The Byzantine Hellene
The Life of Emperor Theodore Laskaris and Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century

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This book tells the extraordinary story of Theodore II Laskaris, an emperor who ruled over the Byzantine state of Nicaea established in Asia Minor after the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204. Theodore Laskaris was a man of literary talent and keen intellect. His action-filled life, youthful mentality, anxiety about communal identity (Anatolian, Roman, and Hellenic), ambitious reforms cut short by an early death, and thoughts and feelings are all reconstructed on the basis of his rich and varied writings. His original philosophy, also explored here, led him to a critique of scholasticism in the West, a mathematically inspired theology, and a political vision of Hellenism. A personal biography, a ruler’s biography, and an intellectual biography, this highly illustrated book opens a vista onto the eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, and the Balkans in the thirteenth century, as seen from the vantage point of a key political actor and commentator.

Introduction; 1. Byzantium in exile; 2. ‘The Holy Land, my mother Anatolia’; 3. ‘I was brought up as usual for a royal child’; 4. Pursuit of learning; 5. Power-sharing; 6. Friends, foes, and politics; 7. Elena and the embassy of the Marquis; 8. Sole emperor of the Romans; 9. The philosopher; 10. The proponent of Hellenism; Epilogue; Appendix I: the chronology of the works of Theodore Laskaris; Appendix II: chronology of the letters; Appendix III: the mystery illness; Appendix IV: the manuscript portraits; Appendix V: the burial sarcophagus.

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