



## Περίληψη :

A family in Asia Minor, known since the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Its members held high military offices. They assumed their greatest power during the 10<sup>th</sup> century by creating family bonds with the Phokas family. At the time of Basil II, their estates were confiscated, an event which led to the political decline of the family. They lost their power completely during the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century.

## Τόπος και Χρόνος Γέννησης

prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Charsianon, Cappadocia

## Τόπος και Χρόνος Θανάτου

## Κύρια Ιδιότητα

Members of the military aristocracy

## 1. General

The Maleinos family was one of the oldest [aristocratic families](#) of the Byzantine Empire, emerging during the 9<sup>th</sup> century from Charsianon and [Cappadocia](#). Its members assumed high military offices and ranked at the top of the byzantine aristocracy from the beginning. During the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Maleinos family ascended the social hierarchy by acquiring high offices and by creating family bonds with the Phokas family (beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century). Since that time, the Maleinos and the [Phokas](#) families constitute the core around which other aristocratic families of [Asia Minor](#) coil up in order to promote their interests. The Maleinos lineage was one of the wealthiest families of the empire. Its wealth is mentioned in the [Novella](#) of the year 996 by [Basil II](#) (976-1025), who confiscated all the estates of Eustathios Maleinos, an event with dire consequences on the wealth of the family. The decline of the Maleinos family starts in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Maleinos lineage of Asia Minor is last mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. Descent of the family

The Maleinos lineage was among the members of the old byzantine aristocracy, emerging during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It was a family of greek origin with close bonds to the region of Asia Minor. It has been presumed that the surname Maleinos is related to the name place [Malagina](#) of [Bithynia](#), a location in the [theme of Boukellarion](#) during the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> If one accepts that presumption, one could look for the old estates of the family in the fertile valley of the Sangarios river. It is safe, however, to consider the region of Charsianon as the homeland of the family, according to evidence dating back to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, or the whole of Cappadocia in a wider sense.<sup>2</sup> It is known that the members of the wealthy Maleinos family had estates in the area of jurisdiction of the [theme of Charsianon](#), the wider region of [Caesarea](#) of Cappadocia and [Ankyra](#) of [Galatia](#).<sup>3</sup>

## 3. The earliest members

The earliest known evidence about the Maleinos family, dating back to the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, shows that the family had already acquired a prominent place in the hierarchy of the byzantine aristocracy by that time. The first known member of the Maleinos family, Nikephoros, was involved in the important events of the period. In 866, he suppressed the rebellion of [Symbatios](#), a relative of [caesar Bardas](#), the uncle of emperor [Michael III](#) (842-867).<sup>4</sup> No titles or offices are mentioned concerning the name of the first known member of the Maleinos family but it can be presumed that his services were of a military nature. As shown by other evidence about the Maleinos family, the ascent of the family was associated from the beginning with the military careers of its members.

An important member of the Maleinos family was Eustathios Maleinos, presumably a brother or son of the first known member of the Maleinos lineage. Eustathios bore the title of [patrikios](#) and held high military offices.<sup>5</sup> Through Eustathios, one can follow the trace of



the most prominent branch of the Maleinos family. His son, Eudokimos Maleinos, was married to the daughter of a certain Adralestos, a patrikios and military official, whose wife was a relative of [Romanos I Lekapenos](#) (920-944).

#### 4. The Maleinos family during the 10th century

Many prominent members of the Maleinos family emerge during the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Among them are most certainly the grandsons of Eustathios Maleinos and sons of Eudokimos, [Michael](#) (baptized Manuel) and [Constantine](#).

Michael started his secular career in the court of [Leo VI](#) (886-912). Following the death of the emperor, he became a monk. Michael Maleinos, the later saint Michael, was the teacher of [Athanasios Athonites](#), the founder of the Lavra monastery in Mount Athos. Michael exerted considerable influence on his nephews, [Nikephoros II Phokas](#) (963-969) and his brother Leo. Thanks to him, the two members of the Phokas family were closely associated not only with him but also with Athanasios Athonites and other monks.

