaiologan literati in the term *Hellanodikes* must be stemming from their devotion to the classical past, which became part and parcel of their intellectual activities during those years.⁴ The term abounds, for instance, in the *Scholia recentia* in Pindar's *Epinicia*, compiled by Triclinius, Thomas Magistros, and Moschopoulos.⁵

One of the most significant representatives of antiquarianism in this age is Theodore Metochites (1270–1332), who uses *Hellanodikes* at three critical junctures in his corpus.⁶ In his *Semeioseis gnomikai* Number 71 (an essay dedicated

3 Nicephori Basilacae orationes et epistolae, ed. A. GARZYA. Leipzig 1984, 1–110, 116–119.

4 This was an age of intense revival of the classical tradition, in which a plethora of editions, commentaries, and paraphrases of ancient works were produced. For the intellectual setting of this period, see I. ŠEVČENKO, Society and intellectual life in the fourteenth century, in: Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantine. Bucarest 1974, 69–92; reprinted in I. ŠEVČENKO, Society and intellectual life in late Byzantium. London 1981; also I. ŠEVČENKO, The decline of Byzantium seen through the eyes of its intellectuals. *DOP* 15 (1961) 169–186; reprinted in I. ŠEVČENKO, Society and intellectual life in late Byzantium. London 1981. Cf. N. GAUL, Thomas Magistros und die spätbyzantinische Sophistik. Studien zum Humanismus urbaner Eliten der frühen Palaiologenzeit. *Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik*, 10. Wiesbaden 2011.

5 Scholia et glossae in Olympia et Pythia (scholia recentiora Triclinii, Thomae Magistri, Moschopuli, Germani), in E. ABEL (ed.), *Scholia recentia in Pindari epinicia*. Berlin 1891. Although it is difficult to determine whether those late Byzantine scholia reproduce faithfully the scholia vetera or whether they contain Byzantine contaminations, they still attest to the contemporary popularity of the virtues of the *Hellanodikes* (e.g. O3, 22; O3, 19–24; O10, 17); *Scholia vetera et recentiora partim Thomae Magistri et Alexandri Phortii*, D. SEMITELOS (ed.), Πινδάρου σχόλια Πατριμακά. Athens 1875.

6 For Metochites' life and work, see in general I. ŠEVČENKO, Theodore Metochites, the Chora, and the intellectual trends of his time, in: *The Kariye Djami. Studies in the art of the Kariye Djami and its intellectual background*. London 1975, vol. IV, 17–91; M. HINTERBERGER, Studien

to Plutarch), Metochites is inspired by Plutarch's wide-ranging learning and his related impartiality, considering him an *Hellanodikes*:

Coming from above as an Olympic judge (*Hellanodikes*) and a critical viewer of the philosophical games, athletes and competitors, he (sc. Plutarch) prefers not to grant favours to anyone without reason, but accepts everybody's achievements and their common contribution to philosophy and life, taking over and choosing to gather from everybody that which is useful for his own life and wisdom. (71.4.6)⁷

What seems to be of particular interest to Metochites is Plutarch's eclecticism and his ability to endorse philosophical doctrines on the basis of their objective value, even when these come from his fiercest opponents, such as the Epicureans. The text reads as follows:

[...] if by any chance he encounters among their (sc. the Epicureans') views something worthy of being noted and used to advantage in the studies with which he happens to be engaged at the time, he follows this too, and he is not ashamed because of his general hostility to the Epicureans, to bring out whatever useful thing one might find there. (71.6.6)

I show elsewhere that Metochites' essay *On Plutarch* is exceptional among his group of essays within the *Semeioseis gnomikai* concerned with other ancient authors, because in this one Metochites draws a careful self-portrait by appropriating the persona of Plutarch to his sense of self.⁸ His aim in doing so is to vindicate his controversial public role by providing it with the authority of the ancient Plutarch, whom any Palaiologan scholar would have honoured and admired.⁹ Metochites' most frequent way of merging self-identity and model is by inventing

zu Theodoros Metochites. *JÖB* 51 (2001) 285 – 319. Recent editions include, I. POLEMIS, Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης. Βυζάντιος ἢ Περί τῆς Βασιλίδος Μεγαλοπόλεως. Thessalonike 2013.

