

*A Persian King in Constantinople? Emperor Basil I and the Historical Memory of Ancient Persia in Byzantium*

Abstract: The Byzantines maintained a keen interest in and knowledge of the Achaemenid Persian past. This even led to the occasional appropriation of the Persian past in the service of imperial ideology, likening and comparing Byzantine emperors and their deeds with those of Persian Kings of Kings. This paper explores the possibility that such use and interest in the Achaemenid past achieved new heights and meaning during the reign of Basil I and the dynasty he founded (867-1056). In part, this may have been a result of the fictional genealogy that became a cornerstone of the dynasty's identity, which included supposed descent from the Achaemenid dynasty itself.



Nathan Leidholm received his PhD in Byzantine History from the University of Chicago in 2016 and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Program in Cultures, Civilizations, and Ideas at Bilkent University. He is the author of several articles, book chapters, and reviews, as well as the monograph *Elite Byzantine Kinship, ca. 950-1204: Blood, Reputation, and the Genos* (Arc Humanities Press, 2019).