Background Stories of the 12 Main Characters of No Budget Films’ *War of the Sicilian Vespers* (2020)

I. Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos of Byzantium- Voiced by the movie’s director, writer, and producer Powee Celdran; a returning character from the previous film *Summer of 1261* returning as the film’s lead character is an anti-hero, Michael Palaiologos who obviously was a historical character and Byzantine emperor (1261-1282), born in 1223 to the Byzantine Greek Palaiologos family of the military aristocracy (*Dynatoi*) when the empire was in exile in Nicaea, he grew up a troubled life rising to power through scheming as he had a singular goal, to retake Constantinople. Michael was also the first person in Byzantine history to have the position of police general (*Megas Konostaulos*) given to him by the Nicaean emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes; though the young Michael being a troublemaker was forced by this exiled emperor John III to prove his innocence by holding red hot irons in which Michael did, immediately the emperor let him go even giving him the title of the grand police general of the empire, a position the Byzantines adopted from the Latins as the *Konostaulos* is the Latin equivalent of “Constable” though in Byzantium the role of Michael as the Grand Constable was to lead the Latin mercenaries, at the same time John III married off his 13-year-old grand-niece Theodora to 30-year-old Michael in 1253. Michael became Byzantine emperor through several plots, first poisoning the emperor of Nicaea John III’s son Theodore II in 1258 and although both Theodore and Michael were childhood friends, they became rivals as Theodore favored the commoners having important roles in the imperial court while Michael as a traditionalist supported the nobility but since he was humiliated by the emperor, he fled Nicaea for a year (1256-57) to serve in the army of the neighboring Seljuk sultan. However, it is unclear in real history if Michael really did poison Theodore II as the real Theodore II only ruling for 4 years had epilepsy like his father, but Theodore’s sudden death could suggest someone most likely his rival Michael poisoned him and though the movie says Michael hated Theodore II for humiliating him though in real history both Michael and Theodore were at odds with each basically for political reasons. Theodore though had favored commoners over the traditional Byzantine elite and sought to make these commoners particularly the Mouzalon brothers the new Byzantine elite and before dying he named his friend, George Mouzalon who was his longtime friend regent to his young son and heir John IV Laskaris but only 9 days after Theodore’s death, Michael successfully plotted to eliminate George Mouzalon who was murdered right next to the late emperor’s tomb, the real historical text says Michael revealed he was behind the murder when Mouzalon’s wife came to him for protection and Michael simply told her to speak nothing of it or she will suffer the same fate as her husband. Early in 1259, Michael obtained the rank of co-emperor and was really the one behind the scenes of the boy John IV’s rule and it was Michael and not young John...
Laskaris that masterminded the recapture of Constantinople in 1261, although in 1260 Michael himself did try to lay siege to Latin occupied Constantinople but failed. With the Byzantines being able to take back Constantinople in July of 1261, Michael was immediately crowned emperor in August even if John Laskaris was still ruling at Nicaea, though at the end of the year, in fact in the boy's birthday Michael surprised him by having one of his men Stephanos to blind the boy and imprisoning him for life at a castle at the southern shore of the Marmara Sea. As Michael Palaiologos restored Byzantine rule to Constantinople in 1261, he swore he would restore the empire seeing all the mess the Latin occupiers couldn't even manage to clean up and for doing this, Michael is sometimes called “the new Constantine the Great”. Aside from being a talented statesman and respected general, Michael was a skilled diplomat who thought of bribing potential allies and making alliances as way to keep his empire alive although Michael as emperor care more for the survival of his empire than for the happiness and freedom of his people that in 1273 at the 2nd Church Council of Lyon, Michael sent Byzantine clergymen to pledge allegiance to the pope, however within only a few years the union did not turn out to be successful and Michael being excommunicated from the Orthodox Church was excommunicated by the Catholic in 1282 for siding with the pope’s enemy Peter III of Aragon and with his sudden death in December of 1282, he was neither Orthodox nor Catholic, therefore not given a proper Christian burial instead his son and successor Andronikos II buried him in the port town of Selymbria in Thrace. As the lead character of Sicilian Vespers and its prequel Summer of 1261, the character of Michael Palaiologos was voiced by the movie’s director Powee Celdran who personally created the personality in these 2 movies for the Byzantine emperor so therefore he decided he could only voice him giving the character a hybrid European accent with a mix of Greek, German, and Scandinavian in contrast to the other Byzantine emperor character of Nikephoros II Phokas who he voiced using an American Southern accent; he too had voiced in total 3 Roman emperors including the 2 Byzantine emperors Michael VIII and Nikephoros II and in previous NBF media, the 1st century Roman emperor Claudius I. Part of the concept of Michael’s character when creating in for the previous Summer of 1261 was the character of Ulfric Stormcloak from the game Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (2011) in which most of Michael’s personality and accent was based on. Out of all the characters in “War of the Sicilian Vespers”, Michael has the most speaking lines having 27 recorded lines including his 3 lines in the deleted scenes. Among all No Budget Films characters, No Budget Films director Powee Celdran certainly says Michael surely has the most complex personality who he can relate to, in which the character of Michael seen as the stereotypical medieval tyrannical, selfish, brutal, and scheming lunatic ruler who did not care much about his subjects or what anyone else though but at the same time was a visionary and one who truly cared about the future and survival of his empire even if it meant taking away its soul which was Orthodoxy. On the other hand, Michael’s personality makes him very much like a lot of Byzantine emperors
of the past who were very controversial yet very effective rulers mainly because of their controversial acts; these past emperors include Justinian II (r. 685-695 / 705-711) who ended being overthrown twice with his nose mutilated for attempting to make the Byzantine Empire great again when it was impossible to do so and Leo III (r. 717-741) as well as his son Constantine V (r. 741-775) who were an effective ruler but despised for being the emperor to execute Iconoclasm in the empire which caused such unrest and Michael was no different from these rulers as he did rule strongly and only thought of doing what was right for the empire’s survival. Michael's reasons for converting his empire to Catholicism meanwhile wasn't overall selfish since true enough he did hate the Orthodox Church but rather this was to gain the protection from the armies of the west and the pope as the restored Byzantium was in great trouble, attacked on all sides north by the new empires of Serbia and Bulgaria, in the west by Charles of Anjou’s Sicily, east by the Turks and even deadlier than all was the threat of the Mongols who have already been attacking Central Europe by this time; in fact in one of Michael’s rambling monologues in the movie he talks about how Byzantium at the current situation was in great trouble though thankfully the Mongols did not go as far as attacking Byzantium then. However, the pope Martin IV rather chose to support the growing kingdom of Charles of Anjou rather than Michael’s dying Byzantine Empire mainly because the pope like Charles was a Frenchman. The personality of the emperor Michael Palaiologos was carefully developed between the 2 films he appears in; in Summer of 1261 he appears more positive in attitude although at the same time greedy and scheming for power while 21 years later in Sicilian Vespers, he appears to have deteriorated in health becoming a cold and tired old man after a long stressful rule losing many loved ones including his younger brother John who died in battle against the Latins in which Michael in the movie says was killed at the Battle of Benevento in 1266 against Charles of Anjou’s forces though it was Charles on Anjou’s threat especially after Louis IX’s death that made Michael worry even more as Charles’ older brother Louis IX made sure Byzantium would not be harmed by any western kingdom and their armies. Michael’s complex personality shows him as a skilled soldier and politician emperor but quite the uneducated type despite his great intelligence and wealth but also ignorant in terms of arts and intellectual life even if his dynasty the Palaiologi’s legacy would be in the Byzantine art scene though the movie when introducing Michael shows him writing a book, which is mainly his way of praising himself and he would spend the later years of his reign isolating himself in his palace growing more and more distant from his people and family due to all the pressure he’s gotten over the years. As the movie progresses, he has grown increasingly guilty for blinding John Laskaris in 1261 which is why Michael experiences many hallucinations including seeing his world freeze with a phantom of the blinded boy John Laskaris haunting him. On the other hand, Michael also brings up the subject of the origins of his Palaiologos family in the movie saying they are descendants of Imperial Rome and true enough a theory says that the
Palaiologos family originated as Romans from the city of Viterbo in Italy and moved east in the 4th century when Constantine the Great moved the capital to Constantinople, though the Palaiologos family was never mentioned in history until the 11th century first appearing as local lords in Asia Minor until rising to power in the Byzantine army under Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118) who was in fact an ancestor of Michael and his family; meanwhile Palaiologos simply means “old word” in Greek. Real history however does not say exactly what Michael had been doing in Constantinople in 1282 but indeed 1282 was the year of his death and in the movie Michael left Constantinople for good to escape the mobs that were constantly wanting to overthrow him for signing the infamous Church Union which is why in the movie he fled the city though his intention was to head to France himself and do whatever he could to finish off the threat, although at this point he had started going insane. The last part Michael appears in is at his death scene on December 11, 1282 in a farm somewhere in Thrace as rides quickly along the Thracian countryside (European Turkey) outside Constantinople until encountering the assassin Hugh Sully who Charles of Anjou sent to kill him, however Michael kills Sully instead but dies out of exhaustion fearing that Charles of Anjou would now destroy Byzantium for good. In real history however, Michael most likely did not get in contact with an assassin Charles sent after him even if he and Charles were archenemies, so most likely in real history Michael still died in a farm in Thrace but most likely because of natural causes, however in the movie before he left Constantinople it is indicated that he already had some sickness as he coughs and this sickness is what could have hastened his death, though it is not very likely in history if only a farmer noticed his death not even knowing Michael was the emperor. At the end however, Michael indeed redeemed himself for his evil actions as he in fact killed off the assassin who was supposed to kill John Laskaris too who Michael had blinded before, yet Michael saved his missing son Andronikos as well as Sully was after Andronikos too. Michael among many other previous No Budget Films characters like Lars Fjallraven also voiced by Powee Celdran in 2017’s Bellum Aeternam: The Age of Eternal War has had the most number of swear words in both films Michael appeared in as well showing such cold attitude to visitors like Dr. Giovanni from Sicily and a dark sense of humor like when threatening to drink from the skulls of the angry mob, though in Sicilian Vespers Michael says some lines in Greek his native language, some in Italian to his Genoese personal captain Ezio, and French when confronting Hugh Sully in Thrace and possibly the real Michael VIII knew some Italian and French for diplomatic purposes; these French, Italian, and Greek lines were voiced by Powee Celdran as well. The facial features including his beard and hair of the Lego Michael Palaiologos character was based on his actual appearance seen in a Byzantine manuscript of the historian George Pachymeres depicting him made in his time, his outfit and cape came from a Lego Gondor guard figure from the Lego Lord of the Rings sets made to look like the Byzantine imperial robes and in both Michael's appearances in Summer of 1261 and War of the Sicilian