⁷ Καὶ ὡσπερ Ἑλλανοδίκης τις καὶ κριτῆς ἐπόπτης ἄνωθεν ἦκων τῶν τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀγῶνων καὶ ἀθλητῶν τε καὶ ἀγωνιστῶν, οὐδενὶ προῖκα ἀξιοὶ χαρίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ προσίεται μὲν τὰ ἐκάστων καὶ τὴν κοινὴν ἐξ ἁπάντων συντέλειαν τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ καὶ τῷ βίῳ, πάντων δ' ἀποφέρεται καὶ κερδαίνειν ἀξιοὶ τὸ χρήσιμον τῷ γ' αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ βίῳ καὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ. K. HULT (ed.), Theodore Metochites on ancient authors and philosophy: *Semeioseis gnomikai* 1 – 26 & 71. Göteborg 2002. In translating the passages from the *Semeioseis gnomikai* provided here, I have adapted the translation of K. HULT. All other Byzantine authors have been translated by myself.

⁸ S. XENOPHONTOS, The Byzantine Plutarch: self-identity and model in Theodore Metochites' *Essay 71 of the Semeioseis gnomikai*. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (forthcoming).

⁹ For example, Maximus Planoudes was personally fascinated with the philosopher of Chaeronea, so that he decided to edit his *Parallel Lives* and *Moralia*. He writes to his close friend, Alexios Philanthropenos (dated early in 1295): “Ἐμοὶ δ' ἔδοξε τὰ τοῦ Πλουτάρχου γράψαι βιβλία πάννυ γάρ, ὡς οἴσθη, τὸν ἄνδρα φιλῶ.” *Ep.* 106, l. 35 – 36, P. L. M. LEONE (ed.), *Maximi monachi Planudis epistulae. Classical and Byzantine Monographs*, 18. Amsterdam 1991.

characteristics of Plutarch which would either refer directly or otherwise allude to his public profile. The employment of *Hellanodikes* is a fine instance of that; although there are no recorded cases in which tradition names Plutarch as a fair man, Metochites contrives Plutarch's fair judgment in order to reply to all those contemporaries that thought of him as unjustly granting personal favours, accusing him of bribery and corruption.¹⁰ This anxiety is manifested a few lines below in his text, when, by way of self-apologetics, he says that he loves Plutarch because he does not “view people as friends or enemies depending on whether they bring advantage or disadvantage, and form judgements under the influence of attachments, but rather decide[s] in the same way in each case whether there is some truth in it” (71.6.7).

The focus on *Hellanodikes* is not limited to Metochites' relation to his classical model, but seems to bear also some contextual implications. I take it as no coincidence that in praising Metochites' own universal learning, Nikephoros Gregoras (c.1290/1–1358–61) (his favourite student and intellectual heir) calls him a *pankosmios Hellanodikes*, who conspicuously oversees and possesses every sort of knowledge. This happens twice, in *Letter 23*, 64–73¹¹ addressed directly to Metochites and in *Letter 22*, 74–94¹² addressed to Joseph the Philosopher with reference to Metochites.¹³ It is true that *Hellanodikes* does not relate to justice on this occasion, but it is important that in expanding the semantic field of the term to denote erudition, Gregoras adapted vocabulary that would

10 I. ŠEVČENKO, Théodore Métochite, Chora et les courants intellectuels de l'époque, in: *Art et société à Byzance sous les Paléologues. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines à Venise en septembre 1968*. Venice 1971, 15–39, here 21, 23–24; reprinted in I. ŠEVČENKO, *Ideology, Letters and culture in the Byzantine world Collected Studies Series*, 155. London 1982.

11 Ὡσπερ γὰρ εἶ τις Ἑλλανοδίκης παγκόσμιος, διάρας κύκλω τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ περισκοπήσας τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανὸν καὶ πάντα κατ' ἴχνος ἐπιδραμῶν τάξαι αἰῶνος πράγματα καὶ διερευνησάμενος τοὺς ἐν ἅπασιν δημιουργικοὺς λόγους καὶ ἐξητακῶς πάνθ' ὅσα γένεσις βόσκει καὶ φθίσις καὶ ξυνιεις τίνα ξὺν λόγῳ τὸν βίον ἤνυσε καὶ τίνα μὴ, τὸ μὲν παρωχηκὸς ἐπειδὴ παρερρῦη καθάπερ τις σκηνὴ καὶ δρᾶμα ἐφήμερον παρήκας.