Constantine Maleinos was a prominent general. It is known that during the reign of [Constantine VII](#) (945-959), Constantine Maleinos, already a patrikios, held the office of **strategos** in the theme of Cappadocia for many years. He participated in the battles against the Arabs in the [theme of Anatolikon](#) under the leadership of members of the Phokas family, his relatives.

Thanks to that generation, the Maleinos family created family bonds with the Phokas family and had the chance to reach the top of the aristocracy of Asia Minor. The sister of Michael and Constantine Maleinos was married to [Bardas Phokas](#), father of the later emperor Nikephoros II Phokas.<sup>6</sup> The bonds between the Maleinos and the Phokas families were not the usual relationship between two families of the same geographical and social origin but had a deeper background. They bore political consequences and the fortunes of the one family were closely associated with the fortunes of the other in a way that it is not possible to examine them separately.

The advantages of that relationship are evident at the time of Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (945-959) and Romanos II (959-963), when the Phokas family ascend the social hierarchy and reach the throne in 969. Members of the Phokas family hold the most important military and administrative offices of the empire, acquiring control over the military policy in the East. During the long battles against the Arabs in the eastern part of the empire, members of the Maleinos family followed the Phokas family. Constantine Maleinos, who succeeded Leo Phokas as strategos of Cappadocia in 955, is mentioned as one of the combatants in the battles against the Arabs in 960. Apart from him, a Leo Maleinos was killed in the battles against the Arabs in Syria in 953. Leo was a member of a different branch of the Maleinos family, probably the one descending from the first known member of the Maleinos family, Nikephoros.

The ascent of Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969), a close relative of the Maleinos family, to the throne, opened the road towards the top of the social ladder for the family. Although there is little evidence about the Maleinos family during the reign of Nikephoros II, it can be presumed that they offered important services to the empire. That conclusion is reinforced by the events during the last decades of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, events revealing the power, wealth and prestige of the Maleinos family.

#### 5. The Maleinos family at the time of Basil II

The most prominent member of the Maleinos family at the time of Basil II (976-1025) was Eustathios, son of Constantine Maleinos. At the end of the reign of Nikephoros II, he was appointed governor of [Antioch](#) and strategos of Lykandos. Following the death of [John I Tzimiskes](#) (969-976) and the ascent of Basil II to the throne, Eustathios is mentioned as **magistros** and leader of the army against the consecutive attempts of [Bardas Skleros](#) to seize power.<sup>7</sup>

At the time when Basil II prepared his first campaign against the Bulgarian czar Samuel (986),<sup>8</sup> **magistros** Eustathios Maleinos was discharged from the army along with others, such as Bardas Phokas. The policy of the emperor against the powerful aristocrats who had close bonds with the eastern provinces of the empire as regards to their origin and their services, led to a new attempt to usurp the throne. In the house of Eustathios Maleinos in Charsianon, during a meeting of members of the most prominent members of the



time (Maleinos, Phokas, [Melissenos](#), Parsakoutenos families), Bardas Phokas was proclaimed emperor (987). Eustathios Maleinos was one of the leaders of the [rebellion which lasted two years](#) (987-989) and commander of the rebellious armies.

Following the assassination of Bardas Phokas in 989, Eustathios was not severely punished but it is evident that he was removed from high state offices. Some years later, when the emperor returned from one of his campaign in the East, Eustathios Maleinos welcomed the imperial armies in his estates in Cappadocia. Surprised by the great wealth of his subject and aware of his political ambitions since the time of the rebellion of Bardas Phokas, Basil II decided to put Eustathios Maleinos under his control. He took him to

Constantinople and held him “σαν θηρίο σε κλουβί”,<sup>9</sup> offering him a luxurious life but not allowing him to return to his estates. Following the death of Eustathios, Basil II confiscated his entire fortune.

## 6. The Novella of 996 by Basil II

The wealth of the Maleinos family is clearly mentioned in the much-discussed Novella of the year 996 by Basil II (976-1025).<sup>10</sup> The emperor stands against the wealthy citizens of the empire who stole the estates of poor farmers and enjoyed their wealth along with their descendants for a century or more. Basil II mentions the families of Phokas, Maleinos and Mousele as an example of illegal wealth. Apart from that general mention of the Maleinos family, the emperor particularly mentions the names of patrikios Constantine Maleinos and his son, magistros Eustathios, in his Novella.