Vespers, he wears the same outfit the only difference in Sicilian Vespers is that his brown hair turned gray as he aged 21 years as in 1261 he was around 38 and in Sicilian Vespers he was 58-59, being 59 at his death. In Sicilian Vespers, only emperor Michael VIII and the King of Sicily Charles of Anjou carry golden swords as both characters are the main arch-enemy rulers of the film, while in Summer of 1261 only Michael and Baldwin II who were also arch-enemy rulers carried golden swords. The last time Michael physically appears in the movie is at the very end appearing as a ghost in the harbor of Sicily to his son, the new emperor Andronikos II, while flashback scenes throughout the movie show a younger Michael by the time of 1261 including the scene when he is crowned emperor in 1261 with the young Andronikos and in one part wearing a full set of armor which was when he joined the Seljuk Sultan’s army in around 1256-57 before returning to poison Theodore II in 1258 where Michael is seen in a different outfit with a hood, and during the outdoor scene in Constantinople when the mob tries to attack him, Michael wears the same usual imperial robes but with a hood, he then is the only character in NBF media to wear these imperial robes. Now if not for securing the Byzantine Empire from western threats and establishing the long-lived Palaiologos Dynasty which lasted till the end of Byzantium in 1453, the other legacy of Michael VIII would be leaving Byzantine borders in Asia Minor unchecked that by the time of his death in 1282, the Turks had already begun raiding and even if he restored Byzantium, Michael’s constant spending on alliances and wars led to Byzantium’s near bankruptcy. When becoming emperor in 1261, Michael VIII had a promising start seen as the hero who would beat the Latins once and for all but only ended up becoming submissive to them though the turning point would be when he betrayed the same people he restored the empire for by giving up Byzantium’s pride, Greek Orthodoxy but all this was to keep Byzantium alive; also Michael VIII ended up depending too much on foreign assistance such as funds from the Jews who he was close with and armies from the Armenians of the Cilician Kingdom in Southern Asia Minor and of course with Genoa but at least the established a lasting and effective alliance with the naval power of the Republic of Genoa in Italy giving them the quarter of Pera across the Golden Horn in Constantinople. With Michael’s death, Byzantium ironically gained the same freedom back from Western domination as they did in 1261 mainly because the infamous Church Union was cancelled and Orthodoxy made free again for worship; now on the other hand in real history which was not shown in the movie, Michael’s Church Union and his treatment to Orthodox Christianity was even more extreme as he went as far as torturing and imprisoning Orthodox loyalists to secure the presence of Latin Catholicism in his empire, though the end was still tragic as Michael was both ostracized by the pope and his own people. Michael VIII I think would certainly not one of Byzantium’s best emperors even if he restored the empire after 57 years of Latin rule but he is for me one of Byzantium’s most underrated and tragic rulers going from hero to zero and in many ways is an anti-hero being the protagonist of the movie but in his actions was a
villainous ruler but if he were the movie’s main villain he would be an anti-villain
since his intentions were not at all that evil but really to protect his empire. At the
end, at least the generally tough and controversial ruler Michael VIII at least saved
his empire basically by paying off the rebellion that successfully beat the French in
Sicily as they were one step to invading Byzantium again. Michael VIII due to his
controversial reign and policies made him not so much remembered as a great ruler
yet still an interesting person who in his spare time liked writing works to praise
himself for comfort and eat horse meat; out of the 8 Michael’s who ruled Byzantium
he is still the most memorable one.

II. Andronikos II Palaiologos- Voiced by Mario Puyat who also is the movie’s
co-producer; the character of Andronikos the actual active protagonist of the story
introduced as a main character in this film, the son of the ruling Byzantine emperor
Michael VIII who embarks on a quest to prove his worth in being the next emperor.
Now if there was a case of a father and son being polar opposites, Michael VIII and
his son Andronikos is a perfect example as Michael was a strong iron ruler being a
skilled soldier and politician at the same time who may have been well respected by
his army but seen as an oppressive ruler by his people, meanwhile his son
Andronikos was totally different as he was a highly educated young man and at the
same time a lover of the arts, music, and anything academic and had despised war
however his peaceful qualities did not make him the right emperor for his time
wherein Byzantium was weak and besieged on all sides therefore needing a tough
ruler who could stand up to the enemies through any means especially violent ones.
Andronikos was the first son of Michael VIII and Theodora, born in 1259 when the
Byzantine Empire was still at exile in Nicaea just shortly after Michael rose up to
being co-emperor of the young John IV Laskaris. Andronikos though grew up in
Constantinople being crowned co-emperor in 1261 the moment his father took back
the city and was crowned the restored emperor and growing up, Andronikos was
educated by Byzantium’s best scholars and had a bright future ahead of him set by
his father. When grown up however, Andronikos came to doubt all of Byzantium’s
greatness seeing more and more that it was a dying empire which was so badly
damaged by the 4th Crusade of 1204 that nothing could bring it back, therefore
thinking of his father as nothing more than an idiot with imperial ambitions making
him grow more and more distant from him and instead being closer to his mother
Theodora who also grew distant from Michael and it was through his mother that
Andronikos became what he was, an intellectual and patron of the arts the same
way she was. Andronikos is first introduced as the movie progresses first seen in the
palace of Constantinople lying drunk on the floor of the throne room next to an icon
which he probably painted showing he was enjoying the good life as an imperial
family member. However, his father soon asks him to accompany the army to Sicily
on a mission to start the rebellion against the French but Andronikos is reluctant
saying he was not meant for it rather wanting to just stick to his good life drinking
and enjoying the arts but his father scolds him for that saying that it is a sign of a weak ruler. Andronikos still refuses to leave for Sicily until both his mother and father convince him that he does not need to fight but rather to just use his mission as a diplomacy lesson for he will observe how to bribe off potential allies to get rid of a common enemy. Andronikos leaves Constantinople with a heavy heart but is given encouragement by his father although at this point he has grown very suspicious about his father knowing he had blinded the boy John Laskaris many years ago without knowing why his father did it making Andronikos think more and more of his father as a lunatic, also Andronikos was a faithful Orthodox Christian deep inside but since his father signed a Church Union with the pope, Andronikos was forced to obey with it though this made him hate his father more. Arriving in Sicily, Andronikos heads straight up to Charles of Anjou's castle in Messina sneaking in with only 3 Byzantine companions who are all foreign in blood- the Latin commander Stephanos, the Varangian Sviatoslav, and the Armenian Haran after tricking the French guards by speaking French. Andronikos duels Charles himself to settle the matter on who will rule Byzantium, almost wins but is knocked unconscious by Charles’ general Hugh Sully and at his comma, Andronikos sees visions of an uncertain future seeing the odds are too great for Byzantium and worse seeing the Byzantines defeated in Sicily and he himself executed. When waking up, Andronikos is spared by Charles’ secretary Jean Clovis as a way to further his ambitions and has Andronikos escape the castle by jumping down into the water and climb into Jean’s rival’s boat in order to fame the rival. Andronikos ends up wandering for a time though in his dialogue said he had the ship drop him off in Asia Minor back in Byzantine territory wherein he found his way back to Nicaea, the city he was born which now became abandoned due to his father moving everything there back to Constantinople. At Nicaea, Andronikos decides to just start life all over again tearing down the city and burning all its arts, treasures, and flags while all alone there out of pure frustration coming to realize that there is no future for Byzantium, until the ghost of the late general Alexios appears to him to encourage him that there is still a future ahead if Andronikos continues the fight against the French. The ghost of Alexios meanwhile gives more encouragement to Andronikos telling him the real reason his father blinded John Laskaris, which was to secure the dynasty in order for Andronikos to succeed his father as Michael had indeed set some high hopes for his son to succeed him, Alexios too encourages Andronikos to return and continue the fight or else everything Alexios and Michael fought for in 1261 will be of nothing. As Alexios shows Andronikos the true relics his father had looking for all this time kept safe in Nicaea, Andronikos now has the energy to return and follow his destiny; now this part in the movie where Andronikos feels like giving up until encouraged by Alexios’ ghost was heavily inspired from Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker with Andronikos being exactly like Rey wanting to give up and the ghost of Alexios being like the encouraging ghost of Luke Skywalker. The next scene Andronikos comes back is