12 Αὐτὸς δ', ὡσπερ τις Ἑλλανοδίκης παγκόσμιος, διάρας κύκλω τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ περισκοπήσας τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανὸν καὶ πάντα κατ' ἴχνος ἐπιδραμῶν τάξαι αἰῶνος πράγματα καὶ διερευνησάμενος τοὺς ἐν ἅπασιν δημιουργικοὺς λόγους καὶ ἐξητακῶς πάνθ' ὅσα φθορὰ καὶ γένεσις βόσκει καὶ ξυνιεις τίνα σὺν λόγῳ τὸν βίον ἤνυσε καὶ τίνα μὴ, τὸ μὲν παρωχηκὸς ἐπειδὴ παρερρῦη παρήκε, τῆς δὲ μελλούσης ἔσσεσθαι πρὸς λόγους ἡλικίας καὶ μάλα πλείστην ἐνεδειξάτο τὴν πρόνοιαν, ὡς μὴ πλημμελεῖ τι ἐτι καὶ ἡμαρτημένη χρῶντο τῇ φορᾷ: *Ep.* 22, 83–91.

13 All letters that Gregoras addressed to Metochites date before 1328, and given that the overlaps with the essay *On Plutarch* are meant to appeal to Metochites, the essay *On Plutarch* must have been composed before the *Letters*; P. L. M. LEONE (ed.), *Nicephori Gregorae Epistulae*. Matino 1982–1983.

have been familiar and appealing to his teacher. For, Metochites was compared to a *homo universalis*,¹⁴ and Gregoras especially admired him for his acute mind that enabled him to comment upon all areas of the intellect: “We would indeed be speaking quite truthfully if we were to call you a rhetorical, a poetical, an astronomical man, and in addition a political, a practical, a sentence-giving one” (*Letter* 24a, 15–17).

But why would Gregoras overlook justice as the conventional quality of *Hellandikai* and delineate them as bearers of universal knowledge instead? What is less known about the *Hellandikai* is that they also exercised disciplinary authority over the athletes, especially in areas concerning their training, character, morality, and way of life.¹⁵ Late Byzantine authors were extremely fond of recovering minute details of the classical past as a token of their encyclopedism and broad learning,¹⁶ so that in enriching the meaning of the term with such subtle references, Gregoras may be embracing contemporary trends.

In any case, Metochites must have certainly been flattered by his naming as a cultural *Hellandikes*, if one considers the manner he uses it himself in the other two instances in his work. In his *Stoicheiosis astronomike* 1.18 he cites *Hellandikes* in his eulogy of Andronikos II (1282–1328) in the wider context of treating the emperor’s benevolence (φιλανθρωπία) and ambition (φιλοτιμία) in relation to his strength of mind (μεγαλοφυΐα).¹⁷ Metochites goes as far as to stress that Andronikos promotes intellectual achievements by being an overseer of the *logoi* (i. e. of intellectual works or more broadly of education) and an attributor of judgments and grants (τῶν λόγων Ἑλλανοδίκτην τόνδε καὶ βραβευτὴν τῶν ψήφων καὶ τῶν ἐπάθλων, l. 316–317).¹⁸ Metochites’ contemporary, Michael Gabras (ca. 1290–after 1350), widely known for his voluminous correspondence, ad-

14 M. BAZZANI, Theodore Metochites, a Byzantine Humanist. *Byz* 76 (2006) 32–52.

15 Notice that Gregoras is acquainted with the detail that *Hellandikai* were responsible for the bodily training of the athletes, as can be seen in his *Letter* 145, l. 41–43: διὸ καὶ οὐ πρὸς τὰς τῶν σωμάτων ἔξεις ὀρῶντας ἐκφέρειν τὰς ψήφους τοὺς ἐναυθ’ ἀξιοῦμεν Ἑλλανοδίκας, ἀλλὰ τὰς τῆς γνώμης ἀκριβῶς ταλαντεύειν ῥοπὰς [...].

16 On encyclopedism in Palaiologan education, see P. CANART, Les anthologies scolaires commentées de la période des Paléologues, à l’école de Maxime Planude et de Manuel Moschopoulos, in P. Van Deun / C. Macé (eds.), *Encyclopedic trends in Byzantium? Proceedings of the International Conference held in Leuven, 6–8 May 2009. Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta*, 21. Leuven 2011, 297–332.

17 B. BYDÉN (ed.), Theodore Metochites’ *Stoicheiosis astronomike* and the study of natural philosophy and mathematics in early Palaiologan Byzantium. *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia*, 66. Göteborg 2003.