## 7. The decline of the family (11th century)

The Maleinos family did not recover from the blow of Basil II (976-1025), not only due to the confiscation of their estates but also due to the fact that Basil II stood against their relatives, the Phokas family, and the circle of aristocrats around those two families. The waning of the influence of the Maleinos family is reflected in the sources, which offer little information about any possible political activity of the Maleinos family following the period of Basil II. It is obvious that they were politically marginalized. Some seals, however, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, indicate that certain members of the family bore titles, such as patrikios or [proedros](#).<sup>11</sup>

From the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and on, certain people under the surname Maleinos are mentioned in the European parts of the empire – the region of Macedonia.<sup>12</sup> That fact leads to the conclusion that certain members of the family were forced to settle in the western parts of the empire due to the [pressure and conquests of the Seljuks](#) in Asia Minor. The presence of the Maleinos family in the region of Macedonia is confirmed during the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> The sparse mention of the Maleinos family during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century, however, indicates that the family had lost its power. The Maleinos family, along with the Phokas family, is among the old aristocratic families that started losing their power during the reign of Basil II. The members of those families were removed from state services and their financial power was diminished due to the confiscation of their estates.

## 8. The Maleinos family of southern Italy (10th-12th century)

From the time of Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969) and on, certain people under the surname Maleinos are mentioned in the region of Calabria in Italy. It is not safe, however, to associate the Maleinos family of southern Italy with the Maleinos family of Asia Minor. The Maleinos family of southern Italy is mentioned throughout the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

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1. Cheynet, J. C., *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance 963-1210* (Paris 1990), pp. 214-215.

2. Thurn, J. (ed.), *Ioannes Scylitzes, Synopsis historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berlin – New York 1973), pp. 332, 340.

3. Cheynet, J. C., *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance 963-1210* (Paris 1990), pp. 214-215.



4. Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Joannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 680.
5. Loparev, Hr., "Opisanie nekotoryh greseskikh Zitij svjatyh", *Vizantjskij Vremennik* 4 (1897), pp. 353-363, ibid p. 360.
6. Hase, C. B. (ed.), *Leonis Diaconi Caloensis, Historiae libri decem et liber de velitatione bellica Nicephori Augusti* (Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1828), p. 83; Thurn, J. (ed.), *Ioannes Scylitzes, Synopsis historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berlin – New York 1973), p. 280.
7. Bardas Skleros rebelled against Basil II. The rebellion lasted from 976 to 979.
8. Basil II started his first campaign against Samuel in 986, 10 years after he assumed power, due to the fact that as soon as he ascended to the throne, the young emperor had to face the rebellion of Bardas Skleros and the conspiracy of his uncle and custodian Basil, who was exiled by the emperor in 986.
9. Thurn, J. (ed.), *Ioannes Scylitzes, Synopsis historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 5, Berlin – New York 1973), p. 340.
10. N. Svoronos presumes that the comments about the families of Phokas and Maleinos in the Novella by Basil II were added after 1001; Svoronos, N., "Remarques sur la tradition du texte de la nouvelle de Basile II concernant les puissants", *Zbornik Radova Vizantinoslog Intituta* 8:2 (1964), pp. 427-434. See also Svoronos, N. (ed.), *Les nouvelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens 1994), pp. 190-191, 303.
11. See Seibt, W., *Die byzantinischen Bleisiegel in Österreich. Teil I: Kaiserhof* (Vienna 1978), nr. 142; Cheynet, J. C., *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance 963-1210* (Paris 1990), p. 333, note 65.
12. A chrysobull of the year 1084 by Alexios I Komnenos mentions a Stephanos Maleinos, a landowner from Thessaloniki; see Archives de l'Athos V, *Actes de Lavra I: Des origins a 1204*, Lemerle, P. – Guillou, A. – Svoronos, N. (eds), avec la collaboration de D. Papachryssanthou (Paris 1970), acte no. 45.
13. Niketas Choniates mentions a Maleinos who rebelled against Andronikos II Komnenos in 1185; see van Dieten, J. L. (ed.), *Nicetae Choniatae, Historia* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 11, Berlin – New York 1975), p. 296.
14. Falkenhausen, V., *Untersuchungen über die byzantinische Herrschaft in Süditalien vom 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden 1967), p. 141.