when his father had already died and somehow he made his way back to Thrace and here he accepts his claim to the Byzantine throne and despite having some conflict with his father, he buries him outside the capital out of respect or else his tomb would be desecrated by the majority who had hated him and becoming the new emperor, Andronikos’ first acts are to cancel his father’s infamous Church Union and allow free worship to all Orthodox Christians with no more fear but also to send more men to finish off the fight against the French in Sicily. As the war rages in Sicily, Andronikos as emperor stays in his father’s study the whole time worried on the outcome even passing out due to exhaustion hearing voices of the past dead Romans and Byzantines that encourage him and as his side wins the war, he gets up. At the end, Andronikos II as emperor returns to Sicily to install Peter III as king and give them the relics as a gift so that the Sicilians will forever remember Byzantium’s service to them. Next to Michael, Andronikos has the second longest screen time as well as the second most number of lines in the movie and with his father are the only 2 characters with the most screen time; he is voiced by Mario Puyat in an English accent who at the same time also voiced Andronikos’ French lines in which he spoke to the French guards in Charles’ fortress in Sicily as a way of pretending to be French in order to be let in revealing that Andronikos did know a bit of French and possibly the real Andronikos in history did know some French for diplomacy reasons. Although the character of Andronikos had his first and now only major role in the 2020 Sicilian Vespers movie, the character although appeared much earlier on in one chapter of the 2019 deleted scenes of Summer of 1261 which was however already passed the setting of the Sicilian Vespers movie in 1282 and in this deleted scenes, the timeline already goes forward in time to the year 1290 and Andronikos II as emperor visits the blinded John Laskaris confined in a monastery and apologizes for his father’s part in blinding him revealing also that his father had died years ago in Thrace- which was then not yet seen in NBF media- though John forgives him and is released from years of confinement. In real history, this really did happen as in 1290 Andronikos II did undo his father’s deeds and released John Laskaris allowing him to live in Constantinople. However, many of Andronikos’ scenes in the Sicilian Vespers are quite historically inaccurate as there are really not much records on Andronikos’ early life except that he was crowned his father’s co-emperor in 1261 and was forced to support his father’s Church Union even if he did not like it, also as co-emperor Andronikos was definitely not trained by taking a risk and travelling to Sicily, rather being his father’s co-emperor all he possibly did was attend meetings with generals and diplomats to get the sense of what it’s like to run an empire and the scene where Andronikos tears down Nicaea himself and wanders off for months only returning by the time his father died was also not factual to history, this was all just done to add more story to Andronikos as the hero of the story following the classic arc of protagonists in film. Though Andronikos appeared quickly in the Summer of 1261 deleted scenes already as emperor, the personality of his character was heavily developed for the War of the Sicilian Vespers movie and
though not the lead character of the movie the way his father was, Andronikos was supposed to be the movie’s active protagonist who is supposed to follow the movie protagonist’s character arc at first being reluctant but forced to follow his destiny but at the end actively pursued and achieves his goal which was to succeed his father as emperor. Again, the historical Andronikos II did not have this exciting story the way he did in the movie as historically speaking, it was quite dangerous for an imperial heir to travel on a risky mission to a foreign land with minimal protection, so rather in real history, the young Andronikos II simply just succeeded his father after his father’s sudden death. In reality also, like in the movie Andronikos was around 23 at the 1282 setting but was already married to Anna, a Hungarian princess and at least had one son who he named Michael born in 1277 named after his grandfather (Michael VIII), though the movie never showed Andronikos having a wife or son but simply as an inexperienced young man still growing up. Despite Andronikos’ character having a young age, the Lego character looks a bit mature having a beard though not a full long beard, although at an early age Byzantine men already did have beards but the Lego character is not very much based on the actual appearance of Andronikos II as most of his appearances in manuscripts depict him as an old man; in terms of outfits Andronikos had 3 different sets first being regular medieval clothes which he is introduced in, then his Byzantine military uniform of a black vest over chain-mail taken from the Gondor soldier Lego figure from the Lord of the Rings sets in which he is wearing majority of the movie, and at the end parts he is wearing imperial robes and his father’s black cape as the emperor which the character also wears in the Summer of 1261 deleted scenes and for weapons Andronikos simply carries a Lego Roman Gladius sword kept in a sheath. Now in terms of Lego Andronikos’ military outfit the movie makes it look like he’s worn it for months and true enough in the Sicilian Vespers deleted scenes he is seen wearing it for the last time returning to Constantinople all scarred and dirty and here the ghost of Nikephoros II from Summer of 1261 reappears telling Andronikos to hide the coronation shield after he is crowned emperor. Now if you look very closely, in his vision scene in Charles’ fortress in Sicily, you would see an old man with a long white beard, this here is Andronikos II as an old man in the future and the Sicilian Vespers deleted scene shows the old white bearded Andronikos II collapse and die and true enough he died this way in 1332 after being dethroned 4 years earlier by his grandson also named Andronikos. The movie shows Andronikos II beginning his reign well with a promising start but true enough his reign was one of the most tragic in Byzantine history even more than his father and rather than being the strong ruler like his father in which his father wanted him to be, Andronikos was the opposite and instead just did what he loved most, neglecting war and the army that the empire would start losing so much territory while he also put all his attention and the empire’s money on arts and culture yet the worst was to come in his reign, the Ottomans began their empire and to combat this threat Andronikos II did not raise an army but depended on Catalan
mercenaries for help in which it cost him too much so they rebelled, though the most tragic was that old Andronikos faced a civil war with his grandson and in 1328 was deposed and had to die in a monastery but at least on the bright side, the real Andronikos II began his reign peacefully because his father shortly before it eliminated the threat of Charles of Anjou in Sicily clearing the way for Andronikos though the threat of the Ottomans and the Catalans’ betray was unforeseen, however at the end of the movie Andronikos mentions a new threat rising in the east in which he says is the Turkish warlord Osman, the founder of the Ottoman Empire which he suspects is still nothing. The name Andronikos happens to be a very common Byzantine Greek name though Andronikos was named after his paternal grandfather the general Andronikos Palaiolgos as it is the Greek tradition since Ancient Greece that the eldest male child be named after their paternal grandfather yet Andronikos II’s eldest grandson who deposed and succeeded him was also named the same; coincidentally, in 1182 exactly 100 years before Andronikos II came to power, another Andronikos usurped power in Byzantine Constantinople and became Emperor Andronikos I Komnenos the following year but was beaten to death by the same mob who put him into power 2 years later after ruling a very short but bloody reign. Andronikos though happens to be quite a bad name for a Byzantine emperor since the first one was said to be a bloody torturing emperor who ended up beaten to death and the second being a weak ruler though it was not so much his fault Andronikos II was weak, it was mainly because he came into power too young and did not share the same strengths his father Michael VIII had and usually a dynasty’s founder is always a tough one while his successors were not always strong ones.

III. Alexios Strategopoulos Caesar- A returning character from Summer of 1261 voiced by Santiago Roxas, former No Budget Films producer; was the main protagonist of the previous film Summer of 1261 but only a supporting role in its sequel War of the Sicilian Vespers. In the previous film, the young general Alexios Komnenos Strategopoulos was the hero of the story who led the attack to take back Constantinople for the Byzantines in 1261, though in the next film he appears 21 years later as a much older man having only less than a minute of screen time when alive, the rest of his small screen time as a ghost. The No Budget Films version of Alexios though happens to be very different from the historical one despite using the same name, as the general Alexios in real history was said to be an old man way much older than Michael probably around 60 by the time he recaptured Constantinople from the Latins in 1261 having had a long military career before though first recorded in only around 1253 and by the time of 1282 he already dead since the recorded date of Alexios’ death in history is sometime around 1275 and definitely in Byzantium and not in Sicily whereas in No Budget Films, Alexios was 33 in 1261 taking back the city and in the 1282 setting of Sicilian Vespers he was older by 21 years. In the No Budget Films story, Alexios’ story was highly altered making
born in the Empire of Nicaea around 1228 as well as being a half-blood as his father was a Byzantine general and mother an Englishwoman, daughter of an English Crusader who attacked Constantinople in 1204, which was made as his story to explain why he speaks with a distinct Scouse English accent whereas the real Alexios was a full-blooded Byzantine Greek. Alexios’ last name Komnenos though hints that he is in a way related to the Byzantine imperial Komnenos family that ruled from 1081 to 1185 and at his time was the ruling family of the break-away Byzantine Empire of Trebizond, meanwhile Alexios’ additional last name Strategopoulos in which is always referred to is a title in Greek which means “son of a general” as Strategos is the Greek word for “military commander” while in the Sicilian Vespers movie Alexios also uses the title of Caesar which is confusing since this title would always be remembered as a Roman imperial title though the Byzantines ended up using Caesar as an honorary title for successful generals and Alexios was named it by Michael VIII after taking back Constantinople in 1261, in addition Michael made Alexios a member of the Byzantine Senate too. No Budget Films though decided to not stick to real history and instead of having Alexios die before the movie’s setting and not make an appearance, it was instead decided that Alexios would make a comeback in the sequel since he had the lead role in previous film, however since the plot was different from 1261 now with Andronikos taking the place of Alexios as the lead hero, Alexios was simply returned only so that his story continues but was killed off at the start less than 2 minutes after he first appears, though this may seem very shocking to just simply kill off the hero of the previous film in the sequel but at the end this is reality meaning due to his age and absence from war, Alexios would’ve been weaker and more prone to being killed. Now in this movie’s 1282 setting, the much older Alexios appears wearing the same outfit he wore in the previous film, which was the Gondor soldier’s armor from the Lego Lord of the Rings sets except using a hood instead of a helmet and his black hair with gray marks, though using the same cape and sword sheath but instead of using the sword and shield of Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas as he did in the previous movie, Alexios in this movie returned to using his old sword as in the deleted scenes of Summer of 1261 he is seen to have buried Nikephoros II’s sword and shield given to him by Nikephoros’ ghost. By 1282, Alexios now much older had not fought in many years the last time back in the 1260s against the Turks in Asia Minor after taking back Constantinople from the Latins though here in the No Budget Films story, Alexios achieved the rank of Megas Domestikos or grand general of the Byzantine Empire which was previously used by Michael VIII’s brother John but after John’s death to the Latin armies in 1266, the title passed on to Alexios till his own death in 1282, though in real history Alexios held this title only in 1259 while between then and 1282 several others held the title. In the Sicilian Vespers movie, Alexios is first seen in Sicily having led the small Byzantine team there to investigate on the matter but as the people begin to revolt, Alexios readies his men to attack and charges into battle himself but is confronted by a much larger armored man,
Charles’ general Hugh Sully and Alexios not having injured his leg back in 1261 after falling off a tower and not experiencing battle in years has grown slower unable to match Sully that Sully ends up severing his arm and stabbing him in the chest to bleed out to death. Alexios simply dies in front of his men in the town square of Panormos in Sicily believing the Byzantium has to face another conflict with the Latins. In the previous movie, Alexios as the main protagonist was like Andronikos in this movie at the beginning being reluctant believing he has no purpose but as Alexios won over the Latins and took back Constantinople he immediately gained hope and inspiration and now believing himself to be a true Byzantine who fought to the death for his empire and emperor but at the same time he was overall a loyal supporter of Michael VIII ever since no matter how much the people hated Michael though Alexios was overall a general who put fighting for the empire as his top priority and did chose to not care too much in Michael’s scheming like in eliminating the Laskaris family despite supporting Michael in it. In the previous movie as well, Alexios may have been quite a mysterious character being able to see visions of the past while in this movie, the much older Alexios no longer has such visions except seeing himself back in battle in 1261 before he duels Sully. After Alexios’ death in the movie, Michael is distraught when hearing the news but was told by the Sicilian doctor and diplomat Giovanni Procida that Alexios had gown old and fat no longer used to battle causing his quick death. Though to give more justice to Alexios’ character, No Budget Films simply did not let him die in Sicily and not come back, rather later on in the movie but also in the same year 1282, Alexios reappears in the form of a ghost to Andronikos in Nicaea encouraging Andronikos to continue the fight or waste everything Alexios and Andronikos’ father Michael fought for back in 1261, here Alexios also reveals he had known many imperial secrets both from the Laskaris family and from Michael. Alexios tells Andronikos that Michael VIII blinded John Laskaris in 1261 not out of hatred but to secure the succession of the Palaiologos family and so that Andronikos can become emperor without anyone challenging him, true enough Andronikos did become emperor without any Byzantine challenger. Meanwhile in the 1261 movie, Michael had always been at it to claim Byzantium’s most sacred relics in which the ruling Laskaris family of Nicaea were hiding though Michael as it turns out only ended up with fake ones, though Alexios knew where the real ones were which were hidden in a vault in the old imperial palace in Nicaea and Alexios swore to the previous emperors John III, Theodore II, and John IV Laskaris that he would guard them with his life never to tell anyone and not even Michael its location but as a ghost he trusts Andronikos will keep them safe so he leads Andronikos to the relics and Andronikos then takes it as Alexios disappears. To make the ghost of Alexios, the Lego character still wears the same black soldier’s outfit but with tissue wrapped around him as an aura while in the edit a white light filter was added to him to make it look as if he is a ghost but even as ghost, Alexios could hold objects like a torch but not be affected by fire as he first comes out in the burning boat that Andronikos burns out of.
frustration, though despite having his arm severed before dying, the ghost of Alexios appears with his severed arm still intact, then at the final scene of the movie the ghost of Alexios next to Michael's ghost appear in the harbor of Panormos in Sicily looking at Andronikos with pride. Alexios in his living form also appears in the deleted scenes of this movie in the scene when Michael discovers the relics, he got from the Laskaris family back in 1261 were fake making him react angrily but Alexios due to keeping his promise does not reveal to Michael where the true relics are. The relics meanwhile are said to be Byzantium’s most sacred ones which Alexios says are the bones of the empire’s founders the emperor St. Constantine the Great and his mother St. Helena though these relics were only an addition by No Budget Films into the story while No Budget Films’ version of Alexios is not fully true to the book, rather he is just based on the real Alexios and for his comeback in the Sicilian Vespers, Alexios was the one character that went from being previously the hero protagonist to becoming the old mentor Jedi Master ghost in the sequel film- like Luke Skywalker in the original Star Wars trilogy to Luke Skywalker in the sequel trilogy. On the other hand, Santiago Roxas who voiced Alexios in the previous movie also reprised his role as Alexios in the same Scouse accent- the accent of Liverpool, England- and the Scouse accent was chosen for the character since it was one of the accents the voicer was most talented at in which he also voiced a previous No Budget Films character in, the Belarusian factory worker Alexei Zalessky in Whiteforest: A 1984 Story and like Alexios who was a Byzantine with a Scouse accent, it was odd too back then for a Belarusian to speak with it.

IV. Dr. Giovanni Procida- A new character introduced in this film War of the Sicilian Vespers voiced by Jon Cabrera; Dr. Giovanni Procida (or John of Procida) is a medieval Italian doctor and diplomat who is based on the real 13th century person with the same name with only a few alterations from No Budget Films. In real history, Giovanni Procida was born in 1210 in Salerno to a noble Italian family and made his name as a medical doctor and professor before becoming a diplomat for the Hohenstaufen family of the Holy Roman Empire that also ruled Sicily. Giovanni was overall a loyal supporter of the Hohenstaufen family and as an old man masterminded the Sicilian Vespers rebellion in 1282 against the French by encouraging the local Sicilians to rebel and travelling to Michael VIII’s court in Constantinople and to Peter III’s court in Spain to get assistance from both of them while the Sicilians were in rebellion against Charles of Anjou. When the French were driven away from Sicily, Giovanni was appointed in charge of the whole island by Peter III and Giovanni died in 1298 at the age of 88 due to his good health as a doctor, however some historical sources especially those loyal to the French portray him negatively as a “conspirator and enemy of law and order”. Meanwhile in No Budget Films, Giovanni Procida appears a bit younger in 1282 than the real person being around 57 and first appears in the opening scene in Sicily after Alexios dies going up to the Byzantine soldiers asking to take him with them back to
Constantinople so that he can ask Michael for aid to start a rebellion in Sicily against the French. Giovanni introduces himself to Michael VIII in Constantinople as a diplomat from Sicily who seeks Michael’s aid for financial resources to fund the rebellion in Sicily which Michael despite initially acting cold and angry to Giovanni agrees to since he would help the people of Sicily for being Byzantines and blood but more importantly because Michael and Charles of Anjou were arch-enemies and Michael would do anything to keep Charles away. Giovanni only stays in Constantinople briefly until returning to Sicily with the same team Michael sent earlier but this team with Michael's son and heir Andronikos, from here on Giovanni as seen in the film would only remain in Sicily while in history he went to both Constantinople and Aragon before returning to Sicily. As they arrive in Messina in Sicily, Giovanni pays off the bribe from Michael VIII to Count Tomaso, a local landlord of Sicily in order to start the rebellion. As Andronikos confronts Charles, Giovanni stirs up the locals of Messina through a speech to rise up and rebel against their French occupiers which they do but when the French send out their knights, the rebellious citizens flee together with Giovanni who flees to Count Tomaso’s farm in Sicily. With the arrival of Peter III of Aragon in Sicily later that year, Giovanni continues the fight and with the combined forces of the Byzantines and Aragonese, Giovanni leads the Sicilian rebels in the final battle against the French early in 1283, at the end Giovanni survives the battle as his side wins saying justice has at last been brought to Sicily and afterwards, though not seen in the movie, Peter III appoints Giovanni in charge of Sicily while Peter III rules from Aragon, whatever happens to Giovanni next is unknown. The character of Giovanni in the movie was largely based on the real Dr. Giovanni Procida except the movie portrays him to be more rugged and gritty yet at the same time very intelligent and an skilled orator but aside from being a skilled doctor and speaker, No Budget Films’ Giovanni was also a rebellious pirate longing to fight against the French oppressors of Sicily though not mentioned in the movie was a loyalist to the previous Hohenstaufen family, also in the movie Giovanni is the only Sicilian character who has an interaction with Michael VIII as he travels to Constantinople to meet Michael himself. The Lego character of Giovanni uses a beardless face and uses a medieval looking Lego body and leg pieces though wears a pirate’s Tricorn hat though some scenes show him removing it showing him having long brown hair and despite being 57, he appears quite young. In the movie, Giovanni’s character was carefully designed and is also one of the few characters who have a lot of screen time and many speaking lines made to represent the Sicilian story in the film yet Giovanni is the only character in the film who is a character is Verdi’s Sicilian Vespers opera using the name Jean Procida; the voice actor behind him Jon Cabrera had previously voiced many No Budget Films characters and portrayed Giovanni as a skilled orator though could not pronounce some confusing Byzantine names.