18 Cf. Metochites’ *Byzantios* 37, I. POLEMIS (ed.), Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, Βυζάντιος ἢ περὶ τῆς βασιλίδος μεγαλοπόλεως. Athens 2013, 390, l. 59–61.

dressed Andronikos II in similar, almost identical, lines: “because you act as if you were an *Hellanodikes* and you allocate awards for all intellectual endeavours, arranging all these principles according to their shape and class” (*Ep.* 435, l. 72–74).¹⁹ Although it is difficult to determine a precise date for this letter in an attempt to see whether Gabras was influenced by Metochites’ usage of *Hellanodikes* or vice versa, it can be deduced with some degree of certainty that at that time the term was used for the emperor. In connection with this, Gregoras himself referred to Andronikos with the expression *pankosmios Hellanodikes* with which he flattered Metochites, as seen above (*Historia Romana*, 1.347.18: γυμναστήν τινα πάσης ἀρετῆς καὶ παγκόσμιον Ἑλλανοδίκην). We can therefore argue that scholars belonging to the patronage of Andronikos II exploited *Hellanodikes* as a praising epithet for the emperor, but this was also re-textured in other scholarly settings to enhance one’s intellectual profile, furnishing it with the quality of discriminating and encompassing judgment.

The cultural vitality of the term is additionally illustrated by the manner Metochites uses it in his *Comparatio oratorum Demostheni et Aristidis* (*Ἐπιστοασία καὶ κρίσις τῆς τῶν δύο ῥητόρων εὐδοκιμήσεως τοῦ τε Δημοσθένους καὶ Ἀριστείδου*). In this work’s highly rhetorical preface, Metochites stresses his difficulties in acting as a judge of the two orators of the past, and refers to his power of arbitration with the verbs ἀλοθετεῖν and Ἑλλανοδικεῖν (Ἄλλ’ ἐγὼ τοι καὶ ἄλλως οὐ μοι προσήκειν τὰ τῆσδε τῆς ψήφου καὶ διαχειροτονίας δοκῶ, ὡς ἄρα νῦν εἶναι περὶ τοίνδε τοῖν ἀνδροῖν ὑμεῖς ἀλοθετεῖν τε καὶ Ἑλλανοδικεῖν παρακαλεῖτε: 1.19–22). This is an interesting case, not only because the action of the verbs is here explicitly self-reflective (Metochites is the one to establish the prizes of the contest and he is likewise the one to decide on its final outcome), but at the same time because the author retrieves a very rare verb to describe his action; Ἑλλανοδικεῖν is used only four times by Pausanias in the extant ancient Greek literature (*Graeciae descriptio*, 5.16.8, 6.1.4, 6.1.5 and 6.24.3) and afterwards only once by Metochites here. On the other hand, the parataxis of ἀλοθετεῖν and Ἑλλανοδικεῖν illuminates the nexus of correct and fair decision, notions that frequently go together in other contemporary works, especially those of Gregoras (e.g. *Florentius* 752: ἀλοθετηῖσιν ὀρθῶς καὶ ἀδέκαστον Ἑλλανοδίκην ἔσεσθαι,²⁰ *Historia Romana* 2.645.10: καθάπερ τις Ἑλλανοδίκης καὶ ἀπαθῆς ἀλοθετήτης).²¹

¹⁹ Ὡς ἂν τις ὦν αὐτὸς Ἑλλανοδίκης καὶ τὰ κατὰ λόγους ἅπαντα βραβεύων ὥσπερ ταῦτ’ αὐτὰ τὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς εἰς σχῆμά τε καὶ τάξιν ἕκαστα διατιθεῖς; G. FATOUROS (ed.), *Die Briefe des Michael Gabras*, 10. Vienna 1973.

²⁰ P. L. M. LEONE (ed.), *Fiorenzo o intorno alla sapienza. Byzantina et neo-hellenica neapolitana*, 4. Naples 1975, 53–130.

I want finally to discuss how Nikephoros Gregoras, who seems to have been particularly charmed by the term, employs it in some other cases in his writings. The two instances of *Hellanodikes* within the narrative of his *Historia Romana* show his sensitivity in investing this term with moral baggage. In 1.505 the author suggests that the *Hellanodikai* should supervise the ethical resolutions of people who are in doubt and constant sin, maintaining thus the “law of justice”;²² in similar vein, in 2.804 the *Hellanodikai* disapprove of abuse (λοιδορεῖσθαι) and are strict imposers of forgiveness.²³ The moralizing role of *Hellanodikes* culminates in the *Encomium to Michael Synkellos*, where Gregoras adjusts the term explicitly to the principles of Christian morality. In praising the moral character of Synkellos at the later years of his life, Gregoras believes that Synkellos should receive crowns worthy of his noble and lengthy struggles (ἄθλους). He then compares the role of the *Hellanodikai* in granting worthy repayments to the winners of the Olympic games to that of God, who awards pure crowns to the athletes of virtue (Ὀλυμπιονίκας μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλανοδίκαι ταῖς ἀξίαις ἀντιδόσειν ἡμείβοντο, τοὺς δὲ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀθλητὰς ἀκηράτοις ὁ ἀθλοθέτης Θεὸς καταστέφει στεφάνοις, p. 276, l. 10 – 12), one of whom is Synkellos. In another instance within the same work, Gregoras advances the implications, when he considers God superior in relation to the *Hellanodikai*, because the former oversees everything, awarding eternal (and not temporary ἔπαθλα πρόσκαιρα) prizes (ὑπὸ κριτῆ παντεπότητη πρὸς αἰώνια βλέποντες ἔπαθλα, p. 260).²⁴ Gregoras is a unique example in the history of Greek literature, that links *Hellanodikes* to the figure of the ethical supervisor, and at the same time appropriates a concept of pagan imprint into a very Christian setting. One can here see a conscious intertwining of the Greek past and the Byzantine present in the way Byzantine scholars reflected on religious issues. That must signpost the current tendency of the mixture of secular and religious learning; on another level it also disproves the suggested escapism in the case of late Byzantine authors (i.e. the tendency of backward looking from a shallow present into a shining past), given that Gregoras’ use

21 Nicephori Gregorae historiae Byzantinae, ed. I. BEKKER / L. SCHOPEN. Bonn 1829–1855.

22 Καὶ ὅσοι γῆς ἔνεκα σταδιαίας ἀμφισβητοῦσι, καὶ εἴ τις λωποδυσίας ἀλίσκοιτο, τούτοις ἐξεῖναι πᾶσιν Ἑλλανοδίκαις τινὰς καὶ κριτὰς ἀρρεπεῖς προκαθίζειν, ὡς μὴ λάθη παραρῦνεις ὁ τοῦ δικαίου κανῶν, μᾶλλον δ’ ἵνα μὴ ἀνήνυτον ἔχη τὸν δρόμον ἢ τῆς ἀμφισβητήσεως ἔρις, μηδενὸς προκειμένου κανόνος καὶ στάθμης, πρὸς ἃ παραμετρηθέντες οἱ τῶν ἀνταγωνιζομένων λόγοι τῆς ἔριδος ἀπαλλάξονται.

23 Ἡ εἰ λοιδορεῖσθαί μοι ἐπιχειροῖη, λάθοι ἂν αὐτὸς ἐαυτῷ περιφανῶς λοιδορούμενος ἢ ἐμοί· ὡς μὴδ’ ἔχειν παρ’ οὐδέσιν Ἑλλανοδίκαις τὸ συγκεχωρηκὸς ἐμοί τῆς ἐγχειρήσεως ἐπεξέναι.

24 T. SCHMITT (ed.), Kahrie-dzhami. *IRAİK* 11 (1906) 260–279.

of *Hellanodikes* combines evenly the classical and Byzantine nuances of the term.

To conclude, I have argued that *Hellanodikes* is an epithet of imperial authority for Andonikos II, and hence of social prestige for his scholarly entourage; a means of cultural redefinition in Metochites' engagement with his Plutarchan archetype, as well as a reflection of his intellectual identity as conceptualized by his protégé, Nikephoros Gregoras; finally, it is an ethically-related notion that helps Gregoras explain how Christian morality ought to function. The novel twists introduced to the semantics of *Hellanodikes* offer a strong case for how the Palaiologan revival of the classical tradition should not be seen in terms of sterile imitation, but that of a dynamic transformation.

More than that, with this article I hope to have stimulated interest in how cultural elements from antiquity were vigorously integrated into the intellectual and social discourse of Palaiologan Byzantium; in other words, how their traditional meanings were not simply revived, but rather revitalised with fresh connotations. It might worth exploring in an encompassing study what other terms from antiquity late Byzantine authors employed in similar or identical lines to that of *Hellanodikes* (*kybernetes* and *Olympionikes* are good cases in point). Such a study will bring out the truly distinct and as yet unknown ways in which late Byzantium approached its classical heritage.