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## Γλωσσάριο :

	<b>caesar</b>
In the Roman Empire the title of Caesar was given to the Emperor. From the reign of Diocletian (284-305) on this title was conferred on the young co-emperor. This was also the highest title on the hierarchy of the Byzantine court. In the 8th c. the title of Caesar was usually given to the successor of the throne. In the late 11th c. this office was downgraded and from the 14th c. on it was mainly conferred on foreign princes.	
	<b>magistros</b>
Higher office than Philotheos in his Kletorologion placed above the anthypatos. This title lost its importance from the 10th century and gradually disappeared - most probably in the middle of the 12th century.	
	<b>novel (novella)</b>
Term meaning ad verbum "new decree" and used since around the 4th century in order to denote the provisions of the emperors as separate from the organized codes. They were written mainly in Greek and used extensively in the Middle Byzantine Era. Since the days of Komnenoi and after, they were replaced by other more specialized terms and they are very rare in the Late Byzantine era	
	<b>patrikios</b>
(from lat. <i>patricius</i> ) Higher title of honour, placed, according to the " <i>Tactika</i> " of the 9th and the 10th centuries, between <i>anthypatos</i> and <i>protospatharios</i> . It was given to the most important governors and generals. Gradually, however, it fell into disuse and from the 12th century did not exist any more.	
	<b>proedros</b>
A high office of the Byzantine court, first known under Nikephoros II Phokas. The responsibilities of the proedros are rather uncertain. In the 11th c. the title was accorded oftenly, but it disappears after the 12th c. As an ecclesiastical office, proedros was equal to a metropolitan and was accorded to the regent metropolitan of a bishopric or a metropolitan see, until the election of a hierarch there.	
	<b>strategos ("general")</b>
During the Roman period his duties were mainly political. Office of the Byzantine state's provincial administration. At first the title was given to the military and political administrator of the themes, namely of the big geographic and administrative unities of the Byzantine empire. Gradually the title lost its power and, already in the 11th century, strategoi were turned to simple commanders of military units, responsible for the defence of a region.	

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## Παραθέματα

Basil I opposes to the greed of the *dynatoi*:

Ἵτι ἡ βασιλεία ἡμῶν οὐκ ἀσκόπως οὐδ' ἀδοκιμάστως τὴν τεσσαρακονταετιάν ἀνατρέπει ἀλλὰ τοὺς πένητας ἐλεοῦσα καὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ καὶ τῆς συστάσεως αὐτοῦ φροντίζουσα καὶ τὸ δίκαιον ἀγαπῶσα καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν ἐκκόπτουσα, φανερόν ἐσται ἐξ ὧν θέλομεν εἰπεῖν. Καὶ γὰρ πολλὰ παρηνοχλήθημεν παρὰ τῶν πτωχῶν χάριν τούτου καὶ τὰς γινομένας εἰς αὐτοὺς κάθ' ἐκάστην πλεονεξίας καὶ ἀδικίας τοῖς ἰδίοις ἡμῶν ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδομεν διερχόμενοι τὰ θέματα τῆς βασιλείας ἡμῶν καὶ πρὸς τὰ ταξείδια ἀπερχόμενοι...

Ἵθεν καὶ ἡ βασιλεία ἡμῶν κατὰ τὸν τόπον διαβαίνουσα καὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐγκλήσει τῶν πενήτων διαγνοῦσα τὰ τούτου οἰκήματα πολυτελῆ ὄντα κατέστρεψεν ἕως ἐδάφους, καὶ τοῖς πένησι τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἀποδέδωκεν, ἐκείνῳ δὲ κατέλιπεν ὅπερ ἐξ ἀρχῆς δημοσίου καὶ τῶν χωριτῶν ἓνα πάλιν αὐτὸν ἐποίησεν...

Svoronos, N. (ed.), *Les nouvelles des empereurs macédoniens concernant la terre et les stratiotes* (Athens 1994), pp. 201, 203.