V. Hugh Sully- A new character introduced in this film *War of the Sicilian Vespers* voiced by Pat Claudio; the character of Hugh Sully was loosely based on Charles of Anjou’s top knight and general with the same name except in No Budget Films had a very different story. In real history, Hugh Sully was a Burgundian knight serving Charles of Anjou, the King of Sicily since he took Sicily in 1266 and chronicles say Sully had red hair and was known for his extremely fiery temper and was assigned by Charles to govern his territories in Albania although Sully was defeated by the Byzantines, captured, and paraded in Constantinople as a prisoner in 1281 but was released and returned to Italy. In No Budget Films however, the French knight-assassin Hugh Sully was one character who never revealed his face and in the whole movie which was his only appearance in NBF media, wears a full set of black armor with a large full helmet covering his face the whole time, therefore his face is never seen though the behind-the-scenes photos of the movie shows him being bald with a short black beard beneath his helmet rather than having red hair; his Lego figure meanwhile includes a full set of knight’s black armor with a Lego full helmet (bucket helm) with a red feather included, he in the movie is supposed to be around 50. Sully appears at the movie’s opening in 1282 in Panormos, Sicily confronting Alexios in a duel warning him Charles will take over Byzantium and Byzantium has no chance to stand against Charles, Alexios challenges Sully but loses as Sully disarms and kills Alexios but escapes the scene when Dr. Giovanni Procida throws a smoke bomb. Sully then mostly appears always next to his master, Charles of Anjou first at the meeting of the generals in the Messina castle and next there again as rushes into the scene and knocks out Andronikos as ordered by Charles right after Sully helps quell the uprisings in the city. Afterwards, Charles orders Sully himself to travel to across the Ionian Sea to Byzantium only to simply kill off the emperor Michael VIII, Michael’s son and heir Andronikos, and the former deposed John IV Laskaris to kill off the whole succession in the Byzantine Empire so that Charles has no one to challenge him when he conquers it. Sully is next seen riding his horse down the Via Egnatia in the Balkans and finally meeting up with Michael VIII at a farm in Thrace where he warns Michael Charles will have everything his way and Byzantium will die but Michael challenges Sully to a duel winning and killing Sully with a stab in the throat and as the dying Michael tells the farmer there what went on he simply said the Latin threat is real and his kill a Latin assassin sent to kill him. In the movie, Sully is supposed to appear as a large sized French knight with a fiery temper and deep voice yet mysteriously never removing his helmet as he belongs to a knight order where it is not permitted to remove their helmets in public, also Sully’s character was supposed to be the traditional secondary movie villain who is the main villain’s henchman and while Charles of Anjou is the main villain, Sully is basically the hitman that does Charles’ dirty work, mainly assassinations and anything to do with murder and has been working for Charles ever since being Charles’ most loyal man. Other than being an assassin, Sully was also a warrior knight greatly skilled in fighting using a broadsword and, in the movie, it was Sully
that killed both of Byzantium’s grand generals, Alexios and as seen in a flashback sequence it was Sully that killed Michael’s brother General John Palaiologos in 1266. In the movie edit, a voice filter was added for Sully to make the voice sound both deeper and with sound like he speaking with some vibration from the helmet, meanwhile Sully's voice actor Pat Claudio missed out on some pronunciations like “Constantinople” which is why the word was cut in the scene where Michael duels him, however to hide the mistake, the movie edit made Michael attack Sully before Sully finished speaking. Now in real history, it is unclear where and when Sully died but he definitely did not reach Thrace and try to assassinate and get killed by the Byzantine emperor himself.

VI. Irene Palaiologina- A new character introduced in this film War of the Sicilian Vespers voiced by Nuni Celdran; based on a real historical figure, Irene Komnene Palaiologina (1218-1284) the older sister of Byzantine emperor Michael VIII. If there was anyone who was behind all of Michael’s plots and schemes against the Laskaris family in order to take the throne, it was no other than his older sister Irene as in fact real history says she brought up Michael and their younger brother John while their parents were never really there for them which led the Palaiologos siblings to grow up the tough way having to use scheming as a way to gain success. It was also said that Irene sang Michael to sleep as he grew up singing that he himself will one day take back Constantinople from the Latins, which he eventually did. The character of Irene was originally supposed to be in the Summer of 1261 film as in the real story she woke up Michael with the news that their army took back Constantinople but since Michael was in Constantinople during the events of the reconquest in that movie, so Irene’s character was removed and instead brought in for the sequel wherein she at this time was no longer in good terms with her brother. When growing up, Michael and Irene were extremely close to each other but what caused her to all of a sudden turn on her younger brother was his infamous Church Union of the Byzantine Orthodox and Latin Catholic Churches in order convert Byzantium to Latin Catholicism, though this act however also enraged the true Orthodox Byzantines which included Irene causing her to lose faith and even despise him. In real history however, it was also Michael's Church Union that led to their estrangement though the real Irene was in fact married earlier but after the death of her husband she became a nun using the name “Eulogia” but in real history Irene was far more evil and scheming and it was she who masterminded Michael’s blinding of the boy emperor John Laskaris and the moment Michael signed the Church Union with the Latins in 1273, Irene openly opposed him which made Michael banish her from the court though Irene would continue further hating her brother she was once so close to that she even went as far as asking the Bulgarians to attack Byzantine borders to further cause Michael some more pain, and even after Michael's death in 1282 she even forbade his widow Theodora to pray for him seeing him as unworthy for salvation for betraying the Orthodox faith, yet it was
also Irene who urged her nephew Andronikos II to cancel his father’s Church Union which he did under his aunt’s influence. The Byzantine historian at their time George Pachymeres basically describes Irene as her brother’s puppet master and the power behind his rule while in No Budget Films it was very much the same and as Irene is introduced midway through the Sicilian Vespers film at the scene of the old hermit Georgios Doukas’ home, here she is already seen being at odds with Michael yet she too reveals that she was the one who masterminded the blinding of John Laskaris back in 1261 for Michael to secure his son Andronikos’ succession though she also tells Michael to tell Andronikos the real reason for the blinding. Eventually later on in the film, Michael and Irene somewhat reconcile as Irene tells him that she will no longer hate him once he cancels the Church Union and Michael feeling the guilt for blinding John Laskaris has her do him a favor and rescue the blinded John Laskaris from the prison castle along the Marmara Sea where he had been for 21 years. As Michael leaves the docks, this is the last time he would see his wife and sister though afterwards Irene is next seen visiting the now fat and blind adult John Laskaris at his prison castle, Irene simply comes to rescue John Laskaris and relocate him to a monastery in Nicomedia where no one will find him as after Michael never really wanted John Laskaris dead. Irene though does not speak after this but is present in Andronikos II’s coronation scene and quickly appears in flashback sequences but is never seen in the movie conspiring with the Bulgarians or convincing Andronikos to cancel the union, though Michael does indeed say in the movie that it was Irene that brought him up, also Irene in the whole film has no involvement with the Sicilian matter, rather her part is only vital to Michael’s personal story. Ironically, Irene is voiced by Nuni Celdran who is the director and Michael’s voice actor Powee Celdran’s real life sister, she too voiced many previous No Budget Films characters. The Lego character of Irene was supposed to appear old as she is older than Michael while her outfit is mostly black.

**VII. Georgios Doukas**- A returning character from *Summer of 1261* voiced by Carlos Francisco, this film’s co-producer; Georgios Doukas is an almost entirely fictional character but loosely based on the Byzantine historian of that era George Akropolites (1217-1282) even sharing the same first name but different in terms of age as this character in the movie was made to be much older than the historian. Out of all the characters in the whole *War of the Sicilian Vespers* film, Georgios Doukas is the oldest character also saying to be the oldest Byzantine alive being around 87 or 88 in the 1282 setting of the story as when he first appeared in the 1261 setting of the previous film, he was already 67 and had in fact he was born all the way back in 1194 Byzantium having witnessed the attack of Constantinople himself as a child in 1204 being a survivor of it. The fateful event of the Crusaders’ attack in 1204 forever traumatized the young Georgios as he saw his own people be killed by the Crusaders and he himself almost killed in the attack until saved by the fleeing Byzantines led by Theodore Laskaris, the first Nicaean emperor, the young Georgios then decided
to just live a life of a monks at that young age when arriving in Nicaea but his hate and distrust on the Latins would live on with him forever. Though living as a monk for decades, Georgios had quite an interesting life by being friends with the Nicaean Byzantine emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes (r. 1222-1254) even joining in this campaigns, joining Alexios and Michael Palaiologos’ reconquest of Constantinople in 1261 in which Georgios had even fought in, becoming for a time part of the Byzantine Senate under Michael VIII, and living a very long life seeing the whole 57 year existence of the Latin and Nicaean Empires and the fall and return of Byzantine Constantinople, as well as seeing the reigns of 10 Byzantine emperors. Now in the Sicilian Vespers film, Georgios makes a comeback in the 1282 setting as an even more aged man compared to his previous appearance in 1261 and here in 1282 being so old, Georgios has come to walk much slower though his Lego face with the gray beard and black outfit with a cape is the same as in Summer of 1261 with the only difference being his headpiece in which became a hood compared to the previous film while in this Sicilian Vespers film Georgios in all his appearances walks with a cane. In War of the Sicilian Vespers, the elderly Georgios first appears in the docks of Constantinople when Andronikos leaves for Sicily and here the old Georgios tells Andronikos the whole story of 1261 and that Andronikos has a purpose to join the fight in Sicily which is to save the hard work Georgios, Alexios, and Michael fought for back then though Georgios also says he would love to fight the Latins again still having his long hatred for them but says he can’t join as he’s too old to leave and his days as a fighting monk are over, instead prefers to live peacefully inside the Walls of Constantinople in which you can see that he does indeed live there at the scene where he grabs Michael and takes him in there to give him a bit of a talk. Georgios meanwhile like Michael’s sister Irene was one who openly criticized Michael’s rule although Georgios was left untouched due to his age and status in Byzantine society; he even dragging Michael’s into his own home while the mob harasses Michael in the streets. Back in the previous film, Georgios served as the old mentor figure for both Michael and Alexios and in the Sicilian Vespers sequel, Georgios again stayed as the old mentor figure being the mentor for Michael, Alexios, and Andronikos though in the 1282 setting of this film, Georgios appears to be more of the ultimate old wise man as he is even older than Michael was already old and in fact living so long through so many events made him so wise that he even calls Michael by his first name rather than “emperor” or “my lord”. Georgios though does not make such a big appearance in this film but was decided to return in it to show how a character can actually live that long and also since he had a major appearance in the previous film, it was better off that he return in the sequel despite being so old in order to serve as the old wise man; also it is Georgios who introduces Irene’s character in the film as she came to Georgios’ house to surprise Michael. However, after the scene when Michael and his sister Irene meet after so long in which Michael rambles about his own imperial ambitions and background story, Georgios does not appear anymore except very quickly near the end in the
coronation of Andronikos II. Though old and weak, Georgios in the Sicilian Vespers scene did have some action by slamming his cane on the ground to shake it while a protester was trying to harass Michael in order for Michael to be brought in to safety in Georgios’ home within Constantinople’s walls as it is raining hard outside. As you notice carefully, you can see that Michael and Georgios were actually very close as in the previous film Michael had already known Georgios even before Alexios and his men first met him and it was even Georgios in Michael’s coronation back in 1261 that carried the sacred icon which was said to have even been painted by St. Luke, although Georgios was a very devout Orthodox Christian monk there was no chance he would agree to Michael’s Church Union as Georgios like many other Byzantines were too stained by the memory of the atrocities the Latin Catholics caused them which is why a Church Union for Georgios and many Byzantine Orthodox Christians can never work therefore even Georgios had become disappointed in his close friend Michael. It is though unclear when Georgios died but till death the memory of the Latins’ atrocities he’d seen back in 1204 still stained him deeply; meanwhile the last scene of the Sicilian Vespers movie shows old Georgios looking out into the sea from Constantinople which was made to symbolize that he survived all the turbulent events of the 13th century living long enough to see the whole threat of Latins gone forever with Charles of Anjou taken care of. The character of Georgios like Irene was one of the major characters in the movie with very little involvement in the Sicilian issue but rather more with Michael’s personal issues ruling a troubled Byzantium with Georgios being the ancient mentor figure to an already old man. Like in Summer of 1261, Georgios was again voiced by Carlos Francisco except making the voice sound a lot older due to the character aging even more being in his late 80s.