## Χρονολόγιο

866: Nikephoros Maleinos suppresses the rebellion of Symbatios

beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century: Marriage between the daughter of Eudokimos Maleinos and Bardas Phokas. Birth of the later emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, Leo and Constantine Phokas

953: Leo Maleinos is killed in the battles against the Arabs in Syria

955: Constantine Maleinos succeeds Leo Phokas as strategos of Cappadocia

968/9: Eustathios Maleinos assumes the duties of strategos of Antioch and Lykandos

976-979: Eustathios Maleinos participates in the civil conflict next to the usurper Bardas Skleros

987: Bardas Phokas is proclaimed emperor in front of members of the most powerful families of Asia Minor in the house of Eustathios Maleinos



987-989: Rebellion of Bardas Phokas. Eustathios Maleinos participates next to the usurper and commands a part of the rebellious armies

995: Eustathios Maleinos welcomes Basil II and his armies returning from a campaign in the East in his estates in Cappadocia

following 995: Eustathios Maleinos moves to Constantinople following the decision of Basil II and remains there under custody.

Following the death of Eustathios (end of 10<sup>th</sup> or beginning of 11<sup>th</sup> century), Basil II confiscates his fortune

996: Publishing of the Novella by Basil II, in which the illegal wealth of the Maleinos, the Phokas and Mouselis families is condemned

second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century: Issuing of seals by members of the Maleinos family, surviving until today

1084: A chrysobull by Alexios I Komnenos from the archive of the Hagia Lavra monastery mentions a scion of the Maleinos family, a landowner from Thessaloniki

1185: Rebellion of Alexios Komnenos against Andronikos II Komnenos. A member of the Maleinos family participates

10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century: A branch of the Maleinos family is mentioned in Calabria of southern Italy

## Βοηθ. Κατάλογοι

Biographic notes of prominent members of the Maleinos family

**Nikephoros:** The first known scion of the family, appearing in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. He suppressed the rebellion of Symbatios in 866.

**Eustathios:** He lived in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. He was most probably a brother or son of Nikephoros. He was a patrikios and a high military official. Through Eustathios, one can follow the trace of the Maleinos family.

**Eudokimos:** Son of Eustathios. He was married to the daughter of a certain Adralestos, a patrikios and a relative of Romanos I Lekapenos (920-944). He lived in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

**Michael (secular name Samuel):** Son of Eudokimos, the later saint Michael. He was born ca. 894. Following the death of Leo VI (886-912), he became a monk. He was the teacher of saint Athanasios Athonites. He exerted considerable influence on his nephew, Nikephoros II Phokas (963-969). He died in 961.

**Constantine:** Son of Eudokimos and brother of Michael. He was a patrikios and strategos of Cappadocia (since 955). He participated in the battles against the Arabs in Syria.

**Anonymous female member of the Maleinos family:** Daughter of Eudokimos and sister of Michael and Constantine. She was married to Bardas Phokas. She gave birth to the later emperor Nikephoros II Phokas, Leo and Constantine.

**Leo:** Presumably a son of the first known member of the Maleinos family, Nikephoros. He participated in the battles against the Arabs in Syria and was killed in 953.

**Eustathios:** Son of Constantine. He was strategos of Antioch and Lykandos in 968/9. At the time of the rebellion of Bardas Skleros (976-979), he fought with the armies of the usurper as a military commander. He participated in the rebellion of Bardas Phokas (987-989), who was proclaimed emperor in his house in Charsianon. Following the assassination of Bardas Phokas, magistros Eustathios was not severely punished but he was removed from state offices. He welcomed emperor Basil II (976-1025) and his armies returning from a campaign in the East in his estates in Cappadocia. The emperor took him to Constantinople and kept him there under custody.



**Συγγραφή :** *Κρσμανοιτ Βοjανα*

**Μετάφραση :** *Χρυσανθόπουλος Δημήτριος*

**Για παραπομπή :** *Κρσμανοιτ Βοjανα , "Μαλείνος Family ", Εγκυκλοπαίδεια*

*Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Κωνσταντινούπολη*

*URL: <<http://www.ehw.gr/1.aspx?id=7766>>*

Following the death of Eustathios, Basil II confiscated the estates of the family. Eustathios and his father are mentioned in the Novella of the year 996 by Basil II and condemned for their illegal wealth.