VIII. Philippe Courtenay- A new character introduced in this film War of the Sicilian Vespers voiced by Angelo Lacson; Philippe Courtenay is largely based on the same historical character Philip I the exiled Latin emperor who was the only son of the last Latin emperor of Constantinople Baldwin II and Marie of Brienne who rules as Latin emperor in exile from 1273 till his death in 1283 and an ally of Charles of Anjou. In No Budget Films’ War of the Sicilian Vespers, Philippe’s story is very similar to his story in real history as in the film like in real history he is also mentioned to be the son of the late former Latin emperor Baldwin II who died in 1273 in Italy, was the son-in-law of Charles of Anjou marrying Charles’ daughter to seal an alliance, was sold off to the Venetians by his father when young to fund the Latin Empire, and was destined to rule Byzantium again when Charles takes in back. In the film, Philippe is slightly younger than the historical one being born in 1248 (historically in 1243) one of the secondary villains and a close ally of Charles of Anjou, so close that he married Charles’ daughter Beatrice of Sicily and as Philippe is introduced in Charles’ meeting room at his castle in Messina, Charles promises Philippe he will rule Constantinople and the east when Charles takes back Byzantium, though
Philippe would be a puppet ruler serving Charles who would be the ultimate ruler of his proposed Angevin Empire. Philippe's role in the movie was not very major with not much screen time and speaking lines but his character is important to the side of the Latins in the story showing what remains of Baldwin II's Latin Empire as Baldwin from the previous film was already dead in the 1282 setting. Though a close ally of Charles, Philippe has one rival among Charles' men which is Charles’ secretary Jean Clovis and both fight over their claim on Byzantium though it is Philippe that has the legitimate claim as he is the only son of Baldwin II who had lost Constantinople and with Baldwin dead, he was the only inheritor of the claim to the lost Latin Empire while Jean was only the son of Baldwin II’s general Valentin Clovis who died battling Alexios back in 1261, however Jean still thinks he is the rightful heir so both Philippe and Jean settle the matter with a fist fight which Charles has to stop sending Philippe away to quell more uprisings in Sicily while Charles later kills Jean leaving no more opposition to Philippe. The character of Philippe though makes no appearance until near the end of the film when he had successfully put down the rebellion at Panormos, Sicily and together with Charles they execute almost the entire population of Panormos as punishment, though at the final battle in early 1283, Philippe takes part leading Charles’ forces but is decapitated and killed by the new Byzantine general Stephanos. In real history however, Philippe also died in 1283 but later in the year and possibly a peaceful one but still, he never got back Constantinople. In the movie, the character of Philippe is portrayed as a greedy and sadistic person who’s only main objective is to end Byzantine civilization out of pure hate since the Byzantines shamefully forced his father out of power and killed his mother in battle although little does he know that the ghost of the Byzantine emperor Nikephoros II killed his mother; on the other hand he was also so bloodthirsty that he is seen enjoying torturing people before executing them including young children as he orders his soldiers to use a child in Panormos as an archery target practice and in battle he fights using all sorts of mutilating techniques including cutting of private parts of men, although Philippe happens to not be so ambitious and independent basically always just follows Charles’ orders at all times. Philippe though was only introduced in the Sicilian Vespers movie to show a connection to Baldwin II in the previous film while Baldwin only appears in flashbacks though the deleted scenes show the death of Baldwin in Charles’ palace in Sicily naming Philippe his heir, surprisingly a young Philippe did not appear in Summer of 1261 so in the whole setting of that, it was unknown where Philippe but possibly in the previous movie’s setting he was being held by the Venetians somewhere as he was sold off to them. The character of Philippe appears a bit young with red hair and large eyes also wearing the same Crusader king’s Lego outfit his father wore in the previous film; the character’s lines were voiced by Angelo Lacson as his first role in No Budget Films media.
IX. Jean Clovis- A new character introduced in this film *War of the Sicilian Vespers* voiced by Alej Consing: the character of Jean Clovis though is purely fictional and is one of the movie’s secondary villains being part of Charles’ generals having the part of Charles’ secretary but has his own imperial ambitions. Jean Clovis was created for this film to add another character of the Clovis family which had been making chronic appearances in NBF media, either in the modern era 1984 settings or in the medieval settings such as in the previous *Summer of 1261* movie with the Clovis family member being the French knight and Baldwin II’s general Valentin, an Alsatian French. The men of the Clovis family meanwhile were all soldiers going all the way back to their direct ancestor, the Roman general Germanicus in the 1st century and the family had always had an unbroken line of males wherein every generation the first son inherits the family heirloom, the amulet of Germanicus which Valentin has in the previous movie though in this movie the late Valentin’s eldest son Jean is the exception as he does not carry the amulet and had no children of his own, rather Jean says he gave the amulet to his younger brother for safekeeping in case Jean dies and true enough Jean did die as the movie progresses. In the Sicilian Vespers movie, Jean’s screen time though is quite minimal and was only put in to represent the Clovis family and his late father Valentin who died in 1261, although Jean was basically quite useless and was mostly only used as Charles’ own experiment to trick the Byzantine people he was to conquer since Jean Clovis does look like the former deposed Byzantine emperor John IV Laskaris who the Byzantine people prefer over their current ruler Michael VIII; in fact Jean Clovis and John Laskaris even sharing the same first name except Jean’s only being the French version of it and being born in the same year (1250), and to make both Johns almost the same person, both John Laskaris and Jean Clovis were voiced by Alej Consing in the same tone. Jean Clovis’ appearance in the movie is quite minimal though first appearing in the 1282 opening as one of the people in the Vespers prayer in the Panormos church but can be seen only very quickly having no speaking lines, though he can only be identified when Charles introduces his generals in the meeting scene where Charles introduces him as Jean. The only parts where Jean has speaking lines is when he fist fights with Philippe over their claim on the Latin Empire in which Philippe badly beats up Jean though Philippe is forced to leave while Charles burns an iron intending to blind Jean in order to use him to trick the Byzantines that John Laskaris is indeed alive, although Charles only intended to use a fake John Laskaris as a trick for Byzantium while Philippe would actually be the one put in the throne. Jean on the other hand knew Charles favored Philippe more therefore giving Jean some imperial ambitions but only caring about getting rid of Philippe through any means. Later on, Jean encounters the Byzantine imperial heir Andronikos who Charles defeats in a duel therefore attempting to make his plot work so Jean reveals his own ambitions and has Andronikos jump down the window into a docked ship which Jean says is Philippe’s to sabotage Philippe and frame him as a traitor when in fact the ship was actually Jean’s. When Andronikos escapes,
Charles immediately returns and questions Jean's action as Charles planned to interrogate Andronikos which Jean now defends himself blaming Philippe for arranging Andronikos' escape in order to frame Philippe as a traitor however Charles surely sees Jean is lying as Charles would do anything to protect Philippe also knowing Philippe would never betray Charles. True enough Charles discovers that his secretary Jean obviously had his own imperial ambitions by wanting to get rid of Philippe but in Charles' perspective Jean has no chance of ruling the east since he has no legitimate claim making Charles see Jean as just a thorn in the side making Charles first blind Jean with a burnt iron and afterwards stab Jean to death ordering his hitman Sully to dispose of Jean's body before riding to Byzantium to eliminate the whole succession, it would then be Jean's younger unnamed brother that would pass on the amulet through the next generations of Clovis males. Jean Clovis is overall the failed villain character but still courageous in personality since he set his ambitions for the throne of Constantinople despite having no claim to it, although trait of Jean shows him as that of earlier Byzantines who despite having no royal background aimed for the throne in which some did succeed in taking most notably Emperor Basil I the Macedonian (r. 867-886) who began simply as a peasant but plotted his way up to becoming emperor. Jean though failed to achieve his goal and with his plot uncovered by his master, he was simply and shamefully killed off in order to protect Philippe's rightful claim but even Philippe died before becoming the restored emperor of the Latins while Charles dying before achieving his goal was indeed the failed villain. The character of Jean Clovis meanwhile comes from the region of Alsace in today's France and in a vision scene of his father Valentin in Summer of 1261, he is seen giving an amulet to his son who is in fact Jean though Jean's name is not mentioned in the previous movie but in the Sicilian Vespers movie, the same child which is Jean appears in flashback scenes with the injured deposed Latin emperor Baldwin II himself giving Jean the amulet since after Valentin's death in Constantinople, Baldwin was given the amulet to take back to Valentin's son, however Philippe later on in his dialogue says that he can't believe his father wasted his time giving the amulet to man so useless like Jean. Jean however ended up in Charles' court in Sicily for some reason and is never explained why but even if he just went as far as being Charles' secretary, he just randomly started having imperial ambitions. Jean's Lego character in the film mostly only appeared in the meeting room of Charles' castle in Messina and the beginning in the Vespers prayer in Panormos but wears nothing else but a blue French fleur-de-lys Lego outfit and blue pants with a ruffled collar even if these collar hadn’t existed yet in the 13th century only appearing in the 16th century, he too as supposed to look like the adult John Laskaris has the same long brown hair and face as the adult John Laskaris and in the movie, Jean Clovis is one of the 3 characters with the same first name next to John Laskaris and Giovanni Procidia (except Jean's the French version and Giovanni the Italian version), and lastly for weapons, Jean is seen carrying a Lego cutlass sword but never fights with it rather only gets into action using his fists
against Philippe. In dialogue, Alej Consing who voices Jean pronounces Philippe’s name as “Philip” while his rival Philippe voiced by Angelo Lacson pronounces Jean’s name as “John”; on the other hand, historical texts though refer to Philippe as “Philip”.

X. Giulia Parisi- A new character introduced in this film War of the Sicilian Vespers voiced by Monica David; a largely fictional character but based on a particular Sicilian woman in 1282 who was grabbed by a French soldier following the Vespers prayer therefore causing a popular uprising and slaughter of the French troops in Panormos (Palermo), Sicily. Giulia is first introduced and only appears for now in No Budget Films’ War of the Sicilian Vespers being one of the only 3 women in the film with a role aside from Byzantine emperor Michael VIII’s wife Theodora and his sister Irene though unlike the two others who are Byzantine royals, Giulia is a young Sicilian common woman who is dragged into the conflict against the French, against her will. The character of Giulia is in the film is in fact the actual unnamed Sicilian woman told in the story of the Sicilian Vespers grabbed by a certain drunk French soldier named Drouet in 1282 and like in real history, Giulia being that same woman kicked the soldier that grabbed her leaving her husband (named Alessandro in the film) to kill that soldier out of revenge though another French soldier killed her husband. Though in real history, this woman is never mentioned again after this incident but in the movie, Giulia disappears after this scene running away with a certain man wearing black but as the movie progresses, Giulia is seen again in the scene where the Byzantines with Dr. Giovanni return to Sicily but this time in Messina and here Giulia with a complete change of outfit is standing next to this man in black who is the local Sicilian lord Count Tomaso of Drepana who is masterminding the rebellions in Sicily and it is he who is bribed by Michael VIII of Byzantium while Giulia now a fighter in the rebellion informs the Byzantine team uprisings against the French broke out all over Sicily and Messina would rebel too if they are paid. Together with Dr. Giovanni and Count Tomaso, Giulia watched the people of Messina riot in the town square but are eventually dispersed and slaughtered by the French knights while Dr. Giovanni, Giulia, and Tomaso flee to Tomaso’s farm in Drepana and wait there for months until the army of Aragon led by Peter III by invitation of the Byzantines arrive meeting them at the farm. Giulia being so bored wills to fight again and accepts Peter III’s offer to join him and continue fighting the French in which Giulia actively does first wiping out the French garrison in Messina then joining the combined Byzantine, Aragonese, and North African forces as they march to Panormos and wipe out the last of Charles of Anjou’s army. Giulia survives the final battle in Panormos in 1283 having killed French soldiers herself and again appears in the final scene when Andronicos II as emperor returns to Sicily, here Giulia ends up being so in love with Andronicos even if they’ve only seen each other once before, when Andronicos arrived in Sicily the first time the year earlier that when Andronicos arrives, Giulia goes up to him and kisses
him. It is though unclear why Giulia all of sudden just started having feelings for Andronikos though this is most probably because she’s come to idolize the Byzantines and think of them as Sicily’s saviors therefore thinking the hero behind this all was Andronikos when in fact the one who masterminded Byzantium’s support in the Sicilian rebellion from behind the scenes was Andronikos’ father Emperor Michael VIII though Giulia in her last dialogue knowing of Michael did not respect him much but sees much potential in Andronikos that he would do a hell lot better than his father, though Giulia also comes to admit the Byzantine people are quite complicated. Giulia’s character was designed and put more attention to in order to represent the side of the common Sicilian people in the movie showing their suffering under the French and in Giulia’s case it was being harassed by a drunk French soldier although the fact of her being young and attractive had also caused the French soldier Drouet to grab her although it only meant trouble since she was already married to Alessandro. In real history, the Sicilian woman who was supposed to be Giulia was not named but only named Giulia, the Italian name for Julia by No Budget Films and was voiced by Monica David being her first voice role in No Budget Films though throughout the movie Giulia has very minimal and in fact short speaking lines but has a lot of screen time especially being part of the battle scenes in the latter part of the film where she fights the French. The Lego character of Giulia Parisi was made to look very attractive with long black hair while she has a change in outfits first introduced in the Vespers opening wearing the Lego medieval woman’s outfit but in the rest of the film wears what is a low-cut tight black dress which is the Lego outfit of the dark side Rey figure from Lego Star Wars, though this black outfit may be an uncommon medieval era outfit though the concept art shows that Giulia barely wears anything but this outfit as a large belted black dress with only her undergarments (a loose medieval chemise) underneath it and the black outfit is supposed to indicate that this was the color of the Sicilian rebels. The character of Giulia though was designed to be the tough female character movie that bravely stands up for herself as she ends up actually fighting first kicking the French soldier that grabbed her and in battle fighting using her late husband’s dagger which he killed the French soldier with and aside from the dagger, Lego Giulia is equipped with the are Lego Assassin’s Creed hidden blade in one arm. In terms of personality though, Giulia is quite questionable as she overall strong in the outside but inside very dependent on the men she’s with either Dr. Giovanni, Tomaso, or Andronikos though is never seen feeling sad about her husband’s death and somewhat just has a strong crush on Andronikos but this is most probably due to her strongly idolizing the Byzantines hinting that she has strong Byzantine blood; Giulia is also one of the youngest characters in the movie only around 6 years older than Andronikos who is 23-24 making Giulia around 29 or 30.

**XI. Stephanos Raoul** - A returning character from Summer of 1261; Stephanos Raoul in its sequel War of the Sicilian Vespers now has a more major role compared
to the previous film and in both this film and the previous one he is voiced by Miguel Abarentos who is also the live game streamer behind the Twitch channel MaskedNinjaHybrid. In the Summer of 1261 movie, Stephanos only has a minor role as one of Michael VIII’s soldiers under General Alexios’ command taking part in the reconquest of Constantinople fighting in the streets though at the end of that movie, it is Stephanos who is sent by Michael to blind John Laskaris on John’s 11th birthday, therefore Stephanos survives the 1261 battle and becomes a commander in the Byzantine army despite being a full blooded Latin in which it is revealed in the Summer of 1261 deleted scenes wherein Stephanos kills Michael’s rival, John Laskaris’ regent George Mouzalon while Michael congratulates this Latin mercenary named Charles who is renamed the Byzantine Greek name “Stephanos” by Michael. Stephanos’ character meanwhile is not really based on any historical figure directly but is loosely based on the specific Latin mercenary Charles who killed George Mouzalon in 1258 afterwards becoming one of Michael Palaiologos’ closest agents while his last name Raoul was only revealed in the behind the scenes of War of the Sicilian Vespers and not earlier in Summer of 1261, the last name Raoul meanwhile was a surname of a noble family in the 13th and 14th centuries which was of Norman origin, also since Stephanos later on in the Sicilian Vespers movie becomes Byzantium’s grand general or Megas Domestikos, he is also loosely based on Michael Tarchaneiotes who was the Byzantine grand general in 1282 in real history but instead of fighting in Sicily fought in the Balkans and Asia Minor so therefore having not much connections to Stephanos’ character. In No Budget Films, Stephanos was indeed a Norman French soldier in the Byzantine army therefore a full-blooded Latin but his loyalties lie with Byzantium and its emperor Michael VIII, meanwhile Stephanos’ last name Raoul was used as a reference to the Norman French family in Byzantium. Stephanos was however originally born Charles in 1230 and not in Byzantine territory but entered Byzantium at a young age as a Latin mercenary becoming close to Michael and in the previous 1261 film, Stephanos aside from being a Byzantine soldier was also Michael’s personal hitman and agent. Now in the War of the Sicilian Vespers movie, Stephanos becomes the 2nd in command to the Megas Domestikos Alexios Strategopoulos and joins him in Sicily at the beginning scene where the people rebel against the French but returns to Constantinople to inform Michael Alexios had died at the same time when Dr. Giovanni from Sicily explains the whole issue in Sicily. Stephanos then also returns to Sicily this time accompanying Michael’s son and heir Andronikos joining him in confronting Sicily’s ruler Charles of Anjou where Stephanos says to Charles who he shares his birthname with that he is a Latin like him but a Byzantine at heart though Stephanos flees the scene when almost killed by one of Charles’ soldiers. Stephanos disappears for a time until he is seen having fled to a farm in Sicily becoming a farmer with his companion the Armenian Haran who fled with him there but returns to action when Peter III of Aragon picks him up to join the fight again. Towards the end of the film after Michael’s death, Andronikos II as the new emperor having returned to
Constantinople names Stephanos as Byzantium’s new Megas Domestikos or grand general succeeding Alexios and Stephanos himself though a Latin by blood leads the allied Byzantine, Sicilian, Aragonese, and North African forces into the final battle in 1283 giving a powerful speech to the allied forces as he rides in front of them on his horse telling his men that they must fight or waste everything Byzantium fought so hard for in 1261. Along with Peter III, Stephanos leads the allied team in the heat of battle against the French while Stephanos himself duels, disarms, and beheads Philippe Courtenay and at the end of the battle, he commands the Byzantine Varangian mercenary Sviatoslav to risk his life and go after Charles while he has the chance to or else there will be no more chance. Though both Sviatoslav and Charles died in battle, Stephanos survived but has no more speaking lines after the battle, instead he is seen in the final scene at the background with his helmet off and a cast over his arm injuring it in battle. Stephanos is one of the few who survived the Sicilian Vespers final battle and in a deleted scene of Summer of 1261 made long before the Sicilian Vespers movie was made though set in 1290 years after the Sicilian Vespers film, the old Stephanos is seen with the emperor Andronikos II visiting the blinded John Laskaris at his monastery in Nicomedia though Stephanos has no speaking line but rather he bows down to John Laskaris being the one who blinded John himself years ago. In the Sicilian Vespers movie, Stephanos was supposed to be portrayed as someone representing the Byzantine army together with Alexios being undyingly loyal to Michael VIII showing that while the people hated Michael, the army loved him and among the soldiers Stephanos highly admired the emperor Michael since Michael had supported him for the longest time, though the character of Stephanos too is another case showing how Michael favored the Latins despite them being the enemy as Stephanos was a full blooded Latin of French origin. Stephanos though despite being a Latin hated the Latins simply because they were Byzantium’s enemy as he had grown up already being on the side of the Byzantines. The Lego character of Stephanos meanwhile wears the same black medieval soldier’s armor set identical to what Alexios wears from the Lego Lord of the Rings Gondor soldier except Stephanos has no sword sheath unlike Alexios and is mostly wearing the shiny pointed helmet as part of this Lego figure though it is only in Sicilian Vespers when Stephanos reveals his face removing the helmet showing him having a red beard and gray curly hair as in Summer of 1261 he is always seen with the helmet on except his face can be seen underneath but not the hair and for weapons he basically fights with a large Lego sword and a shield with the Gondor tree on it and at a few scenes carries a bow which was the same weapon set he also used in 1261. Like in the previous film, Miguel Abarentos reprises his role his role as Stephanos in this film except having more and longer speaking lines.

XII. Charles I of Anjou- A new character introduced in this film War of the Sicilian Vespers voiced by RJ Celdran; Charles I of Anjou’s character is obviously based on the real historical character, the Angevin French monarch ruling over Sicily who at
the same time was part of the royal Capetian Dynasty of France, “Angevin” meaning Anjou as Charles before becoming king of Sicily was Count of Anjou in France. In this film, Charles I of Anjou is the main antagonist and supposed to be a real villain while the film’s protagonist Michael VIII Palaiologos was more like an “anti-hero” or “anti-villain” although both Charles and Michael VIII despite being the film’s archenemies had almost the same kind of personality and the same kind of imperial ambitions, except Michael’s purpose behind all his ruthless scheming and villainous behavior was at the end for the protection of his empire while Charles’ was to do what many Latin rulers of the west wanted to do for the past century, destroy Byzantium and rule most of the world. Charles was born most likely early in 1227 in France, the youngest son of King Louis VIII of France and Blanche of Castile named Charles after France’s greatest ruler so far Emperor Charlemagne some centuries ago, and being the youngest Charles did not immediately get much while his oldest brother Louis IX would already become king, Charles instead would later end up becoming the count of the provinces of Anjou, Maine, Provence, and Forcalquier in 1246 and coming to rule so much land gave him the greed to want more and more land to rule over, at the same time Charles had also joined his brother now King Louis IX’s 7th Crusade in Egypt. For a long time though Charles hadn’t been expanding out his own territories in France but since he was ruling in the shadow of his brother Louis IX who as King of France was already the most powerful man in Europe, which means Charles wanted his own large amounts of land to prove he could be as powerful too, and to do this he aimed for Italy. In 1266, Charles marched into Southern Italy and defeated the forces of the last Hohenstaufen ruler of Sicily Manfred at the Battle of Benevento and right after annexed Sicily to his new empire becoming its king. In 1270, King Louis IX launched the 8th Crusade in which Charles sent his knights too, though this ended up in failure as Louis IX died in Tunis leaving Charles of Anjou his brother free to pursue his own imperial ambitions. Overall, Charles only pretended to be supportive of his brother but in reality felt like his older brother was holding him back and his older brother’s death gave him everything he needed to build his Mediterranean empire and over the years he would end up ruling Albania in 1272 and becoming prince of Achaea in Greece in 1278 making him one step closer to invading Byzantine territory itself. Michael VIII ruling Byzantium kept a close watch on Charles ever since Louis IX’s death in 1270 and so rapidly Charles’ threat would be closer and closer to Byzantium though in 1281, he was beaten out of Albania by the Byzantines but this was not yet the end for him so Michael VIII to know if Charles had more plans to invade Byzantium sent his best soldiers, the veterans of 1261 to Sicily to uncover what Charles was really up to but instead discovered that it was about time for the oppressed the people of Sicily to turn against Charles, their French ruler. In the movie, Charles first appears much younger in 1270 receiving news that his older brother Louis IX had died giving him a sense of relief that he is free to make his own empire and crush Byzantium and in between 1270 and 1282, he accepted the former deposed Latin emperor Baldwin II Courtenay and his son
Philippe into his court in Sicily though in 1273 Baldwin II died which made Charles appoint Philippe as the heir to the Latin Empire, meaning when Charles takes Byzantium back for the Latins, Philippe will be installed as the ruler of Constantinople though acting as a puppet ruler to Charles. The next time he appears is already in 1282 responding to the uprisings in Sicily by putting them all down by force believing all he needs are his powerful 6 Norman knights and his general Hugh Sully to do the job. While being busy on defeating the Sicilian rebellions, Charles’ top priority was still to launch the 9th Crusade and invade Byzantium and the moment he took care of the uprisings in Messina and executed his treacherous secretary Jean Clovis for allowing Andronikos, Michael VIII’s heir to escape in order to blame it on Charles’ to be puppet Latin emperor Philippe so that Jean can take the Latin throne, Charles set off to Panormos (Palermo, Sicily) to execute the population to punish them for their rebellion. After executing the rebellious population of Panormos in late 1282, Charles announced that he would launch the 9th Crusade and invade Constantinople with him leading it together with Philippe and his Papal ambassador Bishop Enirco Salviati while Charles sent Sully to Byzantium ahead to eliminate Michael VIII and his son Andronikos as well as the former emperor turned blind prisoner John IV Laskaris who could end up becoming a potential claimant but little did Charles know that Michael had killed Sully and Andronikos as well as John Laskaris were still left alive. At the beginning of 1283, with Peter III of Aragon arriving in Sicily, the Byzantines together with the Sicilian rebels grouped up and together marched into Panormos and wiped out Charles’ army killing Charles in the process. As his forces were defeated, Charles tried to flee but instead ended up killed by the veteran Byzantine Varangian mercenary Sviatoslav Stolypin by being thrusted by Sviatoslav’s long pole axe with Charles’ soul banished to another realm, though Sviatoslav too was killed in the process. Before dying, Charles admitted he couldn’t be Byzantine emperor because he is not in any way Byzantine in blood but still thought he could be the greatest of the Byzantine emperors. Of course, in real history, Charles’ story after 1281 played out very differently, as after his army was defeated by the Byzantines at Albania in 1281 everything went downhill for him especially when Michael VIII struck behind his back paying off the Sicilian rebels as well as Peter III of Aragon to invade Charles’ Sicily to further weaken him. In real history too, Charles did not die in battle at Panormos, Sicily early in 1283 instead he lost Sicily in 1282 to Peter III of Aragon and would fight continuous wars against Peter III and instead Charles would die of natural causes in Foggia Italy on January 7, 1285 and of course he had a son, Charles II who would succeed him as ruler of Naples. In real history too, Charles and Philippe were in fact close allies and as mentioned in the movie, true indeed Charles’ daughter Beatrice was married to Philippe. In fact, in Purgatorio by Dante written some decades after Charles’ time, Charles is mentioned in Purgatory waiting together with his own archenemy Peter III of Aragon. Now in No Budget Films, Charles has a lot of screen time in the Sicilian Vespers movie as the main villain and a short scene in the deleted scenes where he
names Philippe heir to the Latin Empire. In terms of personality, Charles and Michael VIII had a lot in common being both equally ambitious except Charles was far more ruthless wanting to see Byzantium be destroyed and he himself rule the Mediterranean as a kind of restored “Roman emperor” although Charles lacked practical thinking he could rule such a vast empire when in fact he would be surrounded by enemies on all sides. When ruling Sicily, Charles was an oppressive ruler who demanded heavy taxes especially so that he could launch his invasion on Byzantium but at the same time he did not want to see himself as the kind of luxurious emperor like the Byzantine emperors were but instead as a soldier ruler choosing to wear armor to look like knight and not like a Byzantine emperor richly decorated in imperial purple robes, his idea here was to present himself as a strong military leader. The Lego figure of Charles appears this way looking rather simple wearing a knight’s armor with a simple hairstyle and clean shaved, though like Michael he also carries a golden sword to show that he and Michael are both rival rulers. The voice acting style for Charles was supposed to sound very villainous in a creepy way in which the peg for his voicers RJ Celdran was the character of Hannibal Lecter from The Silence of the Lambs